

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For information contact:

Lesley Kriewald

Texas A&M University at Qatar

Lesley.Kriewald@qatar.tamu.edu

+974.4423.0424

18 Feb. 2018

**Texas A&M at Qatar's sixth annual Liberal Arts International Conference focuses on local solutions to global problems**

Texas A&M University at Qatar hosted attendees from around the world for the sixth annual Liberal Arts International Conference, "Local Dreams, Global Visions: Multidisciplinary Perspectives."

The conference theme was inspired in part by Qatar's recent experience on the world stage, said Dr. Mark van de Logt, chair of the conference's organizing committee and an assistant professor of political science at Texas A&M at Qatar.

"We see the effects of globalization or transnationalism all around us," Van de Logt said. "The question is, in an age of globalization, how do we maintain local identity and authenticity while engaging with the rest of the world? The world must reckon with the challenges of globalization, while seizing all of the opportunities it presents. We hope that this conference will provide us with answers, show us where to look for solutions, and educate us on what local entities can do to improve our lives as members of the global community."

The conference featured keynote addresses and panel sessions, and a slate of more than 70 speakers, including eight Texas A&M at Qatar students and 24 presenters from Qatar. Other countries represented include the U.S., UK, Canada, Brunei, Japan, Germany, Poland, India, Bangladesh, Oman, Cyprus and the Netherlands. Conference participants also came from France, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore and Uruguay.

Panel sessions were sponsored by The Initiative in Professional Ethics at Texas A&M at Qatar and QAPCO.

This year's conference featured three renowned keynote speakers: Dr. Kirk St. Amant, professor and chair of the Technical Communication department at Louisiana Tech University (USA), who gave the talk, "Of Infrastructures and Friction Points: Examining the Dynamics of International Online Education in the Age of Globalization"; Dr. Michael de Miranda, professor and head of the Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture at Texas A&M University (USA), who gave the talk, "Education for Sustainable Development: The Interdisciplinary Imperative for STEM Education"; and Dr. Mehran Kamrava, professor and director of the Center for

International and Regional Studies at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in Qatar, who gave the talk, "Social Science Scholarship in a Turbulent Middle East."

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. Started in 2011 by faculty members Dr. Troy Bickham and Dr. Hassan Bashir, 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.

Dr. César O. Malavé, dean of Texas A&M at Qatar, said that though Texas A&M is known internationally for being leaders in engineering education, excellence in the liberal arts — not just engineering — is cultivating the next generation of engineering leaders in Qatar.

"Texas A&M is known for excellence in engineering, and this tradition continues in Qatar," Malavé said. "A multidisciplinary approach to education — including a strong commitment to the social sciences, arts and humanities — creates engineers who are known as the problem solvers and critical thinkers. 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. Zohreh Eslami, Dr. Sara Hillman, Dr. Phillip Gray and Dr. Paul Lee comprised the organizing committee, with assistance from Khadija El-Cadi and Olena Snitko.

# # #

#### 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 870 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 \$248.2 million that address issues important to the State of Qatar. Visit [www.qatar.tamu.edu](http://www.qatar.tamu.edu).