Student Majlis attends retreat with advisors

By Sahrr Malik
Secretary, Student Government

Now that the elections are over, the promises made by the Student Majlis have become a platform for our goals this year. We plan to be a proactive participant in the Carnegie Mellon Qatar community.

To determine how the Majlis was going to live up to its election promises, its members gathered together with advisors at the Diplomatic Club on February 17th.

The goal of this retreat was to bring the Student Majlis together as a cohesive organization. In this first and crucial meeting, initial strategies were developed to achieve the stated goals of the members.

The retreat began with a light-hearted bonding activity to bring our members closer together. Each member picked a number and answered a corresponding question.

While I will not disclose the names of my colleagues, I must admit that some answers were quite revealing. For example, I learned that someone has a very strange phobia of Barbie dolls. Needless to say, our bonding activity was a success that brought us closer as an organization and, more importantly, as friends.

After a few laughs, the Student Majlis was ready to get to work. The first topic on the agenda was Student Majlis roles. We discussed, expanded on and clarified the roles and the positions of the

Doha Debates talks about whether the niqab is a barrier with the West

By Bryan Zerbe
Director of Admissions, Carnegie Mellon Qatar

I had the opportunity to attend the February Doha Debate, which presented the motion “The veil is a barrier to integration with the West.”

Moderator Tim Sebastian of the BBC hosted four Muslim speakers, three of whom lived in the U.K. and one from the U.S. Nazir Ahmed, of Rotherham, a member of the House of Lords, and Reem Maghribi, founder of the Al-Sharq lifestyle magazine for British Muslims, spoke for the motion. Ayyah Ismail, a teacher at a Muslim girls’ school in northern England and Ahmed Younis, the former director of the U.S. Muslim Public Affairs Council and an adviser to U.S. presidential candidates, spoke against the motion.

This was my first Doha Debate and many of my impressions of the event were positive.

The logistics and set were extremely well organized and the format allowed for plenty of questions and interaction from the audience, which numbered more than 300 and included HH Sheikah Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Missned and several other Qatar Foundation board members.

As an experienced moderator and talk show host, Sebastian was able to maintain a good balance of questions and comments supporting and opposing the motion. As a Westerner, it was very enlightening for me to see that there was disagreement among Muslims as to whether wearing the niqab, which is a face veil covering the lower part of the face, is a religious decision or a fashion decision.

Less impressive was the audience’s, and at times the speakers’, tendency to stray from the motion under debate. Comments and questions often drifted away from the premise of the niqab being a barrier and focused instead on whether women have the right to wear it, which is a related but ultimately different question.

Based on the tone of the questions and comments from the audience, I expected the majority to oppose the motion. I was therefore surprised when 57% of the audience voted in favor of it.

My personal viewpoint is that for Muslims living in Western countries where the niqab is not worn, the niqab does present a barrier to societal cohesion. However, I also believe that people have the right to dress as they choose, within the bounds of decency, and that efforts to ban the niqab in some European countries are misguided.

The Doha Debates are an outstanding forum for Education City students to learn about issues affecting this region and the world at large. If you have not yet had the opportunity to attend one, I strongly urge you to go.
1, 2, 3, Blank: Dive into a day in a fish’s world

By Lina El-Manshawy
Features Editor

"You have a memory of a goldfish!"
That is how people would make fun of their forgetful friends. Goldfish are said to have really short memory spans. Until a couple of years back, scientists believed that fish in general have three second memory spans. This explains how a goldfish kept in a bowl on your windowsill will not die of boredom. As a goldfish finishes one lap around its fishbowl it forgets all about it and starts over again.


In the past year, scientific studies were done to test the short term memory spans of fish. In one study involving building a maze full of holes in water, fish proved to be much smarter than previously thought.

Experiments showed fish became faster as they started recognizing which holes led to the end of the maze and which ones had food. This study triggered a two-sided argument between scientists. Some believed that this experiment proved that fish have “conditional” or selective memories.

They believed that fish had instinctive abilities that allow them to differentiate between whether an action is the right one to take or whether this action will bring harm. When fish owners approach the fish tank, the fish directly swims to the top of because of the instinct that food always gets dropped when the owner comes.

On the other hand, some researches oppose this idea of fish having instinctive feelings to take actions. They simply believe that fish have memory spans that are able to last a minimum of three months. Those researchers have conducted further studies about goldfish including an experiment which demonstrates that not only can fish think and remember, but also tell time and adapt to new and unknown changes in the environment.

