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Math teachers learn new techniques for educating engineering leaders

*Maersk Oil Qatar sponsors inaugural education excellence institute*

DOHA, Qatar — More than 20 teachers from 16 of Qatar's secondary schools participated in the inaugural Engineering Leaders Institute for Excellence in Mathematics Education last week.

The five-day institute, organized by Texas A&M University at Qatar, was designed to enhance teaching techniques to deepen students' understanding of math as a foundation for advanced education, said Dr. Sandra Nite, institute facilitator and a research scientist in math education at Aggie STEM at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, USA.

"Teacher professional development is an especially effective approach for STEM outreach and enrichment," Nite said. "By helping 20 teachers enhance their teaching strategies, you can impact the learning of hundreds or thousands of their students in the years that follow."

Dr. Mohamed Elgindi, professor of math at Texas A&M at Qatar, was Nite's co-instructor for the institute. He reminded teachers of the significant contributions of ancient Arab scholars to science and led sessions in which he highlighted math concepts that are important for success as a university engineering student. Teachers used graphing calculators with rangefinder devices to link mathematical data with real-world applications.

The institute was developed as part of the Engineering Leaders outreach strategy to prepare young Qataris for university studies in science, technology, engineering and math, known as STEM disciplines, said Dr. Hamid Parsaei, director of academic outreach and professor of mechanical engineering at Texas A&M at Qatar. Parsaei also thanked Maersk Oil Qatar, the exclusive sponsor and industry partner for the Engineering Leaders program.

"Our partnership with Maersk Oil Qatar enables strategic outreach that contributes to

human capacity for Qatar's growth," Parsaei said. "Qatar needs broad technical expertise, and professional development for teachers is at the core of our work to help young Qataris prepare for the challenges of university studies in engineering and science."

Sheikh Faisal Al-Thani, deputy managing director of Maersk Oil Qatar, said the company is investing in teacher development among other academic initiatives to strengthen human and social development for Qatar's knowledge-based economy.

"As the operator of Qatar's largest and most complex offshore oilfield — Al Shaheen — we are committed to supporting development of the specialist workforce needed to responsibly unlock Qatar's important national resources," Sheikh Faisal said. "We are therefore supporting a number of educational initiatives aimed at developing Qatar's human capital and knowledge economy; investing in teacher development and nurturing and developing interest in STEM disciplines is critical to achieving this."

"The inaugural Engineering Leaders Institute is helping professional teachers to broaden their experience and skills in a range of engineering disciplines in mathematics to be able to better attract and inspire the next generation to follow a technical educational track, that can lead to successful and rewarding careers in industries like oil and gas," Al-Thani added.

Tahany Abdel Rahman AlShouli, a teacher at Al-Wakrah Independent Secondary School who has taught math in Qatar for 27 years, said last week's institute presented innovative and useful approaches for enhancing students' learning of math concepts.

"This workshop provided participants with helpful techniques for developing and enriching our knowledge and teaching styles, something that will enable us to improve our students' educational background and learning process," AlShouli said. "By working with the Supreme Education Council, Texas A&M at Qatar and Maersk Oil Qatar are shaping the future of education."

Jowaher Al-Marri, program for STEM development for Texas A&M at Qatar, said positive feedback from teacher participants highlights the importance of holding future programs for teachers and students alike.

"This Engineering Leaders Institute is the first of many STEM enrichment programs we are planning in the months ahead," Al-Marri said. "We are proud to be working with schools and industry partners such as Maersk Oil to promote education as the primary pathway to achieving the goals of the Qatar National Vision 2030."

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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. More than 600 engineers have graduated from Texas A&M at Qatar 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 \$196 million, and that address issues important to the State of Qatar. Visit [www.qatar.tamu.edu](http://www.qatar.tamu.edu).