

VCUQatar Dean Allyson Vanstone announces her final year

Doha, Qatar – Allyson Vanstone, dean of Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar since 2007, has announced that she will depart the university at the end of the academic year in June 2015.

During Dean Vanstone's tenure at VCUQatar, the university expanded its degree programs to visual arts and art history and introduced the Master of Fine Arts degree to the Gulf region. She has championed international and regional awareness of VCUQatar's critical position as leaders in art and design education in the Middle East through the cumulative successes of faculty and student research, the university's public programming, the Islamic Art Symposium, the biennial art and design conference Tasmeeem Doha, the Middle East Design Education Association (MEDEA) and Tasmeeem Journal, an open access, international design journal.

Under Vanstone's leadership the university established the Qatar House on the Virginia home campus; strengthened university partnerships with Qatar Foundation, Hamad Bin Khalifa University and fellow branch campuses, Qatar Museums and many other local and regional collaborators; emphasized broadening community programs to welcome children and Arabic learners; and oversaw the doubling of the university facilities and resources to support the expanded programs and future needs of the university.

More recently, Dean Vanstone initiated the development and implementation of VCUQatar's new strategic plan to fulfill the university's vision to strive to contribute to the vitality of human, social, economic and environmental development in Qatar and the region through creative innovation, expression and collaboration. "This realignment toward the Qatar National Vision 2030, the development of Hamad Bin Khalifa University and the Qatar Foundation 2013-23 strategic plan will bring with it exciting challenges that accompany change. With the inspirational and unwavering support of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, we work in a context of continuous, rapid growth with a focus on the future," said Dean Vanstone.

"I believe in the critical work that we undertake each day. At the greatest level, our work fulfills a deep commitment to building understanding across cultures through shared experiences. It is against this rewarding backdrop that I have shared my decision with Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts Dean Joseph Seipel to conclude my role as dean of VCUQatar at the end of this academic year. I believe the timing is right for me personally and for the school. I am motivated and committed to my final year at VCUQatar to support our ongoing progress and ambitions," added Dean Vanstone.

"I would like to thank the Qatar Foundation for their continuous support, Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser for her visionary leadership; and Dr. Abdulla Al-Thani, president of HBKU, for his unwavering support and guidance."

"The contributions that Dean Vanstone has made to VCUQatar are extraordinary," said VCU School of the Arts Dean Joseph Seipel. "During her tenure the school has emerged as a creative leader in the region and is recognized internationally for its transformative approach to arts education. She leaves having positioned VCUQatar in its rightful place as a creative center where the spirit of imagination and innovation lives on in the lives of the young people

she has touched. Her inspired leadership and generous spirit will be missed. We wish her the best as she moves into this next chapter of her life.”

Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts plans to conduct an international search for Dean Vanstone’s successor.

Note to Editors:

About Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar:

VCUQatar is the Qatar campus of the prestigious Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Richmond, Virginia. Established in 1998 through a partnership with Qatar Foundation, VCUQatar offers students the opportunity to earn a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in fashion design, graphic design, interior design and painting & printmaking, a Bachelor of Arts degree in art history and a Master of Fine Arts degree in design.

In addition to a comprehensive annual public events program that includes a wide range of exhibitions, lectures and fashion events, the University hosts the biennial international design conference Tasmeeem and the biennial Hamad bin Khalifa Islamic Art Symposium, attracting globally recognized designers, academics and thinkers while fostering sustainable, university-community partnerships that enhance the educational, economic and cultural vitality of Qatar. For more information please visit www.qatar.vcu.edu

Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF) is a private, non-profit organization that is supporting Qatar on its journey from carbon economy to knowledge economy by unlocking human potential, for the benefit of not only Qatar, but the world. Founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Emir, QF is chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser.

QF’s work encompasses education, research and community development. World-class universities are brought to Qatar to help create an education sector in which young people can develop the attitudes and skills required for a knowledge economy. At the same time, QF builds Qatar's innovation and technology capacity by developing and commercializing solutions through key sciences. The Foundation also works to foster a progressive society while enhancing cultural life, protecting Qatar’s heritage and addressing immediate social needs in the community. For a complete list of QF’s initiatives and projects, visit <http://www.qf.org.qa>

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