



# Chancellor's Newsletter

Spring 2017 / Issue No. 13

CANADIAN UNIVERSITY DUBAI

## CUD STUDENTS SELECTED FOR COVETED DIOR MENTORING PROGRAM



### In this issue

CUD STUDENTS SELECTED FOR COVETED DIOR MENTORING PROGRAM

3

CHINA BECKONS STUDENT INNOVATION COMPETITION WINNERS

6

PSYCHOLOGY PROFESSOR'S BOOK DELIVERS FORMULA FOR A HAPPY LIFE

8

FIVE-YEAR PARTNERSHIP ESTABLISHED WITH WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

10

CUD SPORTS TEAMS SCORE SUCCESS

12

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY COURSES LAUNCHED

14

CUD AND DDFC JOIN FORCES TO DEVELOP WORLD-CLASS DESIGN COMMUNITY

5

CUD TEAM TRIUMPHS IN UAE ROBOTICS CHALLENGE

7

CUD TEAMS UP WITH RYERSON IN GLOBAL INNOVATION CHALLENGE

9

COLLABORATION WITH L'ORÉAL AIMS TO BOOST CREATIVE TALENT

11

GRADUATE STUDENTS PUBLISH IN INTERNATIONAL JOURNALS

13

CUD ALUMNA LEADS GLOBAL CONSERVATION CAMPAIGN

15

## Message from The Chancellor's Office



**Mr. Buti Saeed Al Ghandi**  
Chancellor



**Prof. Karim Chelli**  
President & Vice - Chancellor

### Welcome to the Spring 2017 edition of the Chancellor's Newsletter.

The first semester of the New Year has witnessed some outstanding achievements among our growing student community at Canadian University Dubai. Among many highlights, a number of teams from the University have excelled in national and regional competitions in the domains of technology, sport, innovation and entrepreneurship.

As we prepare for our seventh annual graduation ceremony, our students are already making their mark in the world of work. This semester we have seen several talented undergraduate students securing outstanding personal and professional development opportunities that will help to transform their career journey.

The Canadian University Dubai research community continues to thrive among both faculty and students, with a number of publications helping to further advance our position in the global academic landscape, notably a new book that supports the national happiness agenda.

In this, the UAE year of giving, we continue to dedicate our efforts towards supporting social progress across communities and have worked collaboratively to bring forward bespoke training initiatives that build professional capacity in corporate social responsibility and shared value.

Both in the UAE and internationally, we have been developing strong networks of collaboration that aim to contribute to student growth and also to bring wider economic and societal benefits. In this semester we have established a number of productive strategic partnerships that we look forward to developing and hope will enable us to continually grow our contribution to wider society.

We hope you enjoy reading our highlights from Spring 2017.

## CUD STUDENTS SELECTED FOR COVETED DIOR MENTORING PROGRAM

Six of the seven places in the Women@Dior initiative awarded to CUD students



Six students from CUD have been selected to take part in the Women@Dior Mentorship Program, an exclusive career development opportunity provided by the world-leading luxury brand, Christian Dior Couture.

Accounting and finance students Zukhra Avazova and Hajar Asli; marketing majors Anais Mavioga and Sara Antonucci; human resources student Margret Ibrahim, and public relations major, Maria Surzhankaya, took six of the seven places on the coveted program.

Each member of the all-female group will now be matched with mentors from one of six business areas within Dior Middle East, from fashion retail, buying and finance, to marketing, human resources and public relations. They will benefit from guidance and support from a 'big sister' mentor, who will help them to find their personal

identity and professional destiny, and to set them on the right path to success.

The Women@Dior Mentorship Program originated at the House of Dior in Paris. The initiative aims to connect enthusiastic, ambitious and talented students in need of guidance and support, with female mentors based at Dior, for a period of professional coaching.

The new program was launched with a breakfast at the Vogue Cafe in Dubai Mall, attended by the mentors, students and senior women in management positions within Christian Dior. Among the mentors, was Human Resources Area Coordinator, Charlotte Greet, who said, "Women@Dior is a program that I am extremely proud to be a part of – supporting and guiding young women in discovering their own professional destiny.