In this experiment, a fish was placed in a bowl and not given food until it pressed a lever switch and gradually, the fish realized that food will only come when that lever is pressed. As part of the experiment, the lever switch was switched off and turned on one hour everyday. Soon enough, the fish recognized that the lever does not bring food except for an hour each day and surprisingly only attempt to press the lever in that hour interval everyday.

Although a three month memory span is relatively short, fish have proven that they are not as stupid as we believed they were. Scientists will continue to quarrel upon whether or not the fish’s memory span reaches three months but until then, at least we know that they are not just swimming laps in their tanks repeating the same actions every three seconds.

Stage Fright: tips and tricks on avoiding and dealing with it

By Wesam Said
Features Editor

Statistics show that people’s number one fear is public speaking. This means that an average person would rather die, than speak in public.

As we take part in stage demanding activities such as case competition presentations and Business Communication presentations among other things we are learning what stage fright is all about.

College is an excellent preparation for you to learn how to deal with your mistakes before you enter the real world. Don’t be discouraged; the fact that you made it through a stage experience makes you a hero.

The idea of critical eyes watching you and the pressure you put on yourself to please the public eye can be awfully intimidating. Your mouth is dry, you throat is tight, you have a fast pulse, sweaty and shaky hands. The good news is that when you’re on the stage, you don’t feel the fear as much as you did beforehand. So how do you overcome the anxiety, and control the symptoms?

Know that your stress is excitement; The symptoms associated with your nervousness, are the same symptoms you get when you’re riding a roller coaster or getting married. Your job is to associate being on stage with fun, rather than with fright.

Move your muscles around. Walk around the building and move your arms to stretch as if you’re warming up for a game. The stretch helps you relax. Take deep breaths. You hear this a lot, but it is really important. As you exhale you trick your body into thinking that you are relieved. This helps lower your stress level.

Watch what you eat. You may not feel like eating, but if you don’t, you start to feel low blood sugar symptoms (The same symptoms of stage fright). However, it’s smart to eat a few hours before, not right before. Avoid steak & milk (dairy can irritate the vocal chords). Also, try not to eat candy bars; they only give you energy for a short time and then tire you out. Most importantly, eat carbohydrates for energy.

This may be hard but avoid drinking caffeine or smoking for the obvious reason that you are raising your stress level. However, if you are a smoker, it may be harder to relax your nerves without smoking.

Exercising also can help relax your nerves as it releases endorphins. So not only do you feel happy but you boost your self-confidence. Even if you just exercise the night before your presentation, you will be surprised at the effect it has on your mentality.

My advice to you is to really think of what you are saying and how you are delivering it. In the end do not stress so much on what people think of you at that moment; you’re better off proving that you’ve got what they are looking for.

Mehrunissa Anis (Tepper 2009) tries to deal with her stage fright.
Doha Debates discusses wearing the niqab

By Naif Al-Kaabi
BA Student Ambassador, Student Government

The Doha Debates Series is a program where two sides argue over a proposed issue: one side for the issue and the other against it. The debate is moderated by Tim Sebastian of the BBC.

In the last Doha Debates the issue was “This House believes the face veil is a barrier to integration in the West.”

The debate began with the personal touch and the closed community of the clusters, which were randomly assigned to the clusters, which were tasked with creating their own identity. My cluster already knew each other. We were all of different nationalities and had one: Nokheta, which is the leader of the pearl diving ship.

The memory of Nokheta is the first time it was used as a personal touch to a cluster. Not just myself, but every one of the participants.

As we directly embarked on the highlight of our six day stay, we wore the niqab explained how she lives and works in London as a teacher and is an active member in the society. She claims that the veil does not stop her from having a normal engaging life in London.

Another point that was brought up in the discussion is that wearing the veil should not be a barrier, since people have the right to choose what they wear and how they appear in public. Moreover, a quote that emphasizes such an important point is “it is not the veil that is the barrier it is the ignorance surrounding it.”

The memories still live on in our minds and hearts, but they will live on even longer since I immortalized them in the videos and photos that I have been recording.

LeaderShape 2007: a six-day journey to success

By Yasser M. Khan
Web Editor

Many people think it would be crazy to spend spring break doing something that involves work or studying.

Yet many of us chose to head to Al-Khor to attend LeaderShape, which is one the best leadership conferences ever. Since this is the first time it was being held outside of the United States, none of us knew what we were getting ourselves into.

We departed on a Friday afternoon, having waited outside in the sweltering heat. People had doubts regarding this, but I told them that this is the risk that we have chosen to take. It’s part of our lives, and we will build upon this.

Who would want to throw away an opportunity to develop oneself as a leader that would bring about great change? As I love to say: Take Chances, Make Mistakes and Get Messy!

