



**Weill Cornell  
Medicine-Qatar**



# THE FOUNDATION TIMES

2016-2017



**Weill Cornell**  
**Medicine-Qatar**



**Weill Cornell**  
**Medicine-Qatar**

**Foundation Class**  
**2016 - 2017**





# acknowledgements

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Welcome to the sixth edition of the Foundation Times, created by the 2016-2017 Foundation class at Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar. Students are thrilled to share their reflections on the various learning activities, fun events, and accomplishments they have experienced throughout this academic year. In this issue, students reflect on events ranging from Mole Day to activities like Observerships and field trips. Eager to demonstrate their creativity, students also share reviews of books they have read, reflections they have written, and much more. The Foundation Times is rich with creative content and insightful experiences. I take this opportunity to thank the Foundation class members of 2017 for their creative contributions and to congratulate them on the completion of their program.

**Dr. Rachid Bendriss**  
Assistant Dean



This year's Foundation class has been a joy to teach and discover the students' many hidden talents. Seeing this group become avid readers throughout the year really made for lively class discussions filled with laughter and sometimes tears (mostly mine). Each student has shown a wonderfully unique personality, making class time so enjoyable that the time flies by. Through the kindness in their deeds and the thoughtfulness in their words, all have revealed hearts of gold, which gives me hope for the future. All the best to you, Foundation Class of 2017—I'm looking forward to seeing you grow as individuals and academics!

**Melanie Fernandes**  
Teaching Specialist

# Dos & Don'ts

by Aisha Al-Basti



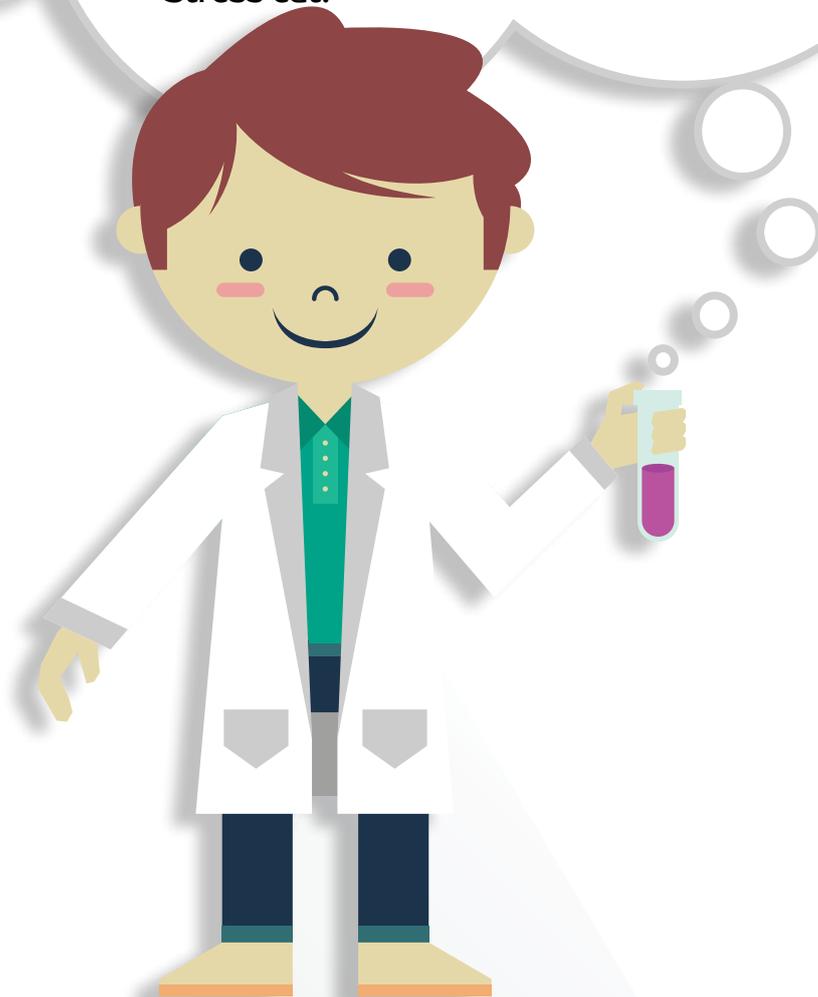
## What to do:

- Always ask—not knowing is not a bad thing.
- Get help when you need it.
- Focus on what you can do in the now, not on what has happened in the past.
- Spend as much time on your assignment as you need.
- Work in groups.
- Share your studying materials with your classmates.
- Start on your lab write-ups as soon as you can.



## What not to do:

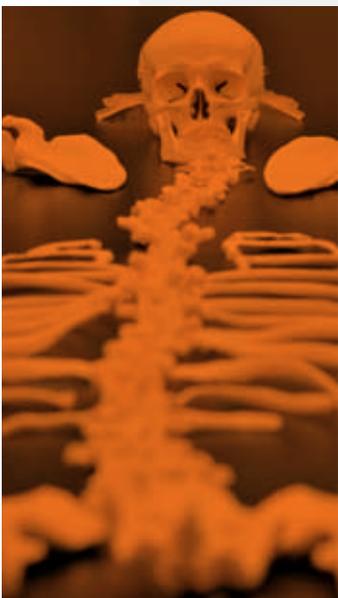
- Leave your assignments to the last minute.
- Cram before an exam.
- Take hours of breaks in between minutes of studying.
- Sleep 9 hours.
- Stay in uni after midnight.
- Take a selfie in class.
- Stress eat.

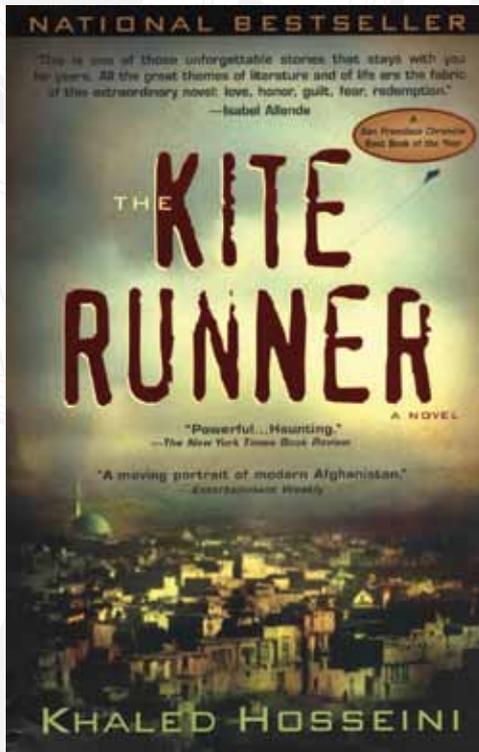




The biology labs allowed us to explore and further comprehend the lecture materials through observations and dissections. We conducted a series of experiments on chicken embryos, deceased cats and even chocolate bars! Although some parts were challenging (have you ever smelled a deceased cat?), we gained valuable knowledge and insight into the wonderful world of biology.







