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Texas A&M at Qatar hosts fifth annual Liberal Arts International Conference

Texas A&M University at Qatar hosted attendees from around the world for the fifth annual Liberal Arts International Conference held at the HBKU Student Center in Education City.

This year's conference, "Reinventing Ourselves: Innovation and the Liberal Arts," featured keynote addresses and panel sessions, and a slate of more than 55 speakers, including 13 from Qatar. Other countries represented include the U.S., UK, France, Netherlands, Russia, Poland, Croatia, Slovakia, Macedonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Brazil, Algeria, Australia, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka.

Dr. Phillip Gray, chair of the conference's organizing committee and an assistant professor of political science at Texas A&M at Qatar, said, "Each year, this conference aims to bring together scholars from numerous liberal arts disciplines and bring them into conversation with one another. We are very pleased with this year's conference, as it successfully encouraged and inculcated cross-disciplinary, cross-national research on topics ranging from technology and politics to translanguaging and historical change. We have already heard from participants of their intention to begin collaborative works with each other, which is exactly the type of results we hope to produce with the annual LAIC events."

The Liberal Arts Program at Texas A&M at Qatar hosts the conference each year to explore a wide variety of regional and global topics from a multidisciplinary perspective. The event serves as a rich opportunity in Qatar for scholars in the social sciences, arts and humanities to engage with colleagues from around the world and to stimulate research and learning efforts. Collaborations from past conferences have led to several academic articles and several books.

This year's conference featured two renowned keynote speakers: Roger Griffin, professor in modern history from Oxford Brookes University (UK), who presented the paper, "Retooling the Humanities to Prevent Self-Extinction: A Liberal Arts Perspective"; and Alastair Pennycook, professor of language in education from the University of Technology Sydney (Australia), who presented "Disinvention and

Reinvention: Rethinking Language and Ourselves.”

Though known internationally for being leaders in engineering education, Dr. César O. Malavé, dean of Texas A&M at Qatar, said that excellence in the liberal arts — as well as engineering — helps the branch campus cultivate a new generation of engineering leaders in Qatar.

“Texas A&M is recognized around the world as a leader in engineering education and this tradition continues in Qatar,” Malavé said. “Part of our success in producing engineering leaders and problem solvers is our multidisciplinary approach to education, which includes a strong commitment to the social sciences, arts and humanities. The liberal arts give our students broad perspectives and help shape them into innovative thinkers and effective communicators, which in turn makes our graduates so highly sought after in the workforce.”

Dr. Sara Hillman co-chaired the 2017 conference, and Dr. Martinus (Mark) Van de Logt, Michael Telfici and Dr. Paul Lee comprised the organizing committee.

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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.