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For information contact:

Lesley Kriewald
Texas A&M University at Qatar
Lesley.Kriewald@qatar.tamu.edu
+974.4423.0424

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Qatari Freshmen PREP For Success At Texas A&M At Qatar

Pathways for Retention in Engineering Programs helps freshmen succeed in their first semester of university

Qatari students set to enter engineering degree programs at Texas A&M University at Qatar are spending two weeks enhancing their mathematics skills this summer ahead of their first semester as university students.

Texas A&M at Qatar's Office of Development, Engagement and Outreach has organized the two-week course, the Pathways for Retention in Engineering Programs (PREP) initiative. PREP began 31 July and runs until 11 Aug.

PREP is part of the *Dhia: Engineering Leaders* initiative, a partnership between Texas A&M at Qatar and longtime collaborator Maersk Oil Qatar that aims to help young Qataris to choose and succeed in educational pathways in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), which are critical to the success of the Qatar National Vision 2030.

"At Texas A&M at Qatar, we believe that preparation is key in helping our students succeed, and we are committed to the success of each and every one of our students," said Dr. César O. Malavé, dean of Texas A&M at Qatar. "The first year of college is a big transition for most students, no matter what they choose of study. Engineering can be especially challenging, and we are grateful to both Maersk Oil Qatar for their support and to Dr. Nite for lending her expertise in preparing the next generation of engineering leaders who will lead Qatar's future growth and development."

The goal of the program is to provide a solid foundation in mathematics, which is essential in sciences and engineering, to support academic success of Qatari engineering students. The program comprises intense instruction in topics such as functions, trigonometry, linear systems and mechanics. The students are also becoming familiar with technologies such as advanced calculators and data collection devices.

Additionally, the students are participating in academic success seminars designed to enhance their academic skills while also introducing them to campus resources.

Jowaher Al-Marri, Texas A&M at Qatar's outreach and development manager, said many students come to university each year suffering from what is called "summer learning loss," meaning that students lose much of the information learned the previous year.

"In order to prevent this, it is imperative that students continue to practice and learn throughout the summer in order to retain or improve their knowledge," she said. "PREP thus helps incoming freshmen refresh and strengthen important skills and information so they will be better equipped to succeed in these foundational courses when they take them for credit during their first year at university."

Al-Marri stressed the importance of the program and said the opportunity would prepare students to enter the university by allowing them to experience the university level of learning.

"This program will give Qatari students a head start to enhance important math and science skills so that they will be able to enjoy the educational opportunities offered by Texas A&M at Qatar with confidence," she said.

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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 \$236.4 million, and that address issues important to the State of Qatar. Visit www.qatar.tamu.edu.