Khaled Hosseini, author of *The Kite Runner*, was born on March 4, 1965 in Kabul Afghanistan. In 1980, he and his family fled to the United States—as it was the beginning of a Soviet War in Afghanistan. He is now known as an Afghan-American novelist and physician, but later retired from his medical career after the success of his first book, *The Kite Runner*. The memories of his childhood in Afghanistan led him to write this novel. The book is a historical drama, as it introduces a fictional story while illustrating real-life events.

This story touches on many themes, namely forgiveness and love in its various forms. It shows a father and son type of love between Amir and Baba, as well as Rahim Khan; a brotherly love between Amir and Hassan; and a romantic love between Amir and his future wife.

In my opinion, *The Kite Runner* is a fantastic, powerful story that I enjoyed reading because it makes one of good fortune feel appreciative of everything. Although most of the events that take place are quite saddening, it leaves a feeling of happiness within the reader. I especially loved that a great deal of the dialogue in the book was in Afghani because it made everything seem so real and raw. In addition, it also reveals how Afghanistan changed from a cosmopolitan city with Western culture to a destroyed city under the control of the Taliban Regime. The story also deals with sectarian issues between the Sunni and Shia.

I would definitely recommend this book to young adults and beyond because it teaches loads of lessons and how people change when life situations change. I would choose to read another book by Khaled Hosseini as his style is unique as he has an impeccable talent for storytelling.

Yasmeen Alavi



Khaled Hosseini

# Book Review

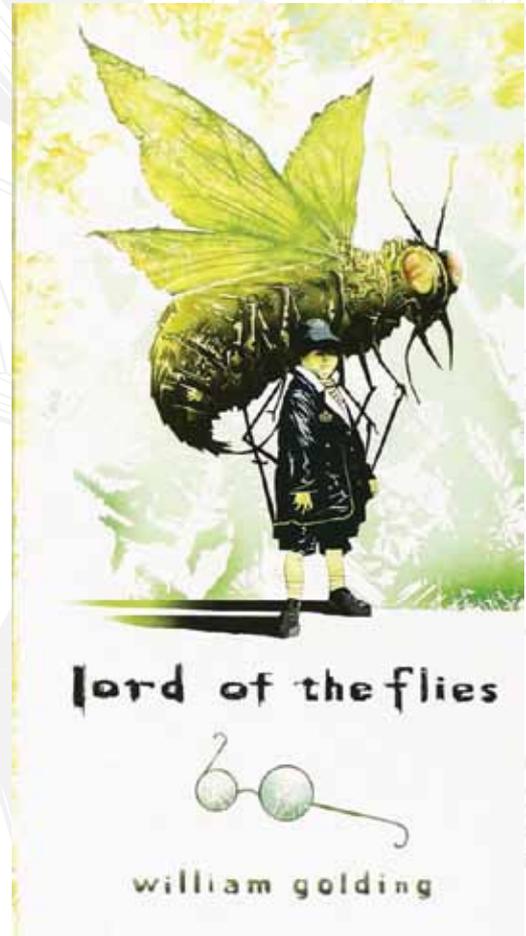
by Abdulla AlMarri

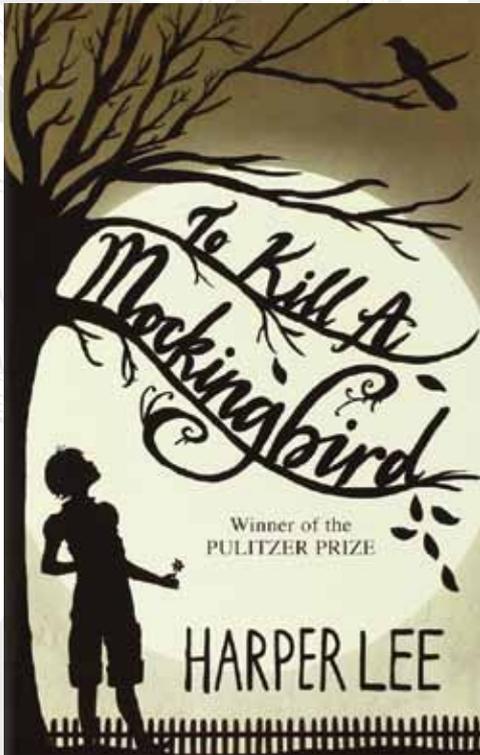
William Golding authored *Lord of the Flies*, a philosophical fiction novel that depicts the dark side of the human race. This darkness manifests itself in children whose plane crashes on an unknown island without a sole adult survivor.

There are many themes touched upon in the novel, but two of them stood out the most: civilization versus savagery and group ideology. These themes stem from the environment that the children are in—where there is no figure of power or authority. This power vacuum affects the children's way of thinking, so they split into two groups. The first represents civilization, and the second, savagery. The "civilized group" wants to leave the island while sustaining their life whereas the hunting group thinks that they should become wild and hunt for meat. With all the infighting, they forget that they were once friends.

I learned from this novel how group ideology is present in the real world. For example, in the Academic Bridge English class, we formed two groups to debate a controversial topic. My friend was on the other team, and as the debate proceeded, the aggression between the two teams grew more intense. As a result, we started to take our positions more seriously. After the heated debate started to fade, we realized that the issue dividing us had ceased to exist. Looking back, I was surprised that my friend and I were debating contentiously; however, I still find it interesting that we did not apologize to each other—maybe because we still dwelled on our position of the debate. Nonetheless, it was a lesson in how context can change the way we behave.

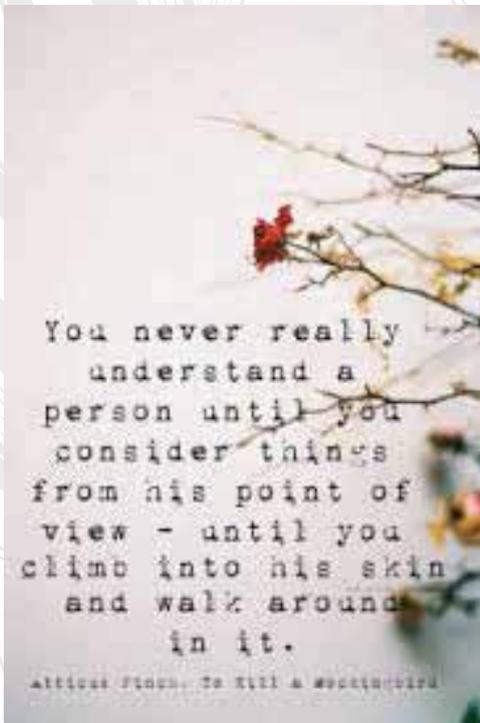
Abdulla AlMarri





*To Kill a Mockingbird* is a classic written by Harper Lee. Narrating the story of two siblings, Jem (thirteen years old) and Scout (nine years old), the novel depicts what it was like to grow up in a discriminant and racist environment. The children mature after facing the harshness of reality with the help of their father, Atticus Finch, and their maid, Calpurnia.

