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24 Nov. 2018

### **Texas A&M at Qatar celebrates teaching and learning during Teaching Week**

Texas A&M at Qatar recently hosted its annual Teaching Week, which highlighted the branch campus' commitment to educating exemplary engineers through various talks, panels and showcases. The week's activities were organized by the Center for Teaching and Learning, which aims to highlight teaching innovation and excellence in engineering education.

The keynote address, "STEM Education: Current Issues and Future Directions," was delivered by Dr. Richard M. Felder and Dr. Rebecca Brent," co-authors of *Teaching and Learning STEM: A Practical Guide*. In their talk, they asked four key questions: How should curricula be structured? How should classes be taught? Who should teach? And how should faculty be prepared to teach? They went on to answer each question through a comparison between the traditional methods and emerging methods in teaching. These emerging methods are proving to be more effective.

Felder and Brent also hosted two hands-on workshops with faculty and teaching staff at Texas A&M at Qatar to provide practical tips to achieve active learning.

Teaching Week also focused on extended reality applications in teaching. Extended reality is a term referring to all computer-generated environments and wearable technologies. Associate mechanical engineering professor Dr. Bilal Mansoor and software applications developer Ali Sheharyar presented on the mixed reality applications they are utilizing in classrooms today. Sheharyar explained the usefulness of oil and gas field visualizations and even augmented and interactive textbooks. Mansoor showcased the app he created to enhance students' visual and spatial skills in his materials science class. Mechanical engineering professor Dr. Arun Srinivasa then outlined the future of augmented lab courses at Texas A&M — all in an attempt for students to gain a deeper understanding of how a lab is operated safely.

Teaching Week also included an event in which winners of transformative educational experience (TEE) grants displayed their projects and the progress they've made on them. These TEE grants fund faculty and staff to come up with ways to enhance student learning.

Teaching Week concluded with a talk from mechanical engineering associate professor Dr. Reza Tafreshi, who is the most recent recipient of the Distinguished Achievement

Award College-level in Teaching from Texas A&M University's Association of Former Students. Tafreshi summarized his teaching principles and how he has emphasized project-based learning techniques. On what a student needs to do to be a good student in his class, he said, "There is no requirement other than enthusiasm."

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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 950 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).