



QNRF ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 10TH ANNUAL UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE PROGRAM COMPETITION

Qatar Foundation Member Showcases Qatar's Young Research Talent

Doha, Qatar, April 11, 2018: Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF), a member of Qatar Foundation (QF), has named a team from Qatar University (QU) as the winner of its 10th Annual Undergraduate Research Experience Program (UREP) Competition.

Launched in 2006, UREP provides undergraduate students across Qatar with hands-on experience of undertaking research projects alongside their studies, under the guidance and mentorship of faculty and experienced researchers. Its aim is to equip students with the skills, insight, and impetus that will enable them to pursue rewarding and impactful careers in science and research, and add to Qatar's pool of homegrown talent in this field.

More than 3,200 students from universities in Qatar have benefited from UREP over its lifespan, participating in 937 projects across 22 cycles. The top 25 percent of projects completed under the program in 2017 were selected to participate in the 10th Annual UREP Competition, with QNRF announcing the results during a ceremony held at Qatar National Convention Centre on April 5.

In total, seven projects – covering a range of areas including health; energy and environment; computing and ICT; and social sciences, arts, and humanities – were shortlisted for the competition, with each team giving a public presentation in front of a panel of judges. Four of the shortlisted projects came from QU, with two from Texas A&M University at Qatar (TAMUQ) and one from Northwestern University in Qatar, both of which are QF partner universities.

Projects were evaluated for the quality of their scientific and technological content, the degree of research experience that their teams gained, and the quality of their oral presentation to judges. First place was awarded to 'Antifungal Activities of Prosopis Juliflora on Postharvest Fungal Pathogens of Fruits in Qatar', a QU project that investigated the effect of an exotic plant on Qatar's biodiversity and agriculture.

"UREP has been an incredible experience for us, and to win the competition is both unexpected and amazing," said team member Nada Kafour, who conducted the winning project with fellow QU students Nada Sadeq, Sabah Akhtar, Sabah Ahmad, Fatemeh Saadat, and Widad Al-Asmar.

"By participating in UREP, you learn that research isn't just about results – it's about working as a team, knowing how to produce scientific literature, developing your methods, and carrying out many different experiments just to get one outcome. We were given the freedom and responsibility of leading this project, and what we have gained from UREP will be of real benefit to us all in the future."

The team were mentored by Dr. Mohammed Abu-Dieyah, Associate Professor, College of Arts and Sciences, QU, who said: "I feel very proud of these students, who have produced such a high standard of



impactful research, which, if further developed and enhanced, has the potential for commercial application.”

Teams from TAMUQ took the second and third places in the UREP Competition, with projects titled ‘A Novel Experimentation on Demulsifying Crude Oil and Water Emulsions Using Ultrasonic Technology’, and ‘Development of a Novel Heat Sink with Wavy-Tapered Channels’.

Dr. Aisha Al-Obaidly, Director of Capacity Building, QNRF, said: “Research experience can allow students to stand out from the crowd, as graduate schools and the job market within industry become more competitive.

“Having such a research experience demonstrates to prospective employers that a student is capable of taking on a project, and working independently. In addition, simply volunteering time and effort to contribute to a research project is a rewarding experience in itself. That is why we encourage students to take the opportunity to engage with science and research, and I wish all those who have participated in UREP the very best of luck in their future endeavors.”

Dr. Suhaila Ghuloum, Senior Consultant Psychiatrist, Hamad Medical Corporation, and Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry, Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar, a QF partner university, chaired the competition’s judging committee and said: “It is hugely encouraging to see undergraduate students not just undertaking such high-caliber research, but presenting it in a confident, positive, and professional way. The difficulty in selecting winners from the seven shortlisted projects illustrates their quality.

“UREP is both an important and a challenging program, and the fact these students have produced such impressive projects in areas of priority for Qatar, while gaining valuable experience of research methodology and presentation, means they should all be proud of what they have achieved.”

ENDS

Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF)

Driven by the aim of fostering a culture of research in Qatar, QNRF was established in 2006 to advance knowledge and education by acting as a support system for researchers.

QNRF, a member of Qatar Foundation, 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-recognized researchers, it is dedicated to funding research that meets the needs of Qatar. For more information, please visit www.qnrf.org

Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential



Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF) is a private, non-profit organization that is supporting Qatar on its journey from a carbon economy to 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, the Father Emir, QF is chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser.

QF's work encompasses education, research and community development. World-class universities are brought to Qatar to help create an education sector in which young people can develop the attitudes and skills required for a knowledge economy. At the same time, QF builds Qatar's innovation and technology capacity by developing and commercializing solutions through key sciences. The Foundation also works to foster a progressive society while enhancing cultural life, protecting Qatar's heritage and addressing immediate social needs in the community.

For a complete list of QF's initiatives and projects, visit <http://www.qf.org.qa>