One lesson I learned from this novel is that it is hard to grow up as innocent children without being influenced by the people around them. Since the story was narrated from Scout's point of view, the readers can gather a clear image as to how children can lose this innocence on the path of life when no one is around to carefully guide them. However, the guidance children receive should not be very strict all the time, as it can backfire. Another lesson is to never assume the personality of someone, and to not believe in the rumors just because they are widespread. Getting to know others can only be accomplished by meeting and spending time with them; otherwise, one can only draw assumptions. Finally, it is not impossible for people to change positively. As long as there is a will to change, then it will surely happen by having self-esteem and knowing oneself.



Aisha Al-Basti

# Chemistry Lab

by Hussain Hussain

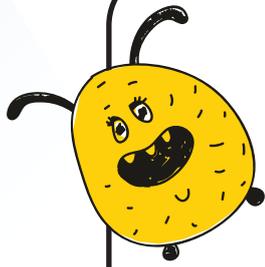
Between dealing with Hydrochloric acid, an acid that can burn your skin with one drop, and the never-ending acid-base titrations, chemistry lab has created a lot of memorable moments. These memories were entertaining, yet educational; so cringeworthy, yet so much fun. During this course we have witnessed grown-ups blowing up balloons, the creation of crystals from a Pepsi can, and the effects of three-hour labs on the body (see below). Chemistry lab included difficult tasks that required significant effort and time management. Coming from various schools that did not provide many opportunities for students to perform labs only made the experience more challenging and exciting at the same time.





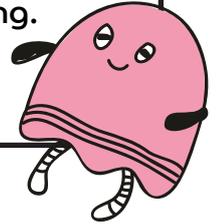
# So Awkward!

by Aljazi Al-Khalifa &  
Najla Al-Eshaq

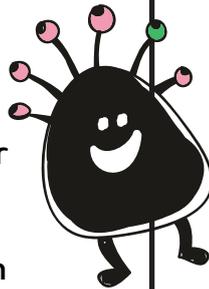


Abdulla was trying to build a “prestigious” image of himself at the beginning of the year. He was proudly approaching Ms. Fernandes, only to stumble over a wire and fall down—taking his “prestigious” image of himself down with him. Nice try, Abdulla.

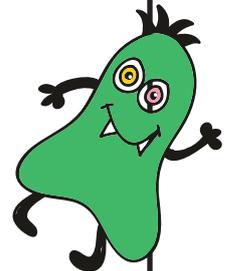
Not too long after Abdulla’s first awkward moment in the class, Ghadeer asked him “شفيع,” which translates to “What’s wrong?” but it is said to females only. Ghadeer did not understand what happened to Abdulla’s face, which started changing colors. In the end, Abdulla just gave up trying.



Every time Nada answers a question nobody can hear her, and at the same moment, someone else says the same answer. “That’s right!” a professor would exclaim. ...Nada kept quiet until one day she said... “انا شفافه,” which literally translates to “I am transparent” (Nada’s famous line).



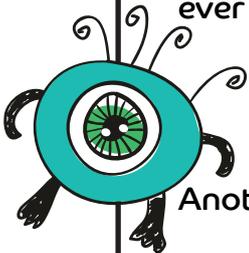
Aljazi decided for the first time in ages to play the “guess who” game with Yasmeen—only that the person whose eyes Aljazi covered wasn’t Yasmeen. She was someone Aljazi didn’t even know. Yes. Exactly. The “kill me now” moment...

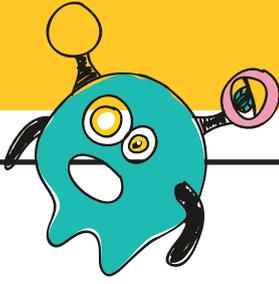


Aljazi wanted to call her classmate Nada, but instead she called another Nada (someone in her contacts list whom she had never ever called before).

Aljazi asked in an angry tone, “Where are you?” Only to be surprised with... “Who are you?” as an answer. “Aren’t you Nada?” Aljazi asked in shock. “Yes I am, but who are you?”

Another “kill me now” moment of Aljazi’s.



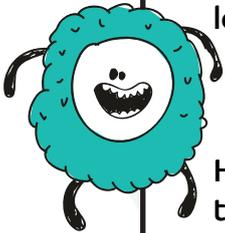


It was the end of the school day, and Ghadeer was leaving the building when Yasmeen and Noor called out to her to say goodbye. As Ghadeer was walking, her head was turned—putting her on a collision course with the bushes. Don't be so excited next time, Ghadeer!

# OOPSIE



On Hussain's birthday, the class wanted to surprise him with a cake (which was just next door with its candles supposedly being lit), but Hussain wanted to go to his mom outside. This is when almost the whole class was suddenly interested in meeting Hussain's mom. Hussain did not listen and was about to leave when Hasan pushed him inside in order not to ruin the surprise.

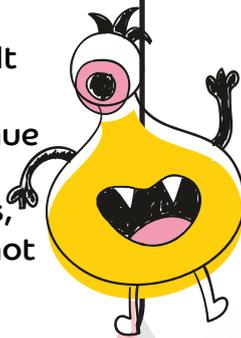


"I have something to tell you," Hasan blurted out—not having time to think of something clever.

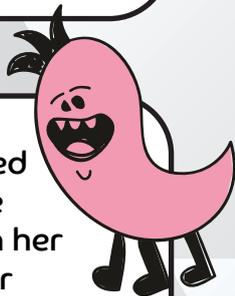
"What?" Hussain asked impatiently.

Hasan—at a loss for words—allowed an awkward silence to creep in between them before the rest showed up with the cake, candles unlit (thanks to Hussain). On a side note, we're not surprising him again.

In Yasmeen and Abdulla's presentation, Yasmeen was speaking so excitedly that she even called Abdulla "Ali" (since she looked at Dr. Ali). It was too funny for the presentation to continue in all seriousness. Covering their mouths, everyone was trying not to burst with laughter that day.



