



## PRESS RELEASE

### **WCMC-Q students head to the US for summer research**

Doha, July 9, 2007: Twenty-two students from Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar (WCMC-Q) will spend the summer in the US, where they will join leading researchers in the labs of Cornell University and Weill Cornell Medical College.

Ten medical students left Doha International Airport last week to join their colleagues – a group of 12 pre-medical students – who left for the US in June. They will spend eight weeks working at the cutting edge of biomedical research and living the daily life of Cornell students in the US.

Owing to the success of previous fellowships and the growing number of students at WCMC-Q, Vice Dean for Research, Dr. Javaid Sheikh, has increased the number of placements for both pre-medical and medical students this year.

“There’s a great deal of enthusiasm for the fellowships expressed by the students, and it’s highly thought of by the faculty. They take great pride in seeing their students complement their intuition with scientific method,” he commented.

The pre-medical students will be involved in research across a diverse cross-section of areas such as physiology, genetics and virology, while the medical students’ research will be more closely tied to clinical disorders, for example two students will be working in embryonic stem cell research geared towards finding cures for cardiovascular illnesses.

Medical students Zuhair Salah and Mohamad Al Kadi said the experience would give them an insight into the way researchers think and the way knowledge is created.

Qatari medical student Mohamad Al Kadi, who will investigate the trafficking of endotoxins produced by cancer alongside Dr. Sushmita Mukhrjee in WCMC New York, said he was keen to get more experience in the lab so he could decide between becoming a physician or a researcher. Many of the research projects at Weill Cornell in New York have been established for a long time, so it’s a good place to go for experience,” he said.

Another medical student Zuhair Salah said: “Research is very connected to medicine now days. Most of the things that are discovered in medicine are discovered in labs. A lot of doctors are going into research now, even if they still practise.” His research in the area of virology will involve work on a vaccine for the parainfluenza virus. He will be based at Weill Cornell in New York City, and work alongside pediatrician and scientist Dr. Anne Moscona.

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“I’m interested in research and pediatrics, so I’m looking forward to seeing how Dr. Moscona mixes the clinical aspect with the research aspect,” he said.

For some, like pre-medical student Tania Jaber, it will be their first visit to the United States. “I am so excited, partly because I’ll get the chance to explore a new country and also because I’ll be experiencing a new aspect of medicine,” she said. “The lab I’ll be working in focuses on genetics and biochemistry. I’m sure the experience will be enriching.”

Associate Dean for pre-medical education, Dr. David Robertshaw, who travels to the US with the students, sees multiple advantages to the fellowships.

“Firstly they get a better understanding of how knowledge is generated,” he said. “Secondly they gain exposure to a dynamic research environment and they may well consider becoming academic leaders of the future.”

Dr. Sheikh is equally positive about the benefits of the fellowships to students’ development.

“These students are used to absorbing information rather than testing it out systematically,” he said. “What they are experiencing in the fellowships is the whole process of learning how to create new knowledge. It is a different, counter-intuitive skill set from being in lectures.”

On completion of their fellowships the students produce a report and present their hypothesis, research methodology and results to an audience of faculty and students in both the US and Qatar.

## **Ends**

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

**Established in partnership with 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](http://www.qatar-med.cornell.edu)

**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](http://www.qf.org.qa)

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