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VCUQatar Dean Welcomes 104 New Students To Campus

Doha, Qatar –Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar (VCUQatar) Dean Akel I. Kahera, Ph.D., who began his tenure at VCUQatar this July, welcomed a total of 104 new Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor of Arts, and Master of Fine Arts students to campus.

The incoming class brings the total student population at VCUQatar to 323: 298 undergraduate (Foundation, Fashion, Graphic and Interior Design, Painting & Printmaking and Art History) and 14 graduate students. In addition, VCUQatar is hosting two exchange students from our home campus in Richmond, Virginia and nine Education City cross-registered students. The university boasts a truly diverse student body, with 60 percent of VCUQatar students being Qatar citizens and the remaining 40 percent representing 37 nationalities.

Dean Kahera joined VCUQatar after serving as associate dean of Research and Graduate Studies in the College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities at Clemson University. His research and teaching interests focus on history and theory; culture and aesthetics; sustainable design; urbanism and the practices of culture and local knowledge; Islamic art and architecture; poetry; jazz; and the Foucauldian theory of space/power/knowledge. He received his Ph.D. from Princeton University and degrees in architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Pratt Institute.

Dr. Kahera sits on the editorial board of the International Journal of Islamic Architecture. His seminal text, “Deconstructing the American Mosque: Space, Gender & Aesthetics,” has substantially altered views of the history and theory of mosque architecture in the United States and the complex cultural patterns of diaspora. During his over two decades of experience as an international consultant, he has served as an architectural designer and project manager, assuming leading roles in the completion of several major projects in Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

As VCUQatar enters its 18th year, the university strives to contribute to the vitality of human, social, economic and environmental development in Qatar and the region through

creative innovation, expression and collaboration. The university's alumni are leaders in Qatar's cultural and creative professions, as well as participants in addressing the global challenges identified as key to the region's future.

"In my role as Dean, my primary duties are to build a community of scholars, to set direction and to achieve a common purpose as defined in our mission and vision," said Kahera. "In so doing, I remain committed to the proposition that VCUQatar is creative, critical, dynamic, curious and original."

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About Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar:

VCUQatar is the Qatar campus of the prestigious Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Richmond, Virginia. Established in 1998 through a partnership with Qatar Foundation, VCUQatar offers students the opportunity to earn a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in fashion design, graphic design, interior design and painting & printmaking, a Bachelor of Arts degree in art history and a Master of Fine Arts degree in design.

In addition to a comprehensive annual public events program that includes a wide range of exhibitions, lectures and fashion events, the University hosts the biennial international design conference Tasmeeem and the biennial Hamad bin Khalifa Islamic Art Symposium, attracting globally recognized designers, academics and thinkers while fostering sustainable, university-community partnerships that enhance the educational, economic and cultural vitality of Qatar. For more information please visit www.qatar.vcu.edu

Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF) is a private, non-profit organization that is supporting Qatar on its journey from carbon economy to knowledge economy by unlocking human potential, for the benefit of not only Qatar, but the world. Founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Amir, QF is chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser.

QF's work encompasses education, research and community development. World-class universities are brought to Qatar to help create an education sector in which young people can develop the attitudes and skills required for a knowledge economy. At the same time, QF builds Qatar's innovation and technology capacity by developing and commercializing solutions through key sciences. The Foundation also works to foster a progressive society while enhancing cultural life, protecting Qatar's heritage and addressing immediate social needs in the community.

For a complete list of QF's initiatives and projects, visit <http://www.qf.org.qa>