Aljazi went alone to get the food ordered from the delivery guy. After getting the order, she decided to walk outdoors on her way back—seeing how nice the weather was that day. With mindfulness being Aljazi's latest obsession, she was walking while meditating, eyes closed. When she opened her eyes, she spotted two students inside the building gazing at her from the window and waving their hands hello. Now, seriously, isn't Aljazi the queen of "kill me now" moments?





“خشي العربية ياغديبير”

Translation:  
“Get in the car Ghadeer!”

-Yasmeen

اتمسخر

Translation:  
“I’m joking.”

انا شفافة

Translation:  
“I’m transparent/I’m an open book.”

-Nada

“bmout”

Translation:  
“I am going to die!”

-Najla

“Edah?”

Translation:  
“What is this?”

-Ghadeer

مايهمني

Translation:  
“I don’t care.”

-Nada

“We are all perfect!”

\*before an exam\*

-AlJazi

“Listen—I’ll  
tell you some-  
thing, okay?”

“استغفر الله”

\*someone mentions  
an assignment\*

-Abdulla

ORLY؟

-Al-Jazi

“ياخي”

Translation:  
“Bro”

-Hasan

“I’m  
blushing!  
Stop!”

BLUSHIN’

-Hussain

“أنا زهت”

Translation:  
“I’m done.”

-Ghadeer





-Yasmeen

YOU GUYS...

\*usually followed by an announcement\*

-Noor

EEP!

" bismillah knt ba6ee7"

-Noor

Translation:  
"Oh God! I almost fell!"  
\*every minute\*

"So basically like..."

Hussain

"تهقون يمديني"

Translation:  
"Do you think I can still finish it on time?"  
\*before a disaster to be committed by her\*

-Najla

"Sometimes when I put a hard question in an exam I imagine that student would come after the exam and kick me."

-Dr. Renzi

My BESTIE Shakespeare!

"Back in the day when Shakespeare and I rode dinosaurs..."

-Ms. Fernandes

"بذبحك ..."

عبدالله أو

حسين

Translation:  
"I'll kill you...  
Abdulla / Hussain!"

I'll kill you!

-Aisha

"Cuuuute"

\*seriously said by the ladies/  
sarcastically used by the gents\*

-Foundation class students



"You guys want me to die, don't you?!?"

\*Small space of the door still open\*

-Abdulla

uggghh-  
"hh/ufffffff"  
-Aisha



After we turned the page of our hectic first semester in Cornell and made it through in one piece, our class had the opportunity to unwind at Hamad Medical Corporation. Though it might not sound like "fun" to some, shadowing doctors in the real world meant a great deal to our medicine-loving hearts. Within the hospital, our new-found foundation family was assigned to different departments: emergency medicine, psychiatry, general surgery, pediatrics, and obstetrics and gynecology.



Hussain Hussain



Yasmeen Alavi

During the rotations in emergency medicine, I witnessed a life changing experience. An ambulance was carrying a patient who was suffering from cardiac arrest. Having seen the patient's last breaths has definitely changed me. Being in the same room as three physicians and a team of nurses all trying to save the patient, I could not help or do anything other than observe. When the patient was pronounced dead, something inside me had surely transformed. Witnessing a death for the first time does have a serious impact in your life.

## Hussain

I enjoyed every day of the program. I got to appreciate health and wellness more than ever by watching patients struggle every day. I also appreciated the doctors' job more when I saw how they devote their time and efforts to treat their patients.

## Aljazi

On the fourth day, I went to the pediatrics catheter lab. There, I scrubbed into the operating room with a doctor who explained the case and the procedure. It was truly fascinating how I had a full understanding of the case as well as the procedure. Awestruck, I felt a range of emotions as I got to see professionals at work, and how they saved these patients' lives with their dedication and devotion. I realized that day more than ever that I am indeed on the right track.

## Ghadeer

As Hussain witnessed a life-changing event and Ghadeer and Aljazi appreciated medicine even more, Yasmeen had the opportunity to welcome the new inhabitants of planet earth in the obstetrics and gynecology ward. In a surprising twist of fate, she met the doctor who welcomed her into the world. Somehow the doctor recognized Yasmeen 17 years later!



# EleMOLEments by Hasan Alroobi

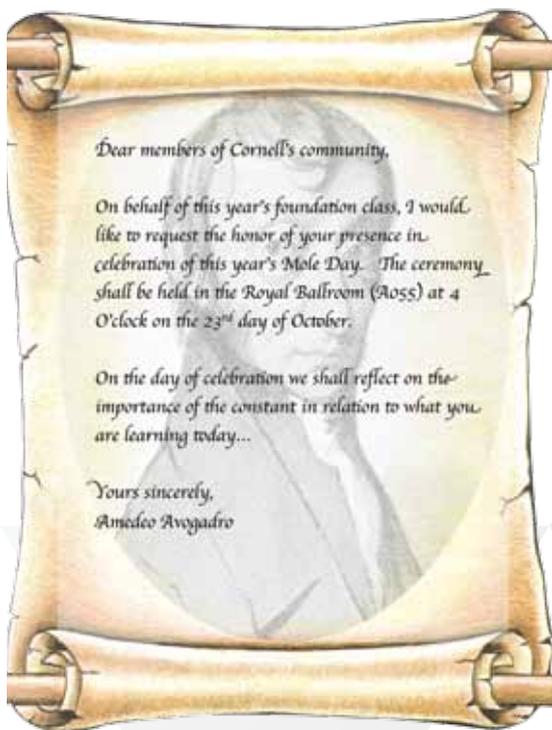


Mole Day is an annual homage to the scientist Avogadro for developing the famed "Avogadro's number":  $6.022140857 \times 10^{23}$ . The Foundation class, from the beginning of the academic year, was determined to host an event that the WCM-Q community would enjoy. We started preparing early by putting together a script for a play, ordering costumes online, and spending a lot of time in meetings with staff and technicians to provide a spot for the event with all that we required.

Before the Mole Day festivities, we began the day by throwing Lulwa a birthday party. With that, we could commence the event where Noor Al-Nassr kicked things off by giving the audience what to expect on this exciting occasion. Entertaining the attendees, Abdulla Al-Marri, Hussain Hussain, Nada Al-Asharam, and I all performed a fun-filled play.

Next, Aljazi Al-Khalifa and Ghadeer Abdelwahab challenged the audience's knowledge with a jeopardy game. The winner was awarded a spectacular prize of a CORNELL T-SHIRT. In charge of all games and fun stations were Najla Al-Eshaq, Lulwa Al-Haddad, and Aisha Al-Basti—everyone made sure to stop by. Finally, when dozens of guests came to thank us for hosting such an event, it meant a lot to us as we reflected on the day. Hosting the Mole Day celebrations made us a real family after all the challenges we went through to make the event possible.







