



WEILL CORNELL
MEDICAL COLLEGE IN QATAR



PRESS RELEASE

Teaching by inquiry key for physics educators

Doha, Qatar

September 14, 2006

Physics teachers across Qatar are learning new ways to actively involve their students in experiments by participating in a series of training workshops this year.

Coordinated by Qatar Physics Society in collaboration with Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar (WCMC-Q) and Qatar University (QU), four workshops are planned for the 2006 academic year, with the first one being hosted by WCMC-Q on September 14 and 17.

The workshops, *New Frontiers in Learning and Teaching*, are one outcome of the Qatar Physics Society's formation during the first Qatar Physics Conference at QU last December, and follow the group's initial meeting at WCMC-Q last April, which had a strong focus on teacher education in physics.

More than 50 teachers from Ministry of Education schools and Supreme Education Council (SEC) independent schools are expected to attend the first workshop, which has been split into two sessions to allow as many teachers as possible to attend.

The first session (Thursday, September 14) looks at teaching laboratory-based units on electric circuits and features demonstrations of experiments teachers could use in the classroom, a hands-on lesson in the laboratory, and discussions about the content of future workshops.

WCMC-Q professor of physics Dr. Roger Hinrichs said the workshop series would focus on teaching physics by inquiry - in keeping with the SEC's Education Institute Curriculum of Standards for the State of Qatar.

"During the workshops, teachers will be learning the material in the same way their students will learn – by observation, exploration and hands-on activities," Dr. Hinrichs said.

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“The laboratory-based units are designed to develop scientific reasoning skills as well as give students experience in the manipulation of materials. We know from physics education research that students learn content and problem-solving skills better if they are taught in this way.”

QU associate professor of physics Dr. Ilham Al-Qaradawi said the workshops were in line with Qatar Physics Society’s mission to advance and disseminate knowledge of, and information about, physics and its applications.

“The best way to do this is through quality physics education,” she said. “Hopefully the workshops will help teachers learn new methods of teaching that will apply to all areas of physics as well as other subjects they might teach.

“With science and technology becoming more and more prevalent, we are seeking to raise the level of students everywhere. This is particularly pertinent to QU and WCMC-Q, as students who are in high school now will be applying to such universities in coming years.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Established in partnership with the Qatar Foundation, WCMC-Q is part of the Weill Medical College of Cornell University, the first American institution to offer its M.D. degree overseas. WCMC-Q offers a complete and integrated educational program, comprising the two-year Pre-medical Program, followed by the four-year Medical Program, with teaching by Cornell faculty. There are separate admission processes for each Program, guided by the standards of admission in use at Cornell University in Ithaca, and its Medical College in New York City.

Website: www.qatar-med.cornell.edu

The Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development is a private, nonprofit, chartered organization founded in 1995 aiming to develop and utilize human potential through a network of centers and campuses. In 1997 the Foundation set out on a strategic plan to create an Education City that is composed of a number of research centers, branch campuses of world-class educational institutions and a Science Park that acts as an incubator for research, responds to the immediate needs of industry and anticipates future necessities for development. In October 2003, Education City was officially inaugurated and it is now home to branches of some of the world's leading universities and research centers.

Website: www.qf.org.qa

Qatar University, founded in 1977, is the country's major institution of higher education committed to fostering an intellectual and scholarly community characterized by teaching excellence, free and respectful exchange of ideas, and a commitment to rigorous inquiry that serves the needs of the Qatari community. It comprises five colleges: the College of Education, the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Shariaa & Islamic Studies, the College of Engineering, the College of Law and the College of Business & Economics, and offers a sound educational and research infrastructure and a broad range of academic programs.

Website: www.qu.edu.qa

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