"Christian Dior is a fashion house that believes in the importance of women in business and the positive impact of supporting women to be inspired, to push boundaries and to grow into strong, independent career women."

Speaking about the unique opportunity, marketing student Anais said, "Being mentored by members of Maison Dior is an amazing prospect as the craftsmanship, the heritage, and the notoriety of this house is well known all around the world. I am hoping it will give me the chance to learn some of the key skills and professional practices of the industry so that I can reach my career goals with more confidence."

Public relations student, Maria, added, "This is much more than an opportunity to gain practical experience in PR; it is an important and influential initiative to empower girls in industry and I am very excited to be a part of it."

CUD Work Placement and Career Coordinator, Ms Orsi Urban, supported the students with advice and guidance prior to their selection for the program. She said, "We are very proud that six out of the seven mentees are selected from CUD and we wholeheartedly congratulate the students on this achievement. I am sure that they will benefit enormously, both personally and professionally, from this exceptional learning opportunity."

“

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# CUD AND DDFC JOIN FORCES TO DEVELOP WORLD-CLASS DESIGN COMMUNITY

New collaboration to engage youth in development of Dubai design industry



CUD and Dubai Design and Fashion Council (DDFC) have come together to promote the engagement of young, emerging talent in the development of Dubai's growing, world-class design community.

The new partnership will see the two organizations work together on a range of activities to extend DDFC's activities into the student community and to cultivate wider networks that will help to build a global market for regional design.

The collaboration was sealed with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between DDFC Chairperson and Group CEO TECOM, Dr. Amina Al Rustamani, and CUD President, Pr. Karim Chelli. Also in attendance at the signing ceremony were DDFC CEO, Jazia AlDhanhani, and senior academic and administration staff from CUD.

DDFC was established by the Dubai

Government to raise the profile of Dubai as a regional and global destination for design. Leading the development of a sustainable industry, DDFC provides in-depth market intelligence and helps elevate local and regional talent, promoting the contribution of the creative industries to the development of the Emirate. DDFC oversees, supports, promotes and drives initiatives related to 5 key design segments - Fashion Design, Product Design, Architecture, Interior Design, and Graphic Design.

As home to one of the leading art and design schools in the region, CUD is well placed to contribute to the DDFC agenda. Under the agreement, CUD students are set to benefit from workshops, talks, competitions and other special events that will open up opportunities for them in this burgeoning regional industry.

Speaking on behalf of CUD, Pr. Chelli said, "Dubai is renowned for its innovation

and creativity in design and when we established the School we aimed to both contribute to this growing reputation and to provide opportunities for students to learn and work in this genuinely unique environment. We are delighted to enter into this partnership with DDFC to collaborate in the next stage of development, to put DDFC as the centre of the design world."

Dr. Amina Al Rustamani, Chair of DDFC added, "Supporting and incubating creative talent lies at the core of our mandate at DDFC. Working with leading educational institutions in the region such Canadian University Dubai is essential in creating new avenues for nurturing young designers, and bridging the gap between academia and the market to accelerate growth of the design industry in Dubai. This partnership is undoubtedly a great milestone in our journey and we look forward to a mutually beneficial collaboration."

## CHINA BECKONS STUDENT INNOVATION COMPETITION WINNERS

Seeds for the Future champions win trip to Huawei HQ



Three students from CUD have won the opportunity of a lifetime to travel to Huawei Headquarters in China, following their recent triumph in the Seeds for the Future student innovation competition.

Undergraduate marketing majors Rhoda Makki, Sofia Alami Riad and Ahmed Alaa were awarded first place among the six teams in the finals of the intra-university competition for their parking management system, EasyP, a mobile app that aims to ease traffic congestion and air pollution by effectively controlling private parking facilities across Dubai.

Rhoda explained, "We were inspired by what seems to be a growing problem of access to parking space across the city. We recognized not only the frustration, but also the social and environmental implications of people driving around in search of parking, and we wanted to develop a solution to help. The app works with the owners of private parking facilities to establish an effective booking and space management system, as well as providing added value services to help save time for motorists."

The Seeds for the Future competition was launched in November 2016 with the aim of encouraging university students to think innovatively and to develop projects that will help to improve community wellbeing. It was initiated by the UAE Ministry of Education and the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, and supported by Huawei.

