



PRESS RELEASE

WCMC-Q Among First Middle East Universities at World Debates

Doha, January 18, 2009 - The Debating Society from Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar (WCMC-Q) and teams from four other local colleges competed in the 29th World Universities Debating Championships, marking the first time universities from the Middle East have taken part in the competition.

This year's championships, billed as the largest academic event in the world, took place over the New Year period at University College Cork in Ireland. The teams from Qatar joined those from more than 40 other countries for eight days of rigorous mental sparring over a variety of challenging topics.

The topics are often complex and even provocative, for example, whether to criminalize all forms of adultery, or whether to desegregate the schools of Northern Ireland. The teams do not get to choose if they support or oppose the motion – that is assigned as well.

“Which doesn't mean that you have to accept those positions,” explains WCMC-Q Assistant Professor of Writing, Rodney Sharkey, PhD, who accompanied and coached the students. “Debating brings you closer to a more plural view of the world where people talk about things rather than fight about them. It also sharpens the mind.”

Evidence of growing interest in debating abounds in Qatar, from the popularity of Qatar Foundation's Doha Debates to the successful QatarDebate program in schools and universities throughout the country. That program culminated last year in the National Universities' Debating Competition, where WCMC-Q students took top honors.

Now that interest in debate is taking an international turn; in addition to WCMC-Q, Texas A&M at Qatar, Qatar University, Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar and College of the North Atlantic – Qatar also sent teams to this year's World Universities Championships.

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Mirroring their success in the national competition, the WCMC-Q teams overall fared best of the Qatar contingent with Team A, consisting of Marwa Saleh and Rahima Sanya (class of 2013), ranking highest among the Middle-East debutants. Also competing at the tournament were Anas Abou-Ismael (class of 2010) and Abdullah Firoze (class of 2013).

“It was a great honor for my colleagues and myself to be among the very first Arab teams to participate in the Worlds debating championship,” Anas Abou-Ismael said. He went on to thank Qatar Foundation, the WCMC-Q Student Affairs Office and Dr. Sharkey for making their participation possible.

For the WCMC-Q team, this was also a chance to meet their debating counterparts from the Cornell campus in Ithaca, New York. The teams had time to socialize during tournament social events, and even discussed the possibility of holding an annual debating event between the two campuses.

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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

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