



Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar



PRESS RELEASE

WCMC-Q Looks To the Future At Opening Exercises

Doha, August 18, 2008 - Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar (WCMC-Q), the first American medical college to graduate doctors outside of the United States, welcomed its 7th class of Pre-medical students and 3rd class of Foundation Program students during orientation activities, August 11-14.

With 80 entering students, enrollment at the Medical School remains at capacity for the second consecutive year. This intake of students saw a significant increase in the number of Qatari students enrolling, with 28 in the Pre-medical and Foundation Programs combined. The number of male students beginning their Pre-medical studies at WCMC-Q also rose this year to equal the number of females.

WCMC-Q graduated its historic inaugural class of medical students in May of 2008. And while pride in the achievement of the recent graduates permeated the orientation, the focus of proceedings remained firmly on the excellence and potential of the entering class.

Dr. Daniel R. Alonso, the Dean of Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar, reminded the freshmen of the example set by the recent graduates while also recognizing the new students' unique qualities.

"Every year at this time, when we admit a new class, there is a feeling of renewal," Dr. Alonso told parents of the freshmen. "They bring new blood and new life to the college."

Among the entering class' distinguishing qualities, Alonso highlighted their ongoing involvement with the arts, the environment, and particularly with volunteering.

Freshman Pre-medical student Omar Kallas displayed that spirit of volunteerism in his native Pakistan where he raised funds for various charities, helped at blood drives and gave time at several local hospitals.

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“Initially it was more about the CV,” Kallas admitted, “but later onwards I realized it was more about your passion towards medicine. To do something about the suffering of humanity is the best thing.”

In addition to its unique traits, the entering class is also very much a part Weill Cornell tradition and high standards. Dean Alonso reminded them that, in being selected, they have proven themselves to be “the best of the best”.

Mustafa AbdulJabar was proud of the accomplishment living up to those standards reflected. “I feel very lucky and confident at the same time,” he said, “because I got accepted in such a university.”

That accomplishment held different meaning for each individual. To Mais Al-kawaz, it meant an opportunity to take what she will learn back to her home in Iraq. “For me to be a doctor is really so personal for me more than anything else,” she explained. “I really want to help there.”

While the majority of the freshmen have entered the Class of 2014, 20 have joined a year-long Foundation Program designed to nurture their abilities to better prepare them for the Pre-medical Program.

Covering the basic sciences, mathematics and English writing, with an emphasis on critical thinking and problem solving, it gives participants the opportunity to build on their skills in core areas and thereby enhance their chances to succeed in the Pre-medical Program.

This entering class has joined WCMC-Q in a period of remarkable growth that will witness the expansion of its research program and the launching of the Sidra Medical and Research Center, a state-of-the-art teaching hospital developed as part of the Medical School’s partnership with the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development.

These initiatives are designed to promote WCMC-Q’s vision for the future of healthcare in the region and advance the Medical College’s triple mission: a dedication to excellence in education, top-quality patient care and research at the frontiers of biomedical science.

Once complete, these elements will form the basis of an academic medical center where, in the words of Dr. Alonso, WCMC-students “will be learning in an environment in which they will become, unquestionably, the best doctors of tomorrow.”

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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

About Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development

Founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of Qatar, and chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned, Qatar Foundation is a private, non-profit organization committed to the principle that a nation's greatest natural resource is its people.

The headquarters of Qatar Foundation are located within its flagship project, Education City, a fourteen million square-meter campus which hosts numerous progressive learning institutions and centers of research, including branch campuses of five of the world's leading universities, plus a cutting-edge research and development center. Qatar Foundation also works to enhance the quality of life in Qatar by investing in community health and development.

For more information please visit: <http://www.qf.org.qa/>

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