Foundation Majlis



Movie Night



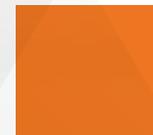
Faculty vs



Movie night



Foundation Picnic

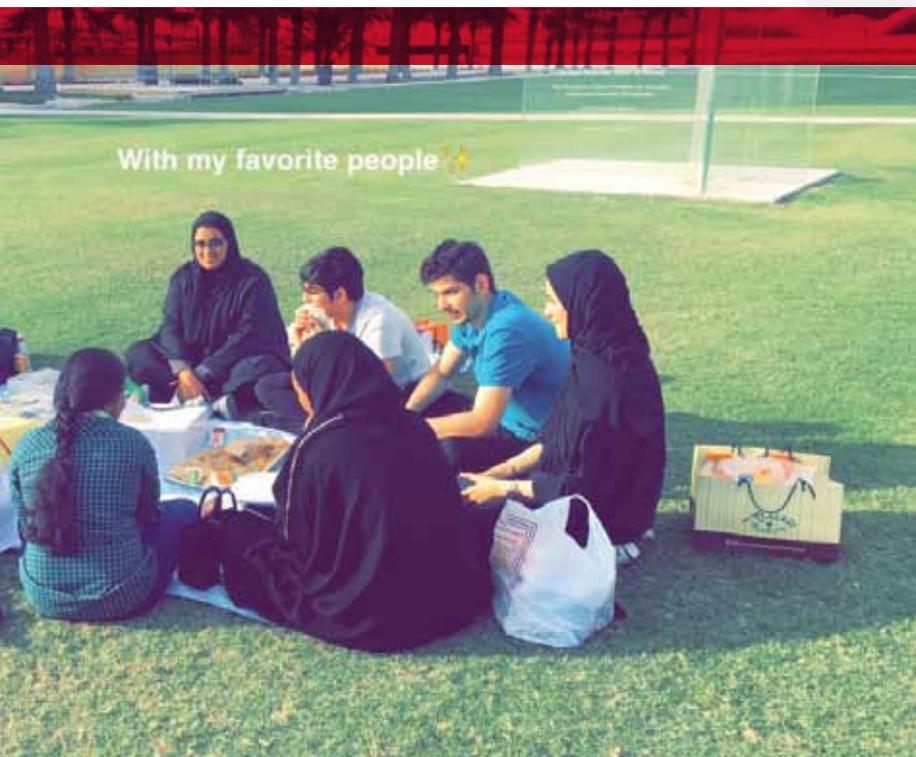


Adidas corner





s. Students - Football Match for Charity

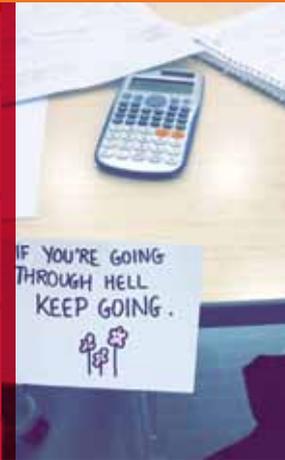


The Foundation year was full of unforgettable moments full of fun, laughs, and excitement. Even in the sad moments, we could find many reasons to be happy. Some of these happy moments were captured because they deserve being shared with others. Each picture on this page has a delightful story behind it, though each may not appear to be super animated. I wish there were a way to describe all the feelings and the joy in these moments, which will remain immortal in our memory.



When you are trying to offer kindness but your face doesn't show it...

When I try to convince myself to not give up...



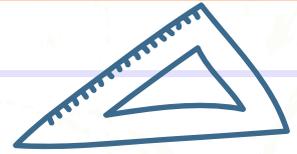
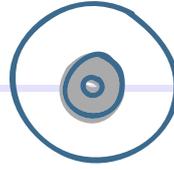
When guys line up to get blusher...



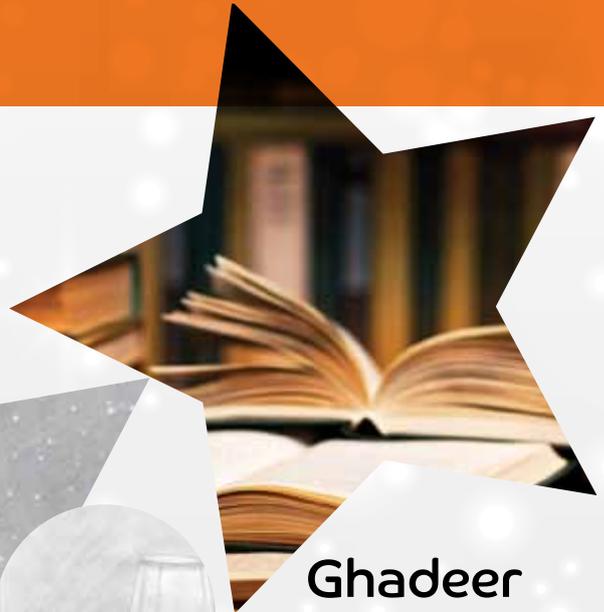
When you are locked outside of the classroom and your classmate doesn't let you in...



$$E = mc^2$$



In physics, we were able to link theory to real life situations. Forces, under the topic of Newton's Laws, required the most experimentation. Sometimes, it was hard to imagine a scenario, so we had to experiment by using simple tools to provide a visual representation of the question.



