



PRESS RELEASE

Open Forum Helps Promote Medical Field to Qatari Students

Doha, March 11, 2010 - Principals and counselors from 23 independent and semi-independent high schools took part today in the first Local Schools Open Forum at Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar. Some 50 participants were invited to the WCMC-Q campus to learn about programs offered at the Medical College and see the facilities first hand.

The main purpose of the forum is to offer an opportunity of an open discussion among all the stakeholders of the educational process and to work together with the local schools and the Supreme Education Council to promote the medical field to Qatari students.

“We gratefully acknowledge the vital role these dedicated education professionals play in our mission to inspire students in Qatar—and the Qatari population in particular—to careers in medicine and biomedical research,” said Dr. Javaid I. Sheikh, Dean of WCMC-Q, who delivered the opening address.

Two main programs were announced by Dr. Sheikh to attract more Qatari students to the field of medicine. The first is an Essay Competition offering an opportunity to the top two winners to receive a fully funded “Doctor of the Future” scholarship at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York, where they will visit and participate in prominent research laboratories. The second is three summer programs geared towards youth in Qatar to explore their intellectual capabilities in a college setting.

“Our challenge over the next years is to promote the medical sciences in all aspects, whether it be as medical doctors, research developers or technicians,” said Dr. Hessa Al Aali, director of the Scholarship Office of the Supreme Education Council, discussing the relationship between the college and the SEC during her closing remarks.

“But from the challenges facing WCMC-Q in training future medical personnel, come opportunities for growth and development,” she added.

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As part of the day's program, Dr. Michael Johnson, associate dean for premedical education, delivered a presentation on the WCMC-Q Premedical and Foundation Programs, and gave the principals and counselors a picture of the qualities of a successful applicant and student at the Medical College.

Also speaking at the Open Forum were Dr. Hoda Mohamed Bouslama, Senior Consultant on Policy Research and Strategic Planning of the Supreme Education Council and Mrs. Buthaina Al Noaimi, Director of Pre-university Education at Qatar Foundation.

Participants also had the opportunity to ask questions directly to WCMC-Q faculty and students during a panel discussion. Principals were able to interact with some of their Qatari graduates who are currently studying in the Premedical and Medical Programs at WCMC-Q. Discussion about how to best prepare the students to face the challenges of the Premedical and Medical Programs were also addressed during the forum.

The visit ended with a tour of the WCMC-Q building, including its state-of-the-art laboratories, classrooms, and the region's first Clinical Skills training center.

Events such as these are indicative of WCMC-Q's ongoing outreach efforts to Qatar's students, counselors, and teachers. Outcomes from this pilot Open Forum will guide the development of future sessions, which organizers hope to expand to include principals from even more area schools.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Established in partnership with Qatar Foundation, WCMC-Q is part of Weill Cornell Medical College (WCMC), the first US institution to offer its MD degree overseas. WCMC-Q shares the tripartite mission of WCMC: a dedication to excellence in education, patient care, and biomedical research.

WCMC-Q offers an innovative program of pre-medical and medical studies leading to the Cornell University MD degree. Teaching is by Cornell and Weill Cornell faculty,

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including physicians at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) who hold Weill Cornell appointments.

Faculty and staff of WCMC-Q and WCMC are building the research capacity of Qatar in partnership with Qatar Foundation, HMC, the Ministry of Health and other organizations, with a focus on high quality research in genetic and molecular medicine, women's and children's health, gene therapy, and vaccine development.

Website: www.qatar-weill.cornell.edu

About Qatar Foundation

Founded in 1995 by decree of His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of Qatar, Qatar Foundation is a non-profit organization focusing on education, scientific research and community development. Under Qatar Foundation's umbrella are Education City, which comprises elite universities, several academic and training programmes and Qatar Science and Technology Park, which boasts more than 21 world class companies involved in scientific research and development.

Chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned, Qatar Foundation also aims to enhance lives through community development initiatives including Doha Debates, Reach out To Asia and Al Jazeera Childrens Channel.

Joint venture partnerships in the areas of design, ICT, telecommunications, policy studies and event management contribute to fulfilling the objectives of Qatar Foundation.

Website: www.qf.org.qa

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