The EasyP team, which was mentored by Chair of e-Business at CUD, Dr. Anas Najdawi, was selected from ten original submissions and six short-listed projects to take the trip to China. Runners up in the CUD leg of the competition were Mehak Ashfar, Esraa Mostafa and Saeed Aljabri for their air quality monitoring app, IBreathe, while Anthony Ezeh, Marina Mikhail and Maryam Dakhan took third place for their anti-congestion innovation, Wherego.

The competition culminated with the top three CUD innovations representing the University in Abu Dhabi during His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Majlis for Future Generations event. The EasyP team will now travel alongside other winning teams from universities across the UAE to the international HQ of the leading global ICT

solutions provider, where they will embark upon a two week fieldtrip.

Speaking about the team's victory and the prospect of their trip to China, Rhoda said, "We committed so much time and effort to developing the app and we are very proud that our work has paid off. We are now looking forward to what promises to be an exciting and challenging journey ahead."

Assistant Professor, Dr. Ons Bouachir, who coordinated the University's participation in the challenge, said, "This competition has provided an excellent opportunity for students to apply their academic knowledge in a practical way and to learn new skills in communication, presentation and business development. They have been collaborating across disciplines to come up with business ideas that are both feasible and sustainable, and developing their entrepreneurial potential in the process."

## CUD TEAM TRIUMPHS IN UAE ROBOTICS CHALLENGE

Engineering students win national competition for second year in a row



A team of students from CUD has triumphed in the UAE national finals of the GCC Robotics Challenge for the second year in a row.

Engineering students Mehak Butt, Nikita Mankovskii, and Iman Seyed Hossein, along with e-business student Valeriy Borsuk, came out on top following a combination of challenges that tested their mechanical and programming skills. The win for team 'Cheburashka' follows on from CUD's success in last year's competition, which was the first time the University entered into the event.

Hosted at CUD, this year's challenge involved six separate rounds of technical trials, from moving objects, to navigating through a maze. Teams from universities across the UAE each competed across the six rounds, applying their technical knowledge to build robust devices and programming them to take on specific robotic challenges.

The CUD team elected to use the complex Vex technology to compete against their fellow competitors' lego devices; a move that saw

them secure victory in three of the six rounds and go on to win the overall competition title.

Speaking about the challenge, Nikita said, "This competition is a fun way to apply our learning and to get hands-on experience with an important technology in our field."

Valeriy added, "As a business student the technical level of the competition is quite challenging, but I am enjoying learning something new and creating networks that I am sure will be beneficial for my future career."

As robotics play an increasingly important part in human life, CUD's School of Engineering, Applied Science & Technology has provided a platform for students to engage with the technology, both inside and outside the classroom, with investment in state-of-the-art equipment and the creation of a student robotics club.

Mentored by Chair of Network Engineering, Dr. Sherif Moussa, and Lab Instructor, Mr. Sijo Sudheendran, the winning team will now go on to face competitors from Kuwait, Saudi

Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, and Oman in the grand final of the regional competition.

Dr. Moussa said, "We always encourage students to challenge themselves outside the classroom and this competition is a good test of their practical programming and mechanical skills. We are proud of the way that the students worked as a team and applied what they have learnt skillfully to win this challenging competition."

Mehak, Nikita, Iman and Valeriy will now travel to Qatar to compete in the regional finals of the competition.

This competition is a fun way to apply our learning and to get hands-on experience with an important technology in our field.

# PSYCHOLOGY PROFESSOR'S BOOK DELIVERS FORMULA FOR A HAPPY LIFE

New publication reveals research-backed techniques for personal happiness



A new book from CUD professor, Dr. Louise Lambert, has revealed a simple set of strategies for daily life that can help to achieve the ultimate state of happiness.

'A New Year, A New You' is a practical workbook that guides happiness seekers through 52 tried and tested techniques to achieve contentment and wellbeing. Drawing upon extensive research in the field, the book also reveals what science has to say about the roadmap to happiness.

With over 15 years of experience in the field, Dr. Lambert has already developed and delivered three evidence-based positive psychology intervention programs and launched the region's first academic journal on the subject.

