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Qatar Computing Research Institute
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Press Release

QATAR COMPUTING RESEARCH INSTITUTE WELCOMES NEW BATCH OF STUDENTS TO SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

Hands-On Programme Offers Undergraduate Students An Opportunity To Conduct Research And Gain Real-World Experience

Doha, Qatar, 02 June 2015 - Enjoying its fourth consecutive year of success, the summer internship programme at Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI) kicked off on 10 May with a fresh batch of students. Under the theme 'Hot Summer-Cool Research', thirty-six highly-motivated undergraduate students from local, regional, and international universities are participating in the eight-week applied computing research training programme.

QCRI is a Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) national research institute that focuses on tackling large-scale computing challenges and addresses national priorities for growth and development. It supports QF in its mission to build the country's innovation and technology capacity.

The programme, which runs from 10 May to 2 July, provides a unique opportunity for talented undergraduate students studying computer science, computer engineering, and other related disciplines to explore and get hands-on experience in priority research areas for technology.

The growing interest in the programme is a testament to its continued success. Launched in 2012 with the modest participation of six interns, it has evolved into one of the most sought-after computer-science trainee programmes in Qatar. From among 110 students who applied this year, 36 select students hailing from universities in Qatar, Lebanon, India and the United States were accepted. Over the course of eight weeks, the interns will have the opportunity to develop their innovation and technical skills in a hands-on environment, under the mentorship of world-renowned QCRI researchers and scientists.

"This is the time of the year when QCRI is buzzing with the energy that our interns bring. We are excited about the learning opportunities this programme offers to our interns and mentors," said Dr Eman Fituri, the Director of Educational Initiatives at QCRI.

From making the next viral game, to designing a new architecture for the social web, to leveraging Artificial Intelligence for disaster response, the students will have the chance to work on real projects that are part of on-going research at QCRI. This year, students chose from

amongst 50 projects across QCRI's priority research areas: Arabic language technologies, computational science and engineering, cyber security, data analytics, distributed systems, and social computing. Each student is paired with a mentor based on their background and area of interest.

For many students, the internship is a stepping stone that links classwork with real-world experience. "I wanted to work on real projects. The QCRI internship will provide me with the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge and experience real life applications," said Abdul-Rahman Al Fayyad, a freshman student majoring in Social Computing at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar (CMU-Q).

Returning interns are proof of the programme's success. Qatari student Haya Al Thani, currently pursuing her Master of Science degree in Computer Science at Qatar University is returning to QCRI for the second time. "I had previously worked with the computational science and engineering group at QCRI. It was a great learning experience that encouraged me to come back. This year, I join the data analytics team, where we will be applying the same principles we learned previously, using a different approach. I find that very interesting. So far the project has proved to be challenging and rewarding as well. I am sure I will gain a great deal under the guidance of prominent QCRI scientists and mentors," she said.

The internship promises to be a valuable and gratifying experience to both students and mentors, "Every interaction is a gift. Connecting mentors and summer interns provides both parties with opportunities to learn. Hopefully, it will help them build and pursue a technical career path," said Heather Leson, who is a programme manager in social computing and a mentor at the QCRI summer internship programme.

In addition to conducting rigorous research, the students will have the chance to participate in educational and team building activities. These include weekly Lunch & Learn sessions, a mid-internship bowling event, and an end-of-internship Iftar. During the closing ceremony, due to be held in the third week of September, students will showcase their research, followed by a poster session. A judging panel composed of scientists from QCRI and faculty members from Hamad bin Khalifa University, Qatar University, and CMU-Q, will then select the best three posters, and prizes will be awarded to the winners.

The programme is part of a number of capacity building initiatives organised by QCRI, designed to mentor and cultivate tomorrow's researchers and scientists. The programme follows the 'Coding is Cool' workshop, organised recently by QCRI as a secondary-school student outreach

initiative encouraging students to explore the field of computer science and foster their interest in its real-world applications.

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About Qatar Computing Research Institute

Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI) is a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development and is a part of Hamad bin Khalifa University.

As a national research institute, QCRI supports Qatar Foundation’s mission to build Qatar’s innovation and technology capacity by focusing on large-scale computing challenges that address national priorities for growth and development, supporting Qatar’s transformation from a hydrocarbon-based economy to a knowledge-based economy.

In doing this, QCRI conducts world-class multidisciplinary computing research that is relevant to the needs of Qatar, the wider Arab region, and the world. It performs cutting-edge research in such areas as Arabic language technologies, social computing, data analytics, distributed systems, cyber security and computational science and engineering.

The research conducted at QCRI is aligned with the Qatar National Research Strategy and supports the strategic priorities outlined in the Qatar National Vision 2030. For more information, please visit www.qcri.qa.