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Texas A&M at Qatar hosts solarthermal chemistry expert for Distinguished Lecture Series

The fourth talk in Texas A&M University at Qatar's 2016-2017 Distinguished Lecture Series featured Dr. Alan W. Weimer from the University of Colorado Boulder (USA).

In his talk, "Solarthermal Chemistry — The Path Forward," Weimer provided a framework for using concentrated sunlight and renewable electricity to drive chemical processing. He said solarthermal opportunities are plentiful in several regions of the world, including Africa, Australia and the Middle East. Solar energy is the undisputed champion of renewable energies and the sun plays a unique role in energy production, Weimer said. Therefore, it is critical to invest, develop and commercialize energy production processes for sustainable energy.

"There's an incredible amount of sunlight in Qatar — if you can harness it," he said.

Weimer said that although photovoltaic (PV) cells have won the solar race, the better way to go might be hybrid solar PV/chemical-solarthermal farms in which energy from the sun is collected and focused to drive chemical reactions that would in turn produce electricity.

Weimer said that although photovoltaic (PV) cells have won the first leg of the solar race, solar thermo-chemical processes have proven that the better way to go might be hybrid, i.e., solar PV and thermochemical-processing farms in which energy from the sun produces electricity during daylight but in parallel is "collected" to drive chemical reactions that store energy later use.

Weimer is the H.T. Sears Memorial Professor and C2B2 Executive Director in the Chemical and Biological Engineering department at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He is a globally recognized expert in fluid-particle processing, solar technologies, and nano-materials. Weimer is co-author of more than 300 journal publications with more than 5,000 citations, holds more than more than 30 patents and has formed two spinoff companies.

Before joining the faculty at University of Colorado in 1996, he was an associate research scientist at The Dow Chemical Company for 16 years. While at Dow, Weimer co-invented, developed, and commercialized materials synthesis technology, for which he received several awards from the company. Weimer has also received numerous awards as an academic, including the U.S. Department of Energy Hydrogen Program R&D Award, as well as from the American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE). The two companies that he co-founded have received an outstanding number of awards, as well. He is a Fellow of AIChE and a registered professional engineer in Colorado.

Weimer's lecture was attended by Dr. Abdul Sattar Al-Taie, executive director of Qatar National Research Fund, and guests from Qatar Shell Research & Technology Centre.

Texas A&M at Qatar's Distinguished Lecture attracts world-class experts to campus, encouraging discourse among faculty and researchers in Education City and the local community on important topics in science, engineering and technology. This sharing of scholarship fosters intellectual discourse and encourages the development of critical thinking, lifelong learning and a responsibility to global awareness.

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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.