**Ghadeer**  
Speed Reader



**Aisha**  
Artist



**Abdulla**  
Master of Accents

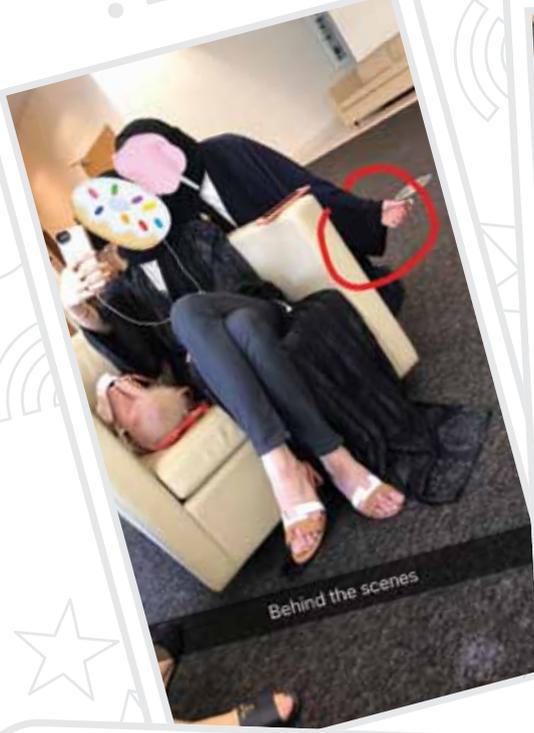
**Najla**  
Songbird

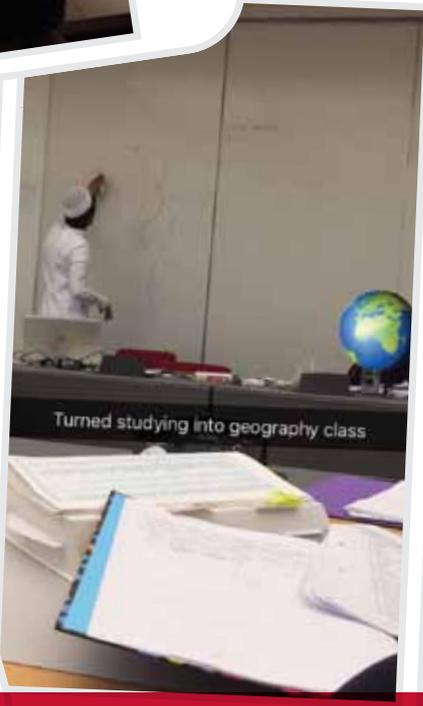


**Hussain**  
Pianist











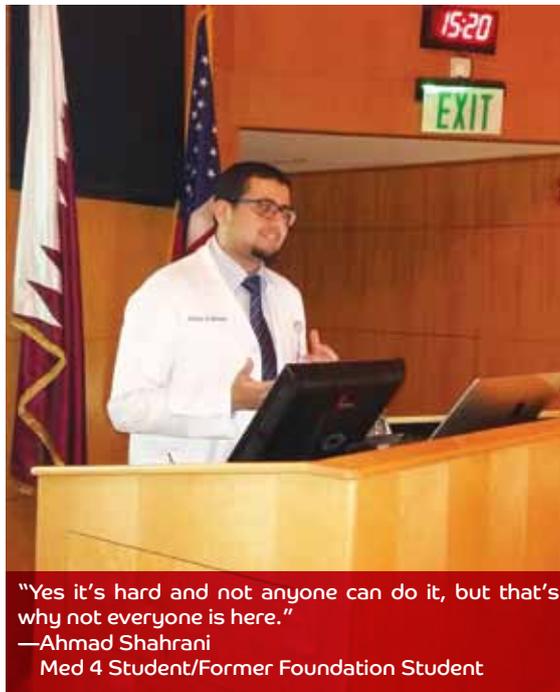
Every Tuesday afternoon, in the Medical Career Seminar sessions, we had guest physicians who would come and speak to us about their areas of expertise in medicine and research. Some of them gave us tips on how to succeed; a few told us stories of how they made it through medical school; others explained their different fields and what they do on a daily basis. We learned a great deal about medicine in general and all its aspects. We were very lucky to have these sessions planned, as they inspired, motivated, and gave us a glimpse into the medical world.



"There will be some challenges, but remember to take a step back and look at the whole picture."  
—Dr. Javaid Sheikh  
Psychiatry



"Be honest to yourself, patients, and colleagues."  
—Dr. Robert Crone  
Pediatrics



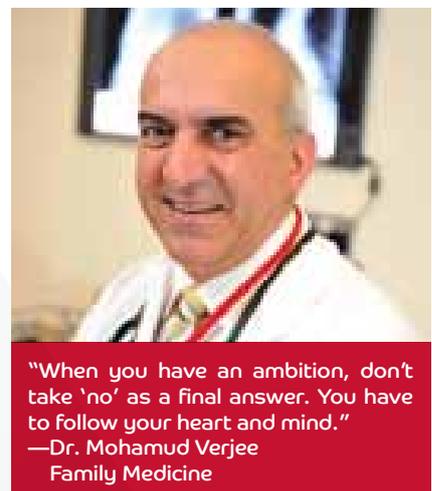
"Yes it's hard and not anyone can do it, but that's why not everyone is here."  
—Ahmad Shahrani  
Med 4 Student/Former Foundation Student



"Don't study with the aim of passing exams—study with the aim of becoming a good doctor."  
—Dr. Samar Al Emadi  
Rheumatology



Dr. Noora Al-Shahwani, alumna  
Surgical Resident



"When you have an ambition, don't take 'no' as a final answer. You have to follow your heart and mind."  
—Dr. Mohamud Verjee  
Family Medicine



"Begin to know yourself before you start to know your surroundings."

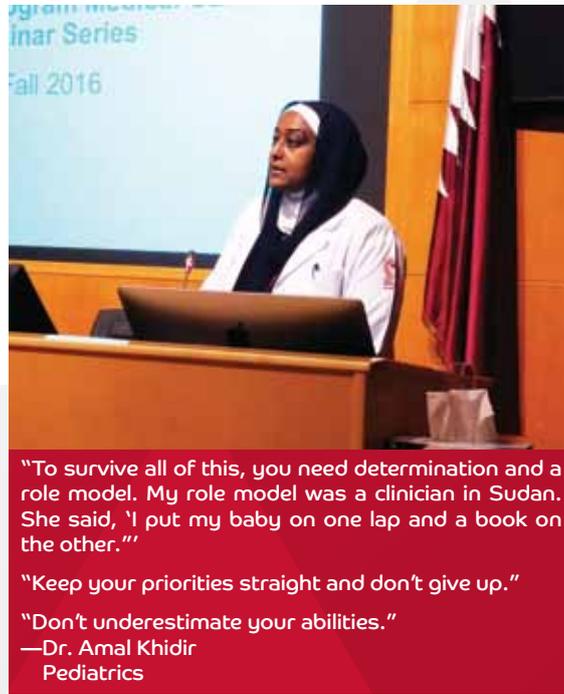
"Use your talents to build yourself."  
—Dr. Wafaa Al Yazeedi  
Clinical Rehabilitation



Dr. Noor Suleiman, alumna  
Internal Medicine



Dr. Khaled Machaca  
Physiology & Biophysics



"To survive all of this, you need determination and a role model. My role model was a clinician in Sudan. She said, 'I put my baby on one lap and a book on the other.'"

