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Texas A&M at Qatar hosts cyber security course for Qatar Armed Forces

Eighteen officers from the Qatar Armed Forces learned fundamentals of cyber security and wireless communication during a three-day course last week at Texas A&M University at Qatar.

The course was organized by Texas A&M at Qatar's Continuing and Professional Education program and held at the branch campus in Education City. The course was designed to be the first of a series of training opportunities to support development of Qatar's human capital in defense and national security.

Brig. Gen. Mohammed Owaidha Al-Ramzani, chairman of the Reconnaissance and Surveillance Center (RSC), attended the closing ceremony for the course, which was one outcome of an agreement Texas A&M at Qatar and the RSC signed in June 2016 that aims to develop the human capital and technological knowledge base needed for Qatar's future.

Texas A&M at Qatar also signed an agreement with the Qatar Armed forces in January of this year. Both agreements aim to provide scholarships and internships for engineering students at the branch campus; increase opportunities for custom-designed training and seminars to support the RSC and Armed Forces' operations and workforce; strengthen links between the branch campus and the Qatar Armed Forces to facilitate exchange of knowledge and expertise; and establish collaboration in research and discovery.

The course was presented by professors Dr. Joseph Boutros, Dr. Hussein Alnuweiri and Dr. Ali Ghrayeb, all faculty in the Electrical and Computer Engineering Program at Texas A&M at Qatar with expertise in cyber security and wireless communications. Topics of the three-day course — the first of its kind offered at Texas A&M at Qatar — included cyberattack models, how to analyze and defend against malicious code, wireless communication standards, drone communications and other special topics, such as wifi, cloud security and network integrity.

Boutros, who led the development of the course, said instructors explained how new

networking technologies work, and how protocols and techniques operate at different levels of the networking system — at the level of end-user computers and devices and within the Internet itself.

“Besides introductory material on digital information and wireless communications, we also included a strong component in the field of cryptography, which is essential to QAF officers who are maintaining the electronic defense of the country,” Boutros said. “All participants completed the sessions with great satisfaction and left Texas A&M at Qatar with a higher knowledge level in networking, communications and related security problems.”

Texas A&M at Qatar Dean Dr. César O. Malavé noted the relevance of such topics amid the increasing role of technology in daily life. “In a time when digital technology for communicating and storing information is a fundamental part of our existence, it’s critical that we work to protect our information — and ourselves — from cyberattacks,” Malavé said. “We are proud to have high-caliber faculty here in Qatar to offer their expertise on this topic to help members of the Reconnaissance and Surveillance Center as they continue their work protecting Qatar and its citizens.”

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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 more than 750 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.