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### **Texas A&M at Qatar names fourth STEM Educator of the Year**

Shanaaz Howell, a Year 6 teacher at the AlMaha Academy for Girls, was named the 2017 Engineering Leaders STEM Educator of the Year 11 May by Texas A&M University at Qatar and Maersk Oil Qatar during a ceremony that recognized and celebrated some of Qatar's top science teachers.

Howell received a cash prize of 20,000 Qatari riyals. Secodn place went to Noha Mohsen Mohamed Helmi Farid from the Alkawthar Independent Secondary School, and runners up were Ban Najimaldeen Abdullah from the Al Bayan Educational Complex for Girls, Mallika Raja from the Al-Arqam Academy for Girls and Hessa Ismail Faraj from the Roda Bint Mohammed Independent Secondary School for Girls.

Shanaaz Howell said "I am the winner of the stem educator of the year and I am extremely excited about winning such a prize and more importantly being part of it. I really appreciate being recognized today for all the hard work I do in offering the young students these new techniques and knowledge in learning their subjects because they are the future leaders."

The STEM Educator of the Year award recognizes teaching excellence in math and science, and encourages educators to instruct and inspire students in these subjects in innovative ways. The competition received a record number of entries in 2017, its fourth year, and continues its direct efforts to support Qatar's development of a knowledge-economy through education.

In being nominated for the award, Howell was described as charismatic, creative, confident and knowledgeable. Her colleagues, students and students' parents praised her use of technology in the classroom and her willingness to take on new challenges in imparting instructions to students and creating an excellent classroom environment. One nominator said that Howell "strives to get her students thinking about their thinking, rather than transmitting knowledge and filling students' brains with information" and that students in her

class grow to become well-rounded individuals, which is at the heart of the school's vision. She also shares her expertise with her teammates by creating innovative lessons supported by technology.

Some of her students also submitted letters of support for Howell's nomination, praising Howell's leadership of a national research project called "Design for Change" in which the students learned about the research process and how to write a research report. Another student said she had learned to program her own games, which taught her programming, coding, algorithms, debugging and encryption —skills the student said she is certain to use in the future.

In her submission essay, Howell said the learning process in her classroom is inquiry-based, with the students as active participants who work in teams and use their skills to research, discuss and share their findings. Howell said she is able to gauge how well her students understand their lessons and track their performance more effectively, which in turn allows her to develop tasks that cater to her students' needs and personalized targets. Since introducing this alternative way of learning, she said her students have shown almost immediate change in terms of engagement, assignment completions and student confidence, which have had a positive impact on students' results.

The award is part of the *Dhia: Engineering Leaders* partnership between Texas A&M at Qatar and Maersk Oil Qatar. *Dhia: Engineering Leaders* supports the development of Qatar's knowledge-based economy through outreach programs designed to inspire young people in Qatar to take up science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) in school and university. STEM education in primary, preparatory and secondary schools is central to these efforts, and the STEM Educator of the Year award recognizes outstanding educators whose work contributes to exceptional STEM education in Qatar.

Texas A&M at Qatar dean César O. Malavé said, "Texas A&M University at Qatar is cultivating the future engineering leaders Qatar will need to drive its development to meet the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030. It is critical to have outstanding educators in Qatar's schools to guide students to STEM majors and prepare them for success in higher education. The teachers we recognize here today are shaping Qatar's future by helping to build capacity and skills in science and engineering."

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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 850 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](http://www.qatar.tamu.edu).