"Keep your priorities straight and don't give up."  
"Don't underestimate your abilities."  
—Dr. Amal Khidir  
Pediatrics



Dr. Hind Rifai  
Psychiatry



Dr. Bakr Nour  
Surgery



Dr. Ravinder Mamtani  
Integrative Medicine



Med 4 Students: "Work as a team, organize your time, don't compare yourselves to each other."  
(from left to right) Abdulaziz Al-Thani, Abdulrahman Al-Abdulmalek, AlJazi Al Mana, Fatima Al-Khori, Fatima Al-Baqali



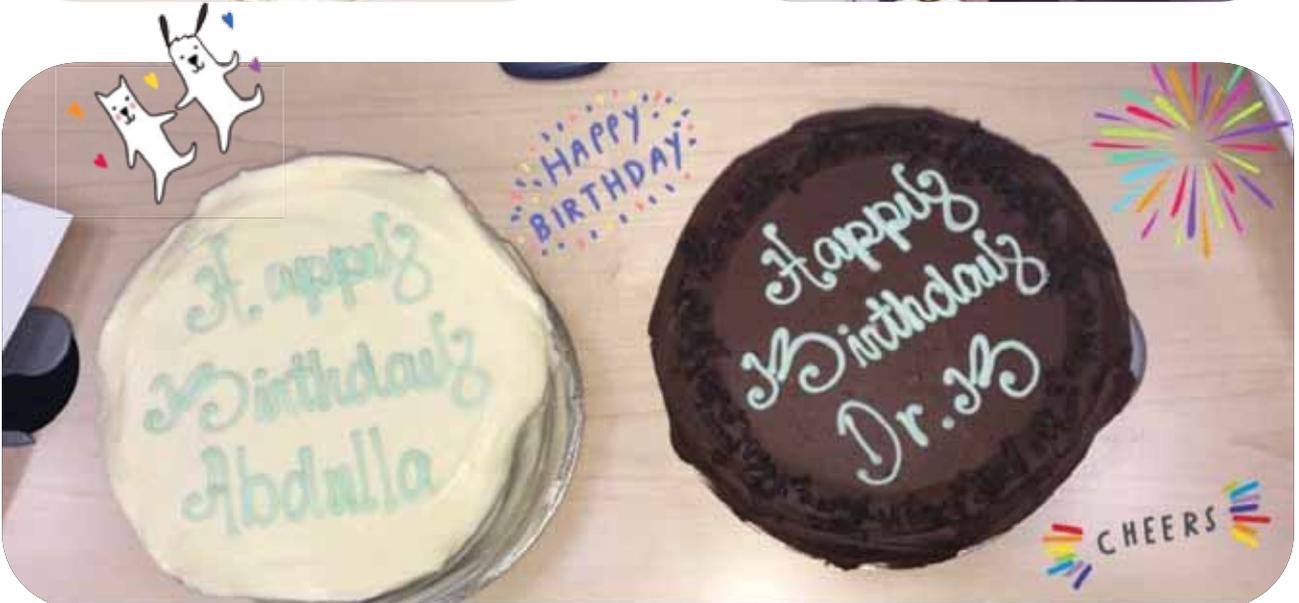
Our visit to the Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al-Thani Museum was quite enjoyable. We had the opportunity to see a very diverse and unique collection of antiques from all around the globe. The museum also took us on a brief journey through the history of some of the most widely practiced religions with paintings and statues portraying their beliefs. However, what I believe we enjoyed the most was the outstanding collection of over 600 beautiful cars!





Do you know what the best artifact here is? ..This mirror—because I can see myself. —Abdulla

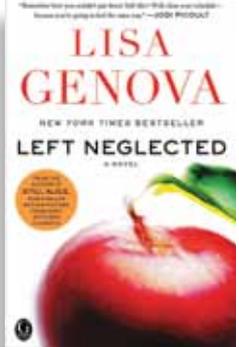
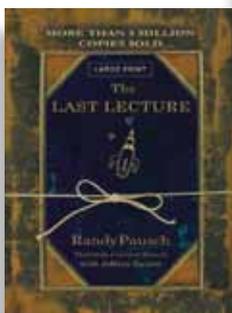
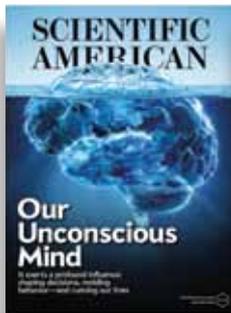
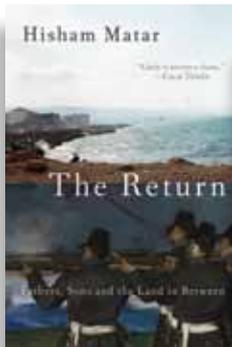
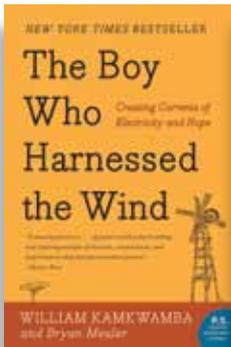






Throughout the first semester, we read an article from a different Scientific American magazine each week. Each student would choose an article of his or her liking and would read for 10-20 minutes. In the remaining time, we had the time to discuss the articles and give everyone (even those who had chosen other articles) a chance to express their opinions about the topic. What we enjoyed the most were the heated discussions of major topics!

**KEEP CALM AND READ ON**  
by Aisha Al-Basti



The article that caught my interest the most was from the Scientific American Mind magazine, which explained how colors could determine the victory of a contestant in sports like boxing, freestyle wrestling, and taekwondo. Apparently, the color red improves one's chances of victory in the martial arts category; it is presumed that contestants wearing red gear exude dominance and power, which intimidates their opponents. Another explanation was that the referees were more likely to favor an athlete who wore red sports gear. At first glance, this topic may seem pointless to doctors, but red seems like a color that they should avoid wearing in order to put patients at ease, seeing that it exudes aggression. – Abdulla Al-Marri









During orientation, I met all of my peers. Hiding my true self behind a veneer of quiet reservation, I maintained a serious expression. Upon seeing my classmates for the first time, I had some preconceived notions about them. For some reason, I thought that in this class I would only meet other serious, rigid students and in Cornell, a serious, fun-free educational environment; instead, half of my expectations were true. After a couple of days of orientation, some funny situations shattered the ice between us. These situations have bonded us together and made our

friendship stronger. Without them, we would probably stay strangers in a classroom.

Sometimes we tackle exciting topics while hanging out together, reinforcing our bonds. Other times we face difficult challenges, and the only way to solve them is to go through them.

Jokes and fun aside, Cornell is known for its challenging curriculum that has sometimes made me lose hope on an exam or an assignment, and I would give up and dwell in my self-defeat.



