



BULLETIN

April 2009

Events/Happenings

Class of 2009 Celebrates Successful Match Day

Exhilaration and euphoria were the overriding emotions on March 19 as WCMC-Q's Class of 2009 discovered where they would spend the next few years as resident physicians.

Match Day marks a celebration of many years of hard work. The seventeen medical school seniors were joined by classmates, friends, family, and faculty members at a WCMC-Q ceremony in honor of the occasion.

The newly matched Class of 2009 is a diverse group, with chosen specialties that include Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Family Medicine, Surgery, Neurology, Psychiatry, and Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. Two students have elected to pursue a year of clinical research before pursuing their residency training.

Interim Dean Dr. Javaid Sheikh extended his congratulations to the Class of 2009: "I applaud the students for their perseverance, dedication, and hard work that have allowed them to reach this momentous day. The fact that all our students matched in areas of their choice is highly significant and speaks to the quality of our programs."

On May 6, the Class of 2009 – the second graduating class from WCMC-Q – will graduate and embark on their new careers as doctors.

WCMC-Q Hosts Stem Cell Workshop

With Nobel Laureates Sir Martin Evans and Gunter Blobel as speakers and participation by scientists, diplomats, physicians and students from around the globe, WCMC-Q hosted Qatar Foundation's first Workshop on Stem Cell Science And Policy in Qatar.

The topic is an important one for the entire medical and scientific community and for the ambitious biomedical research program spearheaded by WCMC-Q and the Qatar Foundation.

"Stem cell research is an integral part of our new genetic and molecular research program," said Dr. Javaid Sheik, MD, interim dean who served as one of the moderators of the March conference. "Our study of stem cells and their use in therapies and treatments will help us improve the health of Qataris and others around the world. This forum and our research demonstrate clearly that there is a renaissance in science taking place in Qatar."

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Dr. Sheikh and Ronald Crystal, Professor of Genetic Medicine and The Bruce Webster Professor of Internal Medicine from WCMC in New York, each served as panel moderators during the workshop.

Qatar Science and Technology Park Inaugurated

A key partner with WCMC-Q in the establishment of a culture of biomedical research in Qatar, the Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP) held its inauguration on March 16.

Attending were the Emir HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani and HH Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned, chairperson of Qatar Foundation, and other specially invited international guests, including top leaders of world-class research and development companies across the world.

Dr Fathy Saoud, President, Qatar Foundation said: “Our strategy in Qatar Foundation is to make the research base firmly rooted in our community. It must be woven into the fabric of our society and our culture.”

QSTP is delivering a unique approach to accelerating research, in a nation where education and healthcare are the centerpiece of a clear national strategy, said Dr Tidu Maini, Executive Chairman, QSTP.

As part of a series of press conferences addressing the various sectors of QSTP’s focus, WCMC-Q Interim Dean Javaid Shiekh, MD participated in a panel on health sciences, and Renee Richer, PhD sat on a panel on the environment.

ASPETAR and WCMC-Q Sign Clinical Training and Education Agreement

ASPETAR, Qatar Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Hospital and WCMC-Q have signed an agreement for the delivery of clinical training to WCMC-Q medical students during their primary care rotation.

Signatories to the agreement were Dr Mohammed GA Al Maadheed, MD, PhD, Director-General of ASPETAR and Dr Antonio M. Gotto, Jr, Provost for Medical Affairs and Stephen and Suzanne Weiss Dean of Weill Cornell Medical College in New York.

As part of the agreement, ASPETAR will make its facilities available as a clinical education training site for WCMC-Q students during their primary care clinical rotations, while qualifying ASPETAR teaching staff will be granted WCMC-Q faculty appointments. The Medical College will also grant ASPETAR physicians access to the WCMC-Q Distributed eLibrary, an electronic repository of more than 1600 publications and periodicals.

ASPETAR facilities feature Centers of Excellence for sports medicine, sports science, orthopaedics, rehabilitation and research and education, and offer medical treatment and services for musculo-skeletal disorders in a state-of-the-art hospital.

