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Texas A&M at Qatar launches fourth edition of student writing

The writing talents of Texas A&M University at Qatar's engineering students are showcased in the 2017 issue of *Best Writing*, a book that demonstrates the ability and creativity of students at the branch campus.

Now in its fourth edition, *Best Writing* features the writings of Texas A&M at Qatar students in a variety of genres — from poetry, short stories and personal essays to technical papers and research reports.

The book's founder and co-editor Dr. Mysti Rudd, who first conceived of the book four years ago, said *Best Writing* illustrates that Aggie engineers in Qatar excel at thinking and writing creatively as well as critically.

"*Best Writing* is a natural extension of how we teach our own classes," Rudd said. "We teach our students about the power their words can have on readers, and we ask, 'Does your writing want to be shared?' It takes courage to share their writing, but their voices and opinions matter and sharing what they write makes them feel heard."

Abdulla Al-Tamimi, who has two pieces published in this year's book, said he decided to submit his work for publication "because after several drafts the text meant something to me. I thought, 'Well, this is how I got here to where I am.' I wanted people to see it and recall the path and decisions that led them where they are. Being published in *Best Writing* is a lot of things, but most importantly it is to deliver a message."

Nadim Wahbeh, who also has two pieces published this year, agreed.

"I feel that *Best Writing* allows people to share their work and get an insight from others. It also delivers a point: Anyone can write, regardless of their background or their major in university. Writing does not require much — it only requires motivation, a pen and a paper. Writing can take the writer and the reader to a different world where self-expression is its number-one motto."

This year's book features more Arabic poetry than previous editions, as well as open letters from Texas A&M faculty and staff. There are also a number of pieces on current events in this year's publication, making it "very of its time," according to co-editor Dr. Amy Hodges. "*Best Writing* shows that TAMUQ students take seriously their roles as both citizens and engineers."

The book also features photos taken by Texas A&M at Qatar students, including Fatima Al-Janahi whose photo of AlWakra Souq is featured on the book's cover.

Texas A&M at Qatar dean César O. Malavé said, "We pride ourselves on creating well-rounded engineers who will lead Qatar's transformation into a modern, knowledge-based society. *Best Writing* celebrates the talent and creativity of our Aggie engineers who are critical and creative thinkers and writers. This book proves that there's more to engineers than just science and math: There's also creativity, innovation and passion." Assistant dean Troy Bickham agreed, adding that "We want, rather we *need*, engineers who can tackle problems we cannot yet even imagine. And for that, we need engineers who have the critical thinking skills to find their own creative solutions and the communication skills to effectively share them."

Alaa Abdalla, a student representative on the Best Writing Committee, expressed a similar connection between critical thinking and creativity: "Engineering and literature sound like two completely different worlds; the bridge between them is *Best Writing*."

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About Texas A&M University at Qatar

Since 2003, Texas A&M University has offered undergraduate degrees in chemical engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering and petroleum engineering in Qatar Foundation's Education City, and graduate degrees in chemical engineering since fall 2011. Texas A&M at Qatar has awarded nearly 850 degrees. All four undergraduate engineering degree programs are accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET. Faculty from around the world are attracted to Texas A&M at Qatar to educate the next generation of engineering leaders in Qatar and to conduct research valued at more than \$236.4 million that address issues important to the State of Qatar. Visit www.qatar.tamu.edu.