Speaking about her latest publication, she explained, "The book includes activities like the well-known gratitude letter and savouring, but also lesser known strategies like satisficing,

dealing with psychological adaptation, self-compassion, capitalization, giving, and taking a social media retreat. Each strategy is simple, to the point, and involves concrete actions or ideas to reflect upon and write about.

"It was important to me as a psychologist, researcher and professor to ensure that the strategies were well-evidenced and grounded in the science of positive psychology. In this manner, the strategies enable individuals to achieve a long-term sustainable state of happiness versus merely just feeling better for a moment in time."

The book comes as His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, announces the creation of a World Happiness Council to support international efforts in the pursuit of happiness. As the first country in the world to appoint a minister for happiness, the UAE has recently been revealed as the happiest

“ The book includes activities like the well-known gratitude letter and savouring, but also lesser known strategies like satisficing, dealing with psychological adaptation, self-compassion, capitalization, giving, and taking a social media retreat. Each strategy is simple, to the point, and involves concrete actions or ideas to reflect upon and write about.

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” country among Arab nations and continues to pursue a raft of initiatives to promote the agenda.

While the UAE sets out to take the lead on happiness at a global level, Dr. Lambert's book aims to help individuals take their own actions to achieve personal satisfaction. Starting out by helping readers to define what happiness means to them, it goes on to reveal how everyday activities and interactions can have a positive impact on their long-term personal outlook.

# CUD TEAMS UP WITH RYERSON IN GLOBAL INNOVATION CHALLENGE

Students work together to develop social impact innovations for the Arab World



An affordable hydroponic system to produce fresh, home-grown crops has emerged as the winner of the 2017 Ryerson Global Innovation Challenge (RGIC), conducted by Ryerson University in collaboration with CUD.

Students from CUD worked alongside their counterparts from the Toronto-based University in a bid to develop social impact innovations applicable to the Arab World. The transnational collaboration was part of the third edition of RGIC, an initiative established by Ryerson University to encourage young innovators to think of, and potentially commercialize, ideas that have a social impact at an international level.

As part of the competition, nineteen students representing the top four teams from Ryerson traveled to Dubai to collaborate with Arab youth at CUD. The UAE-based students provided strategic insights and practical support to help fine-tune the innovations so that they better reflected the context and the market they sought to impact.

Dr. Anas Najdawi, Chair of e-Business, who managed the project on behalf of CUD said, "The aim of this initiative is to help students from Ryerson to participate in solving real

problems in the Arab world through social entrepreneurial business ideas. CUD students have assisted their Ryerson counterparts by organizing field visits and introducing them to useful local contacts to help develop the prototype of their product or service."

From the four innovations that reached the finals of the competition, it was the StackFarm team that emerged triumphant. Showcasing their unique prototype, the team impressed a high-profile panel of judges with their cost-effective solution to address the issues of growing food in arid climates. The team will now receive 5,000 Canadian Dollars to incubate the idea.

Representing the winning team, Revant Kumars said, "The competition offered me an opportunity to collaborate with peers from various academic disciplines and with students and local entrepreneurs in the UAE. This experience will be invaluable in helping our team to develop a better product that we hope will help local residents gain access to fresh, affordable produce."

Team member from close runner up 'Akhdar', a system to alleviate dependence on non-renewable energy sources, will receive mentoring support from Middle East Venture

Partners. Other innovations that reached the final were an online platform designed to connect students and recent graduates in the Arab region to forge strong professional networks, and an online management tool to provide young entrepreneurs, access to resources, funds and mentorship.

Osman Hamid, Director of Student Engagement and Alumni Development at Ryerson University's Ted Rogers School of Management said, "CUD is an extremely important part of this year's Ryerson Global Innovation Challenge. The faculty and staff have given our student teams the support needed to further their ideas."



## FIVE-YEAR PARTNERSHIP ESTABLISHED WITH WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

**Institutions to collaborate on curriculum development in health and social sciences**



CUD has embarked upon a five-year partnership with Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada to collaborate on curriculum development and student transfer initiatives in the fields of health and social sciences.

