

WCMC-Q Team Wins Key Competition Run by Qatar National Research Fund

Doha (Qatar), 22 March 2014: Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF), a centre of Qatar Foundation Research & Development, has awarded prizes and certificates to the best research projects completed last year resulting from its long-standing funding program for undergraduate students.

The Undergraduate Research Experience Program (UREP) gives students the opportunity to acquire invaluable experience through participating in innovative research under the guidance of faculty members.

Every year, the top 25% of completed projects are shortlisted for the UREP competition. This year, 27 projects completed in 2013 qualified for an initial QNRF panel review. The top five scoring projects in the initial review were chosen for public oral presentations where they were presented to a panel of judges. The remaining teams were given the chance to present their work as posters, which were displayed on the day of the competition, and competed for first, second, and third place in the poster category.

The event was held under the patronage of Mr Faisal Alsuwaidi, President of Research and Development at Qatar Foundation, who praised the quality of entrants to the UREP competition.

"Students are the building blocks that will sustain Qatar's future knowledge-based economy," he said. "We will continue supporting students in Qatar as part of our commitment to transform the nation into a global centre of research excellence."

In his speech marking the opening of the competition, QNRF's Executive Director, Dr Abdul Sattar Al-Taie, said, "At QNRF, we recognize the important role and influence of a student's university experience."

He added: "It is precisely for this reason that we decided, in 2006, to begin promoting research and providing support to undergraduate students in Qatar through UREP."

First place was awarded to a team from Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar. Their project, "Typology and Credibility of Gulf Cooperation Council Internet Health Websites", examined ways for improving consumer e-health websites in Qatar.

PRESS RELEASE

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The other projects in the competition focussed on the fields of engineering and technology, natural sciences, medical sciences, and social sciences and humanities.

Finalists included a team from Texas A&M University at Qatar, who worked on a novel, environmentally-friendly and inexpensive method of degassing oil and drilling fluids using ultrasonic waves to remove gas bubbles from liquid systems.

Another project from Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar also made it to the finals. The team studied the role of two different cellular components in order to see how they affect the overall growth of cells.

In the field of natural sciences, a Qatar University team studied the effects of garden thyme as a therapeutic agent for breast cancer. Another team from Qatar University, in the discipline of social sciences and humanities, studied the relationship between cultural misunderstandings in business and the quality of customer service in order to help companies improve their dealings with clients in cosmopolitan societies.

This year's UREP competition took place at the Hamad bin Khalifa University Student Center on Thursday (March 20) and was open to the public.

First launched in 2006, UREP is QNRF's longest running program, with two cycles per year. To date, more than 2,300 students have taken part in UREP, with teams of students across universities in Qatar paired with a professor in order to conduct research in a particular field. Wednesday, 19th March, 2014, marked the start of the online proposal submission and vetting processes for the 16th cycle of UREP.

QNRF is a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development and a centre within Qatar Foundation Research and Development. Visit the QNRF website www.qnrf.org to learn more about UREP and other QNRF Programs for funding research.

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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 this press release, please contact:

Basil Mahfouz
Account Manager
BLJ Worldwide
Tel: +97470218269
Email: basilm@bljworldwide.com

For more information about Qatar Foundation, please contact

Anwar El-Shamy
Press Office Coordinator
Qatar Foundation
Tel: +974 5590 4407
Email: aelshamy@qf.org.qa