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NU-Q Student Nominated for Student Oscar

Doha, Qatar – August 8, 2016 --A recent graduate from Northwestern University in Qatar has been nominated for a Student Academy Award. Shahnawaz Zali's film, *100 Steps*, is among the 26 US nominees selected from more than 500 applicants to be nominated for an Oscar.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences established the Student Academy Awards in 1972 to support and encourage excellence in filmmaking at the collegiate level. The awards are open exclusively to college and university film students who compete for awards and cash grants, with films being judged in four categories: Animation, Documentary, Narrative, and Alternative.

Past Student Academy Award winners have gone on to receive 46 Oscar nominations and have won or shared eight awards. They include John Lasseter, Pete Docter, Robert Zemeckis, Trey Parker, and Spike Lee.

"All of us are extremely proud of Zali's nomination. Through his participation in the student run organization Studio 20Q to his experience studying on Northwestern's main campus in the United States, he has exhibited tremendous commitment and talent. His success as a filmmaker is also adding an important voice to the story of Pakistan," said CEO and Dean Everette E. Dennis.

The film is set in Pakistan and follows a young boy who finds that his local religious school has been a front for a radical extremists recruitment camp. It has won a Miami independent film festival, a Moving Media film festival in Detroit, and an excellence award at the Accolade Global Film Festival.

"I came to NU-Q because I was so sure about the potential for the Pakistani media industry to tell their own stories. We're used to seeing Pakistan in a certain light and I wanted to show the world that there's more," Zali said.

The film was produced with a grant from Studio 20Q, an NU-Q student run organization that provides students with hands-on filmmaking experience and help in creating a thriving film culture in Qatar. Zali completed the post-production of the film when he was spending a semester at the Northwestern's main campus in Evanston, Illinois.

A Class of 2016 communications major, Zali is now establishing a production company in Lahore, Pakistan and plans to continue to tell stories about his country and its people through film.

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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](#).