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Top NU-Q Scholars from Qatar and US Launch “*On the Ground*”

Collected writings on Middle Eastern research “solid first step in NU-Q publication history”

Doha, Qatar – March 25, 2014 – In an effort to understand the onset of massive power shifts in the Middle East, scholars from Northwestern University in Qatar and Northwestern University’s Middle East and North African Studies program in Evanston, Illinois, collaborated to publish an engaging monograph entitled *On the Ground: New Directions in Middle East and North African Studies*, edited by Professor Brian T. Edwards

Launched recently at events in both Evanston and Doha, *On the Ground* features the work of 10 scholars—two NU-Q faculty and eight from the Evanston campus.

The working papers presented in the book critically cut into issues ranging from emotional impacts of the Arab uprisings, to youth-generated media, to religious freedom in Syria.

The launch in Doha provided students and audiences with an avenue to interact directly with a panel featuring an NU-Q professor who participated in the book, as well as other faculty experts in the field of Middle East Studies.

NU-Q Dean and CEO, Everette E. Dennis opened the event by highlighting the significance of *On the Ground* for the future of research in the Middle East region.

“This is the first collaboration of its kind produced by NU-Q and a solid first step in our publication history,” he said. “The work offers fresh insights by emerging social scientists who are eager to cast new light on old controversies in a region that demands deeper reflection.”

Following opening remarks by Dean Dennis, the panel engaged with the audience regarding themes presented in *On the Ground* and the future of field research in Qatar and the region.

Professor Joe Khalil, a panel member and contributing author to *On the Ground*,

stressed the importance of involving students at NU-Q in various research projects.

“Students are an essential part of any research project at NU-Q,” explained Khalil, whose research focused on youth media in the Arab world. “... involving students in projects enables researchers to produce contextualized research questions which relate to the Qatari community and the region in general.”

Professor Jocelyn Sage Mitchell enthusiastically elaborated on this point, “We at NU-Q believe in being a place where faculty and students come together to share interests and create new research, so that we do our part to help prepare the next generation of researchers and leaders who will help shape the future of this country and the region.”

Another panel member, NU-Q professor Zachary Wright noted that “conducting research on the ground in Qatar helps us appreciate the diversity and plurality of the region; it helps us understand that many held convictions about the region may have a number of different interpretations.”

Professor Khaled Al Hroub, an expert in Middle Eastern and Arab Media studies, stressed the importance of understanding the challenges faced by researchers living “on the ground.”

“The Northwestern University in Qatar campus presents researchers with a unique opportunity. However, being ‘on the ground’ is also a challenge for researchers who face pressure to constantly produce substantial findings, but researchers must always be vigilant and understand the high-paced environment in the Middle East.”

A digital English version of *On the Ground* is available at <http://ontheground.qatar.northwestern.edu/>.

KEY WORDS: *ON THE GROUND, NEW DIRECTIONS, EVANSTON, JOE KHALIL, BRIAN T. EDWARDS, EVERETTE E. DENNIS, BOOK LAUNCH, DIGITAL BOOK, MIDDLE EAST STUDIES, ARAB SPRING, MENA*

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About Northwestern University in Qatar

Northwestern University in Qatar draws from its parent organization, [Northwestern University](#) (Evanston, Illinois), a distinguished history, famous programs and an exceptional faculty. Founded in partnership with Qatar Foundation, NU-Q provides a framework through which students explore the world and, ultimately, shape its future through its distinguished schools of [communication](#), [journalism](#), and [liberal arts](#).