We endured a half hour journey to our destination – Al-Sultan Beach Resort. The surprising part was that some of us had randomly assigned roommates, while others got to stay alone. How fortunate.

After separating ourselves from our luggage, we directly embarked on the highlight of our six day stay – training ourselves to be the leaders of the future that are forward looking and thinking, strong-willed, courageous and more.

One of the best parts of LeaderShape was the so-called concept of “family clusters.” We were randomly assigned to the clusters, which were tasked with creating their own identity. My cluster already had one: Nokheta, which is the leader of the pearl diving ship.

The personal touch and the closed community gave us the feeling that we were one big family, and allowed us to express our deepest thoughts and feelings to our members. The bond that we established has helped us to learn from each other. Even our beloved mail-bags gave us the sense of being part of a bigger family. People would tend to drop notes into other people’s mailbag, usually when they are not around.

I know mine was stuffed like a Christmas stocking hanging near the chimney.

The biggest lesson I learned is not how capable I am as being a leader, but rather how I never really knew myself deeply. People helped me recognize that. I may have underestimated my personal character and abilities.

I learned that being a leader is not just about leading people. It’s about formulating a vision for the benefit of the community. A true leader is selfless in his actions and shows concern for issues that affect the community as a whole.

I also learned that to achieve one’s goals and ambitions, one must be committed to taking the action to implement change. By putting our thoughts to pen and paper and narrowing our focus to the issue that one feels is very important, nothing is impossible.

LeaderShape taught me that “Leaders have a healthy disregard for the impossible.” We can achieve our vision if we work towards it.

However, all things do come to an end. Even to this very moment, I miss my beloved family cluster. Not just myself, but every one of the participants.

Too bad we couldn’t spend an extra day or two.

The memories still live on in our minds and hearts, but they will live on even longer since I im
**STUDENT INTERVIEW**

**Iran’s Current Political Position**

By Hanadie Yousef
Politics/World Events Editor

Hadi Darwishi is a freshman at Georgetown University, studying in the Foreign Services program. He is of Iranian nationality and lives here in Qatar.

**What do you think of Iran’s nuclear power program? Is it truly for peaceful purposes or do you think there is a goal of shifting Middle East power and making a weapon?**

People look at Iran as being a backwards country and usually attribute this to the system of government. The nuclear program is seen as something that can help Iran’s economy by helping the country advance. There is no reason why Iran shouldn’t have a nuclear program.

In regards to shifting power in the middle-east by acquiring technology to make a nuclear weapon, I see it as a feasible possibility. Any country in Iran’s political position would want to have some sort of muscle in order to not be a push-over, as most of the Arab nations have come to be, or come to look like.

I don’t see Iran sending any nuclear bombs over to Israel to “wipe them off the map” because it’s just not realistic. The only way Iran’s power in the middle-east can shift is if it faces an attack from the United States, in which case I don’t see a war weary country (the USA) being very successful in another war while not yet done with its war in Iraq.

**What is your opinion on President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad? Do you think he makes bold statements, such as questioning the holocaust? Is he a good leader? Are his political actions in the favor of the people?**

I’m personally a very realistic person when it comes to politics and people in political positions. Presidents as elected individuals have to serve the interests of the people, while at the same time looking to secure the country’s interests as a whole on a national and international theater.

These often come into conflict with one another, and so criticism of not doing enough is something that every president will face and be accountable for. They can’t always keep everyone happy. I don’t live in Iran so I can’t really judge on whether or not he’s doing any good for his people, but those I’ve talked to maintain that he’s a “people’s President.” After all, Iran is made up of a large population of poor people, and it was the poor who he got most of his votes from.

**Do you think Iran is meddling in Iraq?**

With the Iraq issue, it would be quite viable to contest that Iran is “meddling” with the situation because of the party politics that is going on there. It would obviously be in Iran’s favor to have the Iraqi leadership under Shia’s control. As far as whether or not they are actually involved in anything, there have been claims, but very little evidence, and I read in a news article on BBC that a lot of the things that the American and British governments use as evidence have been fabricated in the past, and this was coming from an American source (link below). Another thing is that with some violence going on in Iran concerning minority Sunni groups on the boarders, in places like Ahvaz, Iran has consistently claimed that the British and Americans have been stirring up trouble. So these allegations have been going both ways.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6353923.stm

**What is your opinion on Iran’s support of the Palestinians? On the Funding of Hizbollah? In general, on actions in the greater Middle East? Do you think Iran is trying to shift control of power?**

Iran has been funding Hezbollah for quite some time because no one else has been. And it can be safely contended that there would be no Palestine if it wasn’t for assistance from Iran. I don’t know whether they’re trying to shift power or not in this situation, but I can imagine that the Iranian government doesn’t want Israel to take complete control of the area – it wouldn’t be in Iran’s or the region’s interest if they do so.