Building upon CUD's existing suite of programs in the School of Public Health & Health Sciences, the new agreement will see the two institutions work on curriculum development in disciplines such as psychology, water science and environmental science. The partners will also work on the creation of opportunities for existing CUD Environmental Health Management students to transfer their studies to health science programs at Laurier.

As CUD prepares to bring forward a new undergraduate degree in social work, the partnership is expected to explore how Canadian accreditation principles will be incorporated in the curriculum, and how students can incorporate a period of Canada-based study in their program.

Meanwhile in the social sciences field, the two

institutions will work collaboratively on ideas to create combined honours degrees that will attract awards from both universities. It is also anticipated that CUD will benefit from Laurier's expertise in policing education, and explore the opportunity of delivering degrees and corporate training to the police service in Dubai.

Wilfrid Laurier University has more than a century of history in Canada's higher education landscape, offering more than 110 programs in nine different faculties. With over 19,000 students across two campuses and two additional sites, it is a university with an international outlook, already holding exchange agreements with institutions in 28 countries.

This new agreement comes following a visit by CUD President, Pr. Karim Chelli, to Laurier's campus in Waterloo, Ontario, where discussions took place on the areas of mutual interest to the two institutions. The visit culminated in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding which will take forward the areas of cooperation.

Speaking about the partnership, Pr. Chelli said, "We are delighted to embark upon this collaboration, which promises to open up several new, exciting avenues for strategic development for both our institutions. Equally, we are honoured to have Wilfrid Laurier University join our ever-growing network of Canadian partners, and to provide our students with another range of opportunities to access the best in Canadian higher education."

Dr. Deb MacLachy, Laurier's Provost and Vice-President: Academic, and incoming President and Vice-Chancellor said, "We are very happy to have signed this MOU with the Canadian University Dubai. This agreement will bring together some of the strengths of each institution to create pathways for students and exciting collaborative research opportunities. We welcome the knowledge and talent that faculty and students from CUD can share with us as we build on the teaching and research possibilities that come from this partnership."

## COLLABORATION WITH L'ORÉAL AIMS TO BOOST CREATIVE TALENT

**New MoU to establish enhanced learning opportunities for CUD students**



Canadian University Dubai (CUD) and L'Oréal Middle East have joined forces to help bring forward and nurture the creative talents of students, as part of a new agreement signed recently between the two organizations.

Building upon Brandstorm, the company's international student innovation competition, L'Oréal Middle East will work with CUD on a range of initiatives that will provide practical, enhanced learning opportunities for students at the University.

The new collaboration was sealed with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding by Thierry Houssin, Managing Director of L'Oréal Middle East, and Pr. Karim Chelli, President and Vice-Chancellor of CUD, during a recent ceremony held on campus. As the world-leading beauty company with more than a century in the business, L'Oréal has a long history of creating innovative educational experiences across university campuses around the globe, to help the organization identify and develop the best international student talent.

Bringing this tried and tested approach to CUD, the new agreement will pave the way for students to take up career-defining internship opportunities, learn from professional guest lecturers about real-world business challenges, and benefit from programs designed and developed by experts at L'Oréal Middle East.



Speaking at the signing ceremony, Mr. Houssin said, "At L'Oréal, our focus is on people; we are constantly looking for future leaders, and millennials are at the heart of

our HR strategy. This is a very strategic and important partnership for us as it provides a critical gateway to interact and recruit young talent in the region, to work in the region, for the region."

For CUD, the partnership builds upon plans already underway to introduce a suite of new business programs, including a Bachelor of Business Administration in Luxury Marketing. In the meantime, teams of CUD students are already honing their branding skills through the 2017 edition of Brandstorm.

Commenting on the collaboration, Pr. Chelli said, "Developing students that are industry-aware and job-ready is a vital part of the educational experience at CUD. Our partnership with L'Oréal Middle East represents an unrivalled opportunity for our students to learn about business from the perspective of a world-renowned commercial brand; a unique experience that will help to give them the edge as they prepare for the world of work."

## CUD SPORTS TEAMS SCORE SUCCESS

CUD athletes lead the way in inter-university competitions



Teams from CUD have scored a number of successes in the annual inter-university sports competitions held during the Spring semester.

The men's football team triumphed in a nail-biting penalty shootout to take the title at the 4th Skyline Inter-University Sports Festival.

