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Bright, Young Qataris Spend Their Summer Breaks Preparing For Careers In Engineering And Science

*Enrichment programs for exceptional students sponsored by Maersk Oil Qatar,
Texas A&M at Qatar*

Doha, Qatar, 25 June: More than 50 of Qatar's brightest young future engineers and scientists are spending the first few weeks of their summer vacations taking part in the Future Engineers and Summer Engineering Academy (SEA) programs 19-30 June at Texas A&M University at Qatar.

The two programs form part of a broader initiative called *Dhia: Engineering Leaders* initiative, a partnership between Texas A&M at Qatar and longtime collaborator, Maersk Oil Qatar (MOQ). Dhia aims to entice young Qataris to choose educational pathways in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), which are critical to the success of the Qatar National Vision 2030.

SEA is an elite, 10-day academic enrichment program for 24 academically outstanding grade 11 Qatari students who have been named as "Qatar National Vision Scholars." The students are working with Texas A&M faculty members on real-life, relevant, hands-on research projects related to Qatar's research challenges in autonomous vehicles, petroleum production, water desalination and wireless energy.

SEA introduces students to advanced topics in engineering and science while teaching important problem-solving skills. They also learn how to communicate technical ideas and will put these lessons to the test at the end of the two-week program by presenting their individual projects and research findings to the faculty members.

Abdalla Abdeen, a National Vision Scholar in the SEA, notes how the experience has given him a new perspective on the role engineering plays in supporting Qatar's growth and development.

“Through this program, I have the chance to practice what an electrical engineer does, and what transmitters and receivers do,” he said. “I am learning about radio applications and frequencies, and how different frequencies are used to secure any important data.”

In the Future Engineers Program, which runs parallel to SEA, more than 30 Qatari students rising into grades 10 and 11 are working on projects related to space, including the design of a near-space weather balloon that will take measurements, photos and observations as it rises into the outer atmosphere. The project teaches students about data relationships while demonstrating that scientific inquiry can be fun.

Nasser Al-Thani, a student in the program, said, “I feel privileged to get the chance to experience and feel the spirit of being a student at Texas A&M Qatar and as an engineer specifically. I’m excited to know more about the majors in engineering and what they provide, and about the workspace at Texas A&M.”

In week two, the Future Engineers will design a tool that an astronaut might use in space. The tools will be 3-D printed in Texas A&M’s unique 3-D printing facilities. In designing the tools, the students will meet with and interview NASA astronaut Duane Carey about his experiences in space and the kinds of tasks an astronaut might perform in zero gravity. Selected as an astronaut by NASA in 1996, Carey was the pilot of Space Shuttle mission STS-109 in 2002, a maintenance flight to the Hubble Space Telescope. STS-109 orbited the earth 165 times, traveling about 3.9 million miles.

Maersk Oil has played a vital role in driving the development of a number of successful STEM educational programs and initiatives in the past few years, particularly through the Dhia partnership with Texas A&M, Qatar. These initiatives are critical to developing the skilled, scientific workforce Qatar needs to drive its goal of being a knowledge-based economy, said Sheikh Faisal Bin Fahad Al-Thani, Deputy Managing Director, Maersk Oil Qatar.

“We are working to attract more young Qataris into the sciences, and to inspire the next generation to follow a technical educational track that can lead to successful and rewarding careers in industries like oil and gas. We hope all participants enjoy the course and take away new knowledge and skills that will inspire a lifetime’s passion for the sciences.”

Dr. Mansour Karkoub, a mechanical engineering professor at Texas A&M at Qatar, is mentoring a Summer Engineering Academy team for the second year in a row. He said the program gives young Qataris a glimpse into what engineers do and the impact engineers can have on the world.

“The Summer Engineering Academy gives students an opportunity to explore research in underwater robotics and look ahead to their futures,” he said. “These students have shown commitment and dedication to their futures by participating in this opportunity. They will someday be engineering leaders in Qatar, and it’s a privilege to be involved with this program.”

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About Texas A&M University at Qatar

Texas A&M University, recognized as having one of the premier engineering programs in the world, has offered undergraduate degrees in chemical engineering, electrical and computer engineering, mechanical engineering and petroleum engineering at Qatar Foundation's Education City campus since 2003, and graduate degrees in chemical engineering since fall 2011. Texas A&M at Qatar has awarded nearly 725 degrees since 2007. In addition to engineering courses, Texas A&M at Qatar provides classes in science, mathematics, liberal arts and the humanities. All four of the engineering programs offered at Texas A&M at Qatar are accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET. The curricula offered at Texas A&M at Qatar are materially the same as those offered at the main campus in College Station, Texas, and the courses in Doha are taught in English in a co-educational setting. The reputation for excellence is the same, as is the commitment to equip engineers to lead the next generation of engineering advancement. Faculty from around the world are attracted to Texas A&M at Qatar to provide this educational experience and to participate in research activities now valued at more than \$224 million, and that address issues important to the State of Qatar. Visit www.qatar.tamu.edu.