I doubt much power would shift towards Iran’s benefit if the fight in Lebanon is kept up, so I see it as more of an ideological fight. If ideology is the question here, then the trouble is that the Arab countries, which are majority

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Hadi Darwishi, freshman at Georgetown University (left), and Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (right). Ahmadinejad photo source www.siyassa.

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What do you think about Iran’s relationship with the US and Europe? Do you think Iran is in trouble? What are your future predictions?

The possibility of a war, as far as I personally see is very unlikely. There is a danger of a bad defeat if America goes to war because of how the American people have had enough of it.

On a separate note, I don’t see congress funding another costly war. No money, no war. America went into Iraq with the WMDs being the reason for it. When they didn’t find anything, they tried to divert people’s attentions with what I see as nothing more than a show trial of Saddam to keep people busy with something else besides the WMDs. It can even be argued that the Iran issue has been exploited by the government through the media for the same purpose, to divert people’s attentions away from Iraq. But again, that’s just another theory.

The Middle East does need a leading country in the region to put against super powers like the USA and the EU. The problem though is that they’re all divided. In the unlikelihood of an American invasion, the people would probably side with Iran, while the “people’s governments” will stand by the US because they have economic interests that will prevail.

Either this, or they will take up a “neutral” stance, in which case it would be another way of saying they’re on the American side. Unless the Arab countries put aside the Shia’s vs. Sunni issue that has divided the region for so long, there will be no conciliation to form a powerful stance with Iran against the West. The other reason for a power not forming is that almost all the countries in the middle-east or the Gulf at least, are quite content with their situations and will not want to get involved.

However, one must ask questions like: will Qatar for example, with the biggest American base abroad, want to have operations and commands coming out from its grounds with Iran right above it in the case of a war? It’s very likely that Iran will counter if this does happen, in which case Qatar will have to make a choice. I’d call that a dilemma.
Facebook: a social monopoly of poking and tagging

By Siddharth Arora
Contributing Writer

Life at Carnegie Mellon Qatar is more than just taking loads of courses in a semester, staring blankly at mundane Power Point slides during classes, and picking on zombies who occasionally emerge from the A055 computer lab and haunt social meeting places like the recreation room.

It’s also about more than eating the same bland food at the cafeteria week after week. Those freshman without cars know what I mean.

I’m a senior old in this university now. When I entered, I was basically told to come equipped with some things that I’d need for college, which were: 1. The phone numbers to all the fast food joints in the Rayyan area, including those food stalls which you’d never normally go. Well, that’s because it’s only those food stalls that save you at 3 a.m. during “all-nighters” at university.

2. Five alarms to wake me up for Professor Oliver’s classes at the dawn of each day.

3. A bunch of 1 Riyal bills to feed those nasty vending machines and keep my caffeine intake stable (well, if you don’t have these bills, you can still beg your way across, people are nice enough)

4. An ATM card

5. A Facebook account

Most of the things above seemed understandable, except for that last one: A Facebook account. Though I had heard remotely about the social networking site before, I chose not to pay attention to it.

What then followed was the Facebook revolution, a process of smooth transition between high school and college, and an attempt to join an improvement over crappy old school social networks like hi5. So I created an account and immediately got introduced to this whole new world of “writing on walls,” “pokes” and “tags.”

So now that weird conversation that I overheard during orientation made more sense than before, since I just couldn’t understand back then what two sophomore kids were saying during the orientation when they were fighting over why they kept poking each other. Thank God it made sense finally since I had started giving creepy looks to these two.

The Facebook fiasco carried on and it still does, though in a relatively lesser way. I joined these groups, where you can basically write something on the “wall” once for a certain topic of interest and then forget the group even exists. I initially took pride in the fact that I was a tagged element in absolutely random pictures, until it became quite irritating to have my Web mail flooded with tags and wall posts.

The advantage however, was that I found a lot of my long lost friends whom I’ve still managed to stay in contact with. However it just irritates me to be updated that a random but most of my tagged friend of mine is attending a random mid semester ball in an even more random Bryan Hall or somewhere else in the middle of nowhere.

Another of one of the biggest tick offs are those ridiculous pokes, where I’m poked by weird looking friends whom I’ve added from the Carnegie Mellon Pittsburgh campus and the conversation proceeds only from mutual pokes unless I stop for fear of losing it.