Led by team captain and playmaker, Rekan Khalid, the side won through to the finals of the competition with consecutive wins over Manipal University, Amity University, and event hosts, Skyline University College.

The tense competition finale followed a nil all draw in regular time between CUD and challengers Herriot Watt University, with CUD going on to win by four goals to three after penalties.

The team's success was topped off with another accolade for Rekan. In addition to lifting the competition trophy, the team captain was recognized with the player of the

tournament award for his outstanding display of talent and sportsmanship.

Rekan said, "It was a great team effort that saw us take the title and with so many good competitors it was an honour for me to be recognized as the best player."

Moving on to the annual Gulf Medical University Sports Festival, the largest inter-university festival of its kind in the region, the CUD men's basketball team fought through to the finals of their event, ultimately finishing as runners up against the University of Sharjah. The men's tennis team, meanwhile, emerged as champions in their own event during the six-day festival.

It was the CUD duo of Patrick Saba and Shahmir Gill that beat Manipal University in the semi-finals of the tennis competition to reach the grand finale of the event. Both players went on to win their games against opponents from BITS Pilani to lift the tournament trophy.

The triumphant teams returned to the University campus to share their success with President, Pr. Karim Chelli, and Sports Manager, Mr. John Sherratt, before adding the cups to the ever-growing collection in the CUD trophy cabinet.



## GRADUATE STUDENTS PUBLISH IN INTERNATIONAL JOURNALS

MBA research receives international recognition



Students of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program at CUD have recently seen their graduate studies research feature in two international, peer-reviewed publications in the field of business and management.

Authors Viraj Shah, Pooja Shah, Hind Alawadhi, Ali Sharif and Nadia Al Arif had their paper entitled "Scanning Changes in Organizational Culture and Leadership: The Founder and Corporate Executive Officer's Lived Experiences in a Multicultural Environment", accepted for publication in the peer-reviewed periodical, the International Journal for Business and Management.

The paper was part of the students' final project for the MBA Organizational Behaviour course, led by Associate Professor and Chair of Human Resource Management, Dr. Rommel Sergio. Alongside its publication in the journal, the paper was also selected for presentation at the International Conference on Business,

Education, Engineering and Science, hosted recently in Dubai.

The conference was sponsored by the International Association of Scholarly Publishers, Editors, and Reviewers and Cromwell UK, and brought together almost 100 participants representing 20 nationalities from 4 continents, to collaborate on the advancement of business research.

Viraj, who presented the paper said, "It was an honour to have our research recognized by such experienced academics. The conference provided a great opportunity for us to share our research and network with knowledgeable experts in the field. We are thankful to Dr. Rommel for encouraging us to strive for publication and we thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience."

Meanwhile, fellow MBA students, Louis Jos Moyalán, Hadi Ramadan Al-Ali, and Mana Mohammed Al Bannai, have collaborated

with Dr. Sergio to author the paper "Human Resource Management Practices: A Case of Telecommunication Company in the United Arab Emirates." The research has featured in the Proceedings of the International Conference on Leadership, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, produced by Springer International Publishing.

With a rigorous peer-review process, both publications exemplify the best research practices and quality in the field, laying testament to the credibility and value of the students' work. Dr. Sergio commented, "Our research culture at CUD reflects the growing trend that students should not simply submit their research projects to pass or to obtain a good grade. They must be able to publish and/or deliver their papers at international conferences; to disseminate the results of their study thereby contributing to the body of knowledge in the management field."

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY COURSES LAUNCHED

### African delegation first to benefit from social responsibility programs



CUD and Canada-based CSR Training Institute have hosted two back-to-back training courses on 'CSR and Shared Value as a Foundation for Innovation and Success' and 'Impact CSR and Shared Value: Walking the talk PROFITABLY'. A group of employees from Ghana Revenue Authority participated in the inaugural courses held recently in Dubai.

The intensive programs focused on achieving results, and examined cases and examples from around the world and across industries and sectors, identifying common themes and approaches that drive impact. Besides the classroom training, there were also field trips to Dubai Customs and World Free Zones Organization.