Dean Gotto said: “Sports medicine is advancing all the time and ASPETAR offer a unique facility, with state of the art equipment and an impressive faculty. Today’s signing complements the existing

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affiliation agreement we have with Hamad Medical Corporation which is also proving a key partnership in delivering medical education to the next generation of doctors in the region. ”

WCMC-Q Students and Faculty Published In Groundbreaking Local Book Series

An audience of about 70 people recently gathered at the Waqif Art Center in Doha to celebrate the release of the second book in the Qatar Narratives series: “Qatar: Then and Now.” The crowd sat silent as five authors, including WCMC-Q premed student Afaf Osman, read excerpts of their work in Arabic and English.

Among the 22 non-fiction stories in the book are those by WCMC-Q students and faculty: Afaf Osman, a first-year premed student; Shaikha Daoud Al Shokri, a foundation student; Marwa Saleh, a second-year premed student; and Autumn Watts, WCMC-Q Writing Center’s coordinator.

“One of the reasons why [this book] is so important, is because there is very little space in this country for people to talk ... things are moving so fast, and there’s no room for reflection,” said Mohanalakshmi Rajakumar, co-editor of the book and the founder of the Qatar Narratives series.

Considering the phenomenal pace at which Doha, Qatar is developing—and its importation of a myriad of cultures—writers were eager to share what they’ve witnessed in terms of changes. In this age of globalization, their true accounts could apply to anyone, anywhere on earth.

“In general, the world is getting smaller and people are exposed to new cultures. Some people like to cling to the past. And some people get absorbed and lose their identities,” Osman said.

In the book, Osman explains how, although it’s not her first language, she found that English was a way to find a hidden vein of poetry within herself. Her words illuminate how various cultural aspects might be embraced and treasured while remaining true to one’s own past.

“Qatar: Then and Now” is produced by the Waqif Art Center and edited by Rajakumar and Carol Henderson, program director of the North Carolina Writers Network in the United States. The book is available for purchase at Doha’s Virgin Megastore outlets, duty-free outlets and the Waqif Art Center.

WCMC-Q Students Win Education City Soccer Championship

The students of the WCMC-Q Soccer Team are champions of the 2009 Education City Soccer League. They took the trophy with a 2-0 victory over the Academic Bridge Program (ABP) in the league finals.

The win capped off an undefeated season for the team and co-coaches, Director of Student Affairs Eric Fry and Student Academic Counselor Gerard McKee.

Team captain Mohamed El Shazly summed up the team’s excitement and gratitude: “This dream was made possible thanks to all the players who dedicated their time and effort, our two wonderful coaches, the Student Affairs Office and Dr. Maya Hammoud for their great support, and of course all the fans who cheered for us and believed in our team.”

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The trophy now joins that of the WCMC-Q Cricket Team, who this past November won the Education City league cricket championships for the second year running.

Faculty News

Dr. Maya Hammoud Discusses Women's Health At Qatar University Presentation

Healthy life expectancy in Qatar is about three years shorter for women than men, making it one of the few countries in the world with such a trend, according to the World Health Organization Statistical Information System. The data was highlighted by Dr. Maya Hammoud, associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology at WCMC-Q during a presentation at Qatar University to commemorate International Women's Day.

Life expectancy for both women and men in Qatar is 77 years and a healthy life expectancy is shorter for women than men (64 years vs. 67), according to the data, said Dr. Hammoud.

Research into the causes, especially around healthcare for women as they age, would be an area for discussion with all healthcare organizations in the country, and an important area for future research in women's health, she added.

She also noted that Qatar is committed to providing the most advanced and highest quality health care to its people and can point with pride to its high immunization rate and the nearly universal availability of skilled health care for women giving birth.

To help ensure that women get the care and screenings they need throughout their lives, Dr. Hammoud shared guidelines developed by the US Agency for Health Care Research and Quality. The appropriate tests and screenings vary for women at different ages, but all women should participate in regular primary care visits to a physician.

“Women can do much to promote their own health and the health of their families. Some of the best steps for long-term health involve abstinence from tobacco, healthy eating and regular exercise, and maintaining a healthy weight.”