Apparently, none of the people in my class like the idea of me lingering in the darkest corner of my mind (though the skull of a human does not have a corner; you get the point), so they drag me out of there and push me until I cross the finish line. I hated them for doing so. Why not leave me be? But then I look at them, and I get my answers: "You can do it," "You'd better not give up now," "We are not going to leave until you do it." Thanks to them, I didn't give up. This is the one game that I played in which its loss was, in the end, my victory—the prize was success and an everlasting friendship.

I am grateful that I got to know the people in Foundation. I won't forget the lessons and experiences from this year. We will venture forward knowing that we will succeed together.

*Thank you, my friends.  
I can't wait to see what  
the future holds for us.*





**BLUNT**

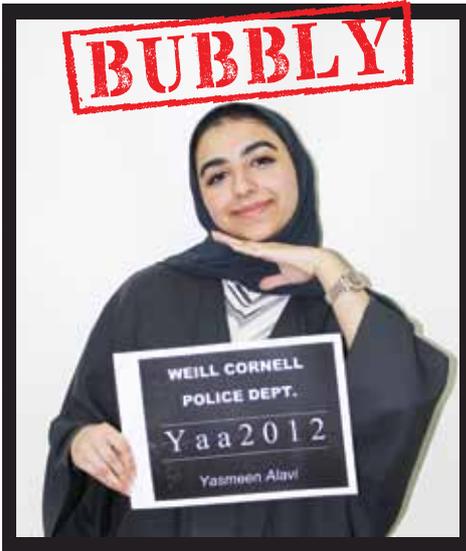


7'0"

6'5"

6'0"

**BUBBLY**



5'5"

5'0"

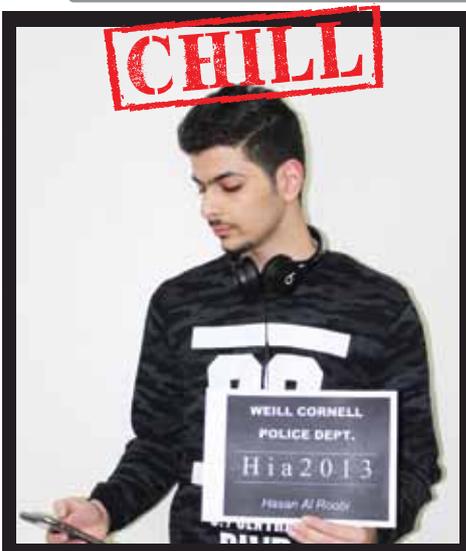
4'5"

4'0"

**CALM**



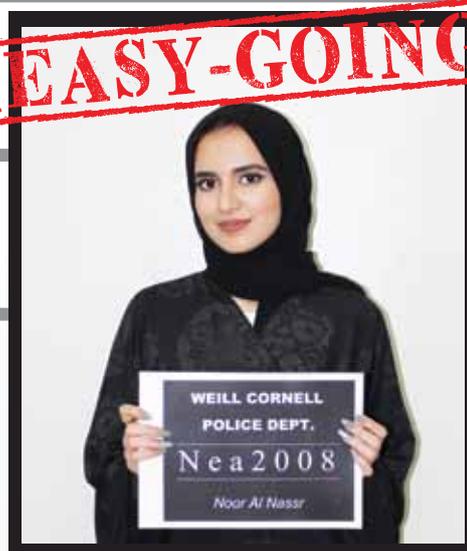
**CHILL**



3'5"

3'0"

**EASY-GOING**



# Foundation Students In One Word

**HYPERACTIVE**



7'0"

6'5"

6'0"

**FRANKSTER**



**SARCASTIC**



5'5"

5'0"

4'5"

**SAVAGE**



**MOTHERLY**



4'0"

3'5"

3'0"



*The road to your goal will not be all smooth, but rest assured, the journey will be worthwhile. You will climb the mountain and you will survive. You will climb the mountain and you will survive. You will climb the mountain and you will survive. And you will survive.*

It is the first day in a new place, all white, not much sunlight. A place where one is no longer distinguished for getting high marks, for the place is full of that. An unfamiliar setting full of new faces. Then comes the next day, then the next, then the next. You realize that the environment is very supportive and friendly. Before you know it, the unfamiliar place feels like home and the faces that were once new will have become your friends or professors--some will have even been family to you!

The road to your goal will not be all smooth, but rest assured, the journey will

be worthwhile. The notion of spending six or seven years studying is already dreadful enough, let alone the endless assignments you will be swamped with. You will often be stressed, but you will learn to deal with that stress. You will struggle with trying not to procrastinate on your work, and you will struggle even more trying to manage your time and balance your life. But you will learn to deal with those too. You will adapt to the environment, and with hard work and the support of your family, friends, and mentors, you will be better at it. Undoubtedly, it will not be easy. At some point, you will even start having doubts:

*The journey could be many things,  
but impossible is not one of them.*

*Don't be disheartened  
for quitters quit not due to their  
inability but their lack of determination. Put your heart and  
mind in it and work for it, and you will  
survive. You will climb the mountain, and you will reach the peak.  
And you will survive.*

Is this the right place for me? Is it worth it? Yes. Yes. It is worth it. Look inside your heart, and you will see that fire burning, and you will know that you are in the right place.

The journey could be many things, but impossible is not one of them. You will meet doctors and medical students naturally at more advanced levels than you; if they were able to make it and reach this point, then so are you. Having a goal and seeing it come to fruition is what makes the whole journey worth every challenging moment. In fact, every hurdle will make you stronger and every step will

pull you closer to your goal. It is similar to climbing a mountain: while it gets harder with every step, each step takes you forward, closer to the peak. Yes, there will be times when you feel as if the weight of the world is on your shoulders. Times when you feel that you are not enough, that you are weaker than what it takes to fulfill your dream. Don't be disheartened and abandon your dream though, for quitters quit not due to their inability but their lack of determination. Put your heart and mind in it. Think about your goal and work for it, and you will survive. You will climb the mountain, and you will reach the peak. And you will survive.



Weill Cornell  
Medicine-Qatar

# The Ins and Outsof Co-education by Nada Alsharam



Having come from an all-girls school, I always felt that I would have so many struggles in dealing with my male classmates. However, that worrying soon went away, and I was able to deal with them with no issues. Coming from an all-girls' school environment, I always felt that to some extent, many of the students had the same perspective. But, dealing with the other gender in college made me realize that there are many more perspectives; this has opened many opportunities for discussion that will help understand topics more deeply and effectively. Also, as a person who aspires to be a doctor, learning how to interact with males now will make it so much easier to communicate with all my colleagues and patients in the future.





# Foundation Program Pathway to Success