Wayne Dunn, Founder and President of the CSR Training Institute and Professor of Practice in CSR at McGill University, who delivered the course, said, "The group from Ghana showed great interest and strong commitment to apply what they learnt and to make a difference to their organization. CSR Training Institute has been active for about a year in a small way in the Gulf, and with this partnership we are looking forward to doing more."

The participants expressed their satisfaction over the course and were highly enthusiastic about applying the concepts to their organization. Adam Iddris, Assistant Revenue Officer of Ghana Revenue Authority, said, "The key take-away was that we need to connect an organization's activities to society. Any disconnect will lead to social unrest. The course was professionally conducted by the trainer and guest speakers."

Essie Theresa Maria Sekyi, Assistant Commissioner-Training, commented, "I was Impressed with way the course was organized, combining social, industrial and academic aspects. CSR and Shared Value is something that everyone should be aware of. We need to be there for one another. This generation needs to be more community-focused. GDP is not the only measurement of economic growth; social progress index is highly important."

Robert Nana Mensah, Assistant Commissioner-Communication/Publication Affairs, said as a revenue collection agency, Ghana Revenue Authority must show the human side of the organization. "Through this course, we got an opportunity not only to learn modern

concepts but also to gain a wider outlook by visiting some Dubai projects. As we are in the process of developing our CSR policy, the course has given us insights that will be very useful going forward."

The program used cutting edge lectures, group work and case studies to combine theory and practice in a way that enables participants to align societal and shareholder value, and begin producing immediate impact.

“The key take-away was that we need to connect an organization's activities to society. Any disconnect will lead to social unrest. The course was professionally conducted by the trainer and guest speakers.”

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## CUD ALUMNA LEADS GLOBAL CONSERVATION CAMPAIGN

### Environmental Sciences graduate represents Middle East in youth wildlife organization



Rahaf Al Saif, a graduate of Environmental Health Management from CUD, is among a team of young people driving forward the international campaign for wildlife conservation as part of a newly formed global youth organization.

Youth for Wildlife Conservation (Y4WC) is a worldwide network of early-career conservationists, aiming to be pioneers, innovators, and instigators of positive change in the conservation arena. A committee member of the new organization, Rahaf has been taking a leading role in its communications strategy, as well as designing the group's logo.

Rahaf's appointment to the Y4WC committee follows her participation in the inaugural Youth Forum for People and Wildlife, organized by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), in collaboration with the Disney Conservation Fund, held in South Africa in 2016. Rahaf represented the entire Middle East region at the Forum, joining 34 delegates from 25 countries to discuss some of the world's most challenging wildlife issues.

According to Rahaf, the delegates were so motivated by their exchanges at the event that they took the initiative to establish Y4WC, to help create an international movement with a community focus. She explained, "The inspirational experience of the inaugural Youth Forum for People and Wildlife became a catalyst for the formation of Y4WC. Our

mission is to support early-career wildlife conservationists with innovative ideas, empowering them to become facilitators of change in their local communities."



The Youth Forum took place on the sidelines of the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES - the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, which went on to adopt the first ever resolution on youth, calling for engagement and empowerment of young people in conservation issues.

The resolution also welcomed the Youth Forum for People and Wildlife and South Africa's Youth and Conservation Programme

to engage young people, and to serve as examples of ways to integrate youth in wildlife conservation. Building on the resolution, the UN World Wildlife Day for 2017 will be held under the theme, 'Listen to the young voices'.

For her part, Rahaf has spent several years campaigning on wildlife issues, including work with IFAW in Dubai. Her experience in South Africa was an opportunity to take her campaign overseas, learn more about the movement from likeminded people, and meet key actors in the field including the UAE's own Ministry delegate, H.E. Eng. Mariam Mohammed Saeed Hareb.

Rahaf revealed, "It was a privilege to hear from and speak openly to experts, who taught me more about my field of work – wildlife trade – which I have followed closely in the Gulf region. I came to realize the shocking scale

and devastation of wildlife trade throughout the world; it is a complex issue that is having a huge impact on wildlife populations.

"Nevertheless, meeting people who shared my passion and goals made me realize that there's still hope for wildlife and the environment. By investing in other young change makers, Y4WC and its supporters will help them to find innovative solutions to the conservation challenges in their own regions."



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