



WEILL CORNELL MEDICAL COLLEGE IN QATAR

PRESS RELEASE

WEILL CORNELL MEDICAL COLLEGE IN QATAR: 2004 ACADEMIC YEAR OPENS IN NEW BUILDING

*Orientation and Opening Exercises to take place in
new WCMC-Q Building for first time*

Doha, Qatar

August 27, 2003

New and returning students gather for Orientation and Opening Exercises at Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar (WCMC-Q) on Saturday August 30, as the doors of the new WCMC-Q building in Education City open to admit students for the first time.

The 4-day program of events provides incoming students with a wide-ranging introduction to College life, prepares them for the challenges that lie ahead and helps them bond with their colleagues, faculty and staff.

The program culminates in Opening Exercises on Tuesday, September 2, a rite of passage for the freshmen. There will be formal presentation of the Cornell University Pre-medical Program pin by faculty to each incoming student.

There are some 34 students in the incoming class, a 36% increase over last year. Of these, 14 are Qatari nationals. Other students are from countries in the Middle East and the Sub-continent; there are also American citizens of Middle Eastern background among the group. They have been selected from applicants from across the world through a rigorous admission process that is the same as that for Cornell University in the U.S.

The purpose of Orientation, part of the tradition of North American universities, is to help new students adjust to the change from high school to university. Lectures, workshops and discussions focus on a range of subjects from study skills to legal issues to student organization.

This year, WCMC-Q students will join in the Cornell University Summer Reading Project. Like their counterparts at Cornell in Ithaca, New York State, they will meet with faculty, teaching assistants and staff, to discuss Sophocles' play *Antigone*. The experience offers the students an opportunity to enjoy a humanities-based activity, in line with the broader pre-medical education of American universities, before they begin studying the sciences basic to medicine.

Commenting on the program, Dean of WCMC-Q, Daniel R. Alonso M.D., said: "we are delighted to welcome pre-medical students at this momentous time in the development of the College. Our Orientation has been carefully planned to help them settle in as they embark on the immensely challenging, yet rewarding, journey to become doctors of medicine. We look forward with excitement to the year ahead, and to continuing our work to create a strong academic community here at WCMC-Q, part of the wider campus at Education City."

Office of Public Affairs
Education City
P.O. Box 24144
Doha, Qatar
Fax: +974 492 8444

Norma Haddad
Director, Public Affairs
Phone: +974 492 8650
Email:
noh2003@med.cornell.edu

Sylvia Ismail
Associate Editor
Phone: +974 492 8651
Email:
smi2001@med.cornell.edu



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Meanwhile, the parents of the students will be able to attend an afternoon Orientation designed specifically for them. At this session, faculty and staff will explain the demands of studying at Cornell University, and the commitment and dedication that their children will need to demonstrate in order to succeed in their studies.

Director of Student Affairs, Charles Paragg, explained: "we want parents to know about the resources available for the students – from academic support to library and information technology application to education. We want to assure them that we are here to help students succeed as they face new issues and challenges, as they transit from high school to college. And we would like parents to help us with this."

In another development this summer, WCMC-Q unveiled its new Website. Designed for optimal usability, the regularly updated Website gives detailed information about the College, the programs it offers, the admissions process, student life, and upcoming events, as well as a wealth of links to other, related sites.

The WCMC-Q site is at www.med.cornell.edu/qatar

Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar (WCMC-Q) opened in September 2002, the first American medical school ever to offer its Doctor of Medicine degree overseas. The College has set up a two-year Pre-medical Program in the sciences basic to medicine, to be followed by a four-year Medical Program leading to the Cornell University M.D. degree. There are separate admission processes for each Program.

For the first year, WCMC-Q was housed in temporary accommodation in a wing of Qatar Academy, while its permanent home was constructed in Education City nearby. In August 2003, the College moved to the new building. Commissioned by the Qatar Foundation and designed by renowned architect Arata Isozaki, the building features extensive laboratory space, 4 lecture halls, including two uniquely shaped ovoids, and state-of-the-art technology that gives faculty and students at the College rapid access to the resources of Cornell University in the United States.

For further information, contact Director of Public Affairs, Norma Haddad, on tel. 4928650, fax 4928444, e-mail noh2003@med.cornell.edu

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