

VCUQatar Welcomes 71 Incoming students

Doha, Qatar - Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar welcomed 71 new full time Master of Fine Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Arts students to the Education City campus.

This fall semester, VCUQatar welcomes the third group of students into the new BA program in art history. This is the first non-studio degree offered by the branch campus and is intended to support the development of the cultural infrastructure in Qatar. The incoming BFA and BA classes of 2018 represent a truly diverse student body with nearly 60 percent Qatari students and the remaining international students from Qatar, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, Hungary, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the United States.

Admission to VCUQatar is competitive. A committee comprised of faculty and staff review the applications with no identifying information about the applicant. Decisions are based on a comprehensive assessment of the applicant's academic achievements to date, their artistic creativity and experimentation as evidenced by the work they present in their individual portfolios (BFA and MFA), letters of recommendation, writing skills and English language proficiency. The incoming class represents highly qualified students who are poised to succeed in the fields of art and design.

VCUQatar Dean Allyson welcomed the incoming undergraduate class during their orientation. "Being accepted to this prestigious university is the first step in your academic journey," began Dean Vanstone in her welcome address to the students. "Take full advantage of every opportunity during your years at university both within and outside the classroom. The people in this room are your colleagues, today and onward into your careers. Be curious, collaborate, experiment and find your passion. University is a diverse learning environment where you will be supported and expected to find your critical voice and share your creative expressions. Welcome to VCUQatar!"

The welcome address marked the opening of an exciting week of orientation activities, which included an introduction to all aspects of the university, college transition programs, an intercultural workshop to help prepare students for the diverse cultural experiences that will be part of their education, ice-breakers and community building activities to help build positive learning/living environments. Students also participated in additional Hamad Bin Khalifa University sponsored events.

VCUQatar also welcomed the sixth class of the MFA in Design, the first graduate program in design in the gulf region. "The Graduate Department is delighted to welcome its latest contingent of talented and dedicated MFA students into the program," said Dr. Thomas Modeen, interim director of the program. "This highly select international group of individuals, from diverse backgrounds and disciplines, will, in conjunction with our current student body, continue to foster the unique mix of ingenuity and enterprise that our multifaceted community of students and faculty alike contribute to the ever-evolving research and practice of interdisciplinary design, producing independent thinkers and makers whose creative acuties and vigor will continue to define and contribute to the development and definition of what a prosperous and dynamic Qatar could and should entail."

The Incoming Class brings the student population at VCUQatar to 282: 270 undergraduate (Foundation, Fashion, Graphic and Interior Design, Painting & Printmaking and Art History) and 12 graduate students – representing 40 nationalities. VCUQatar is also hosting six students from our home campus in Richmond, Virginia for the semester.

Following student orientation week, VCUQatar welcomed all new and returning faculty and staff with an all-day retreat. The retreat included a half-day collaborative workshop on intercultural communications to continue self-reflection and progress toward a dynamic intercultural environment. The highlight of the day was the annual awards ceremony, recognizing individuals who distinguished themselves over a period of years in service to the school and community, and the Faculty Distinguished Achievements Awards. Simone Muscolino, Interim Director of Foundation was honored with the Distinguished Achievement in Teaching Award; Zachary Stensen, Assistant Professor of Painting & Printmaking received the Distinguished Achievement in Service Award and Dr. Khaled Saoud, Assistant Professor in the Liberal Arts and Sciences Department received the Distinguished Achievement in Research Award.

As VCUQatar enters its 17th year, the university strives to contribute to the vitality of human, social, economic and environmental development in Qatar and the region through creative innovation, expression and collaboration. The university's alumni are leaders in Qatar's cultural and creative professions, as well as participants in addressing the global challenges identified as key to the region's future. The VCUQatar community continues to be engaged in reflecting on its past and planning its next five years with a focus on actively supporting the development of Hamad bin Khalifa University (HBKU) and the Qatar National Vision 2030.

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 studies.

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 Tasmeem and the biennial Hamad bin Khalifa Islamic Art Symposium, attracting globally recognized designers, artists and scholars 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 is a private, non-profit organization that is supporting Qatar on its journey from carbon economy to



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virginia commonwealth university in qatar
جامعة فرجينيا كومونولث في قطر

p.o. box 8095, doha, qatar
www.qatar.vcu.edu

p +974 4402 0555 f +974 4402 1425

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, Amir of Qatar, QF is chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser.

QF carries out its mission through three strategic pillars: education, science and research, and community development. QF's education pillar brings world-class universities to Qatar to help create an education sector in which young people can develop the attitudes and skills required for a knowledge economy. Meanwhile, its science and research pillar builds Qatar's innovation and technology capacity by developing and commercialising solutions through key sciences. Finally, its community development pillar helps foster a progressive society while also enhancing cultural life, protecting Qatar's heritage and addressing immediate social needs in the community.

Press Contacts:

Meike Kaan | Executive Director of Communications
Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar
PO Box 8095, Al Luqta Street, Doha, Qatar
T: +974 4402 0558 | M: +974 30133446
mckaan@vcu.edu

Priya D'Souza | Media Officer
Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar
PO Box 8095, Al Luqta Street, Doha, Qatar
T: +974 4402 0721 | M: +974 30133466
plddsouza@vcu.edu