Most importantly, Dr. Hammoud added, women should make sure to visit their doctor on a regular basis.

Dr. Renee Richer Contributes To Qatar Human Development Report

Dr. Renee Richer, WCMC-Q assistant professor of biology, has authored a chapter on sustainable development for Qatar's “Second National Human Development Report” (HDR).

The authors of the report, prepared under the guidance of the Qatar General Secretariat for Development Planning (GSDP), recently presented its content in a national seminar entitled “Achieving the Environmental Development Outcomes of the Qatar National Vision 2030.” The seminar allowed the public to hear and comment on the report, and the results of that open discussion are to be incorporated in the report's findings.

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With a majority of Qatar's economy based on natural capital—in this case, non-renewable natural resources—Dr. Richer asserts that the country's leadership must maintain overall capital levels by investing profits from these natural resources into other forms of capital such as durable (physical infrastructure), human (citizens' education and skills), as well as financial.

“Qatar can approach sustainability if it invests the profits wisely,” she says.

Success, Dr. Richer says, will require stakeholder engagement and transparency, an improved and integrated set of indicators, and the creation and implementation of a comprehensive development plan. But Dr. Richer warns that time is of the essence. The establishment of the regulatory framework to guide development already lags dangerously behind the pace of growth.

The good news: “Qatar is a relatively small country with bold and forward-thinking leadership which has the ability to make and implement these decisions.”

This and subsequent HDRs will inform the National Strategy to realize the Qatar National Vision – a statement of strategic goals Qatar hopes to achieve by the year 2030, encompassing four “pillars” of development: human, social, economic and environmental.

Forthcoming events

Medicine and U Lecture Series

Get to the heart of today's hottest medical topics at WCMC-Q's Medicine and U public lecture series. Medicine and U brings together key opinion leaders to explore medical topics of keen interest to members of the public, giving the facts in plain and simple language.

The series premiered on March 24 with an exploration of the epilepsy by Dr. Basim Uthman. Future editions of the series include discussions of organ donation by Dr. Bakr Nour on April 7, menopause by Dr. Maya Hammoud on May 19, and depression by Dr. Ziad Kronfol on June 16.

Education City Liberal Arts/Social Science Research Forum

Under the direction of Assistant Professor, Writing, Alan Weber, PhD, the Education City Liberal Arts/Social Science Research Forum is a venue for Education City university faculty members to share their research and teaching concerns. Upcoming presentations by WCMC-Q faculty include “I See What You're Saying: Visual Learning In the Life Sciences” by Phyllis Baudoin Griffard, senior lecturer in biology on March 30, and “The Hippocratic Oath: What Does It Really Say?” by Alan Weber on April 20.

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Literary Lectures Series

In the month of April, WCMC-Q offers the third edition of its literary lecture series in which writing faculty discuss an area of their expertise, or their creative writing, in an informal environment.

Scheduled lectures include:

April 1: Telling Stories: Three Doctors Who Write by Katherine K. Gottshalk, MD

April 8: Doha Ma'alsalama by Peter Fortunato

April 15: In the Shadow Of Shakespeare: The Minor Elizabethans by Alan Weber, PhD

April 22: Is It Dark Where You're Sitting? By Autumn Watts

April 29: Excited, Passionate, Fantastical Imagination: W. B. Yeats and the Personal Political by Rodney Sharkey, PhD

Coffee House VII

Students and employees of Education City institutions will have a chance to show off their talents at the annual Education City Coffee House taking place April 2 at 6 pm, outdoors near the WCMC-Q Main Entrance. This popular annual event features music, dance, drama, poetry and other entertaining talents from performers of all ages and backgrounds.

End Of Year Celebrations

WCMC-Q will mark the end of the academic year with a number of events to celebrate and acknowledge those students progressing to the next stage of their academic and professional lives. In addition to the Foundation and Pre-Medical Program completion ceremonies (dates to be announced), Medical College students will take part in both the Education City Convocation and the WCMC-Q Convocation on May 5, as well as the WCMC-Q Graduation Ceremony on May 6.

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