

\$1.3 million awarded to students for research in Qatar

Doha (Qatar), 20 January 2014. Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF), a center of Qatar Foundation Research and Development, awarded grants totalling \$1,388,000 to undergraduate students in Doha. The research grants are part of Qatar's goal of continuing prosperity through development of a knowledge-based economy.

The 15th cycle of the Undergraduate Research Experience Program (UREP) saw 39 proposals receiving grants, out of the 126 proposals that were reviewed, a 31 per cent success rate. The program gives undergraduate students the opportunity to acquire invaluable 'hands-on' experience by participating in innovative research under the guidance of their respective faculty. Each proposal was evaluated under strict criteria by three independent peer reviewers.

QNRF's Executive Director, Dr Abdul Sattar Al-Taie, expressed his delight at the breadth and depth of research undertaken and submitted for the 15th cycle of UREP. He said, "UREP's latest cycle attracted 42 proposals under the engineering and technology discipline, followed by an impressive 40 in social sciences, arts and humanities, 23 in the medical and health related discipline and 20 in the natural sciences."

Dr Al-Taie added, "One of QNRF's core missions is assisting Qatar's youth to pursue a career in research. The ability to develop a research culture is a critical building block for Qatar's future."

Proposals awarded by QNRF were submitted by students from Qatar University, Texas A&M University at Qatar, Ahmed Bin Mohamed Military College in Qatar, Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar and Northwestern University in Qatar.

"The latest cycle saw grants awarded to 145 students, 44 of whom are Qatari students," said Sunitha Shyam, Training Programs Manager at QNRF. "This is really encouraging and I am particularly pleased to see such a high number of female Qatari students participate in UREP. Supporting young women in Qatar to further develop skills in science and research is a key area for QNRF so we are extremely happy that 27 Qatari females participated," she added.

The students will carry out research on a wide spectrum of topics that are of benefit to Qatar. The research projects include a study of biodiversity in date palms from different regions in Qatar, building a hybrid-renewal energy generation system for eco-friendly

buildings in Qatar, improving Doha's residential neighbourhood by promoting healthy communities, a study to engage and empower Qatari women, and examining the transition of Doha's Fareej Al Asmakh to a living heritage district.

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Notes to Editor:

About Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D)

Leading Qatar's vision to become an international centre for research and development excellence and innovation, (QF R&D) is home to Qatar Science & Technology Park, a world-class hub for technology innovation and commercialization, as well as the Qatar National Research Fund, a globally renowned scientific research funding organization, and prominent research institutes operating at the frontiers of science, including Qatar Biomedical Research Institute, Qatar Computing Research Institute and Qatar Energy and Environment Research Institute.

About Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF)

Driven by the aim of fostering a culture of research in Qatar, Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) was established in 2006 to advance knowledge and education by acting as a support system for researchers. It is a centre within the Research & Development establishment at Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development.

QNRF administers funding for original, competitively selected research and furthers collaborations within academia, the public, private, governmental and non-governmental sectors through effective, mutually beneficial partnerships. While QNRF actively seeks internationally recognised researchers, it is dedicated to funding research that meets the needs of Qatar. For more information, visit: www.qnrf.org

For more information on the press release, please contact:

Avantika Nair, avantikan@bljworldwide.com, +974 7021 8261

For more information about Qatar Foundation, please contact:

Khalifa Essa Al-Kubaisi

Press Office Coordinator

Qatar Foundation

Tel: +974 4454 2313

Email: khalkubaisi@qf.org.qa