Although it is packed with all these absolutely funny and nonsensical frustrating features, it is still the biggest most popular social network today followed by “my space” and the rest of the Brady bunch. Thus, on a more serious note I’d like to request everyone keep a check on their Facebook profiles especially around the time when you might be looking to be employed or selected for internships.

Companies also have access to Facebook now and so, honestly, you don’t really want prospective employers to check you out in your prom queen makeover for a Halloween fancy dress party.

So, this is what I think of the situation. For now, its time you got back to what you were doing before you stumbled onto this issue of All Around. Excuse me for now but I need to go poking.

Islam and the economies of love in a changing world

By Omar Khan
Contributing Writer

Many people believe that since Islam does not condone the celebration of Valentine’s Day that it is against “spreading love.” I would like to make it clear that Islam is not against love but rather has set different and do not use it as a proof because I am not an authority on our religion or economics. The article does not do justice to the topic as when commented on by scholars of Islam, who use the sources of Islam in their arguments. Of course the arguments presented may have flaws since I wrote them myself. The article does not do justice to the topic as when commented on by scholars of Islam, who use the sources of Islam in their arguments. I wish people read it for a taste of something different and do not use it as a proof because I am not an authority on our religion or economics.
PROFESSIONAL DAY
A Stepping Stone to Success

By Marium Chandna
Staff Writer

In almost three years of its existence, several prominent events have glorified the timeline of celebrations at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar.

The Business Administration and Computer Science schools of Carnegie Mellon, which rank amongst the top institutions in the United States, have mirrored the excellence and high-class standards of the home campus in every aspect.

To add yet another feather in its cap, Carnegie Mellon Qatar held its first Professional Day on March 21st 2007.

This event saw the leading business houses and establishments in Qatar come together under one roof to identify, recognize and, hopefully, tap future leaders for their long-term growth and success.

Shortly after 5 p.m., the various stalls had begun to flood with sharp-looking, confident students who did not fail to build relations and make an exceedingly positive impression on these idols of thorough professionalism in the fields of business administration and computer science.

The faculty and staff were also present to welcome the participating companies and provide constant support to the students. For the first time in the short history of Carnegie Mellon Qatar, students of the freshman, sophomore and junior years were subject to direct exposure of the corporate world and received the opportunity to interact with real experts in both fields.

Despite the relatively small size of Carnegie Mellon Qatar, great effort, communication and relationship-building activity on the part of the Student Affairs team made this occasion not only possible, but an evening to remember. Last but not least, a special note of appreciation is well-deserved by Khadra Dualeh, Director Professional Development and Internation Education.

To her goes the credit of making this event a successful one. Several prominent events have mirrored the excellence and high-class standards of the home campus in every aspect.

A total of 27 companies participated in this prestigious event. They were: Al Fardan Group, Al Khaleej Bank, CISCO, Commercial Bank, ConocoPhillips, Deloitte & Touche, Doha Bank, Dolphin Energy, ExxonMobil, General Electric, Gulf Business Machines(GBM), Hewlett Packard, HSBC Bank, iHORIZONS, International Bank of Qatar(IBQ), KPMG, Microsoft, Nestlé, Qatar Airways, Qatar Financial Centre Authority, Qatar Financial Regulatory Authority, Qatar Petroleum, Q-Tel, RasGas, Shell, Sidra Medical and Research Center and Standard Chartered Bank.

Student Government Spending

By Siddharth Arora

The Vice President of Finance and the secretary/treasurer work together to cater to the financial requirements and budgeting for the diverse clubs and organizations on campus. They also aid the students of these clubs and organizations with the reimbursement process and the various procedures involved in the accounting of their payments.

They, along with the Vice President of Clubs and Organizations also offer advise to these clubs on how to use their funding in the most appropriate and justifiable manner, so that there are no conflicts with the internal administration later on. Moreover, the Student Majlis decided to submit a chart illustrating, where the students activity money goes.

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Ramsey Ramadan and Deloitte’s Representative (top), Nasser Rozwahni and Standard Chartered Bank Representative.
What or who do you love most and why?

By Rooda Al Neama
Opinion Editor

We thought we would get a little personal with the students and see what they truly love about life.

Shakir Hussain pondering seriously says: “Life…because... because...because…its EVERYTHING!”

Kaleem Rahman shrugs in a cool manner: “God because that’s why I am here”

Maha Obaidan blushes with a huge grin and says: “my parents, my friends because my life would be incomplete without them!”

Shakir Hussain pondering seriously says: “Life…because... because...because…its EVERYTHING!”

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Weaimed to improve the delivery of our messages, we would like to correct the errors made on the last issue. The first error was in the spelling of our All Around staff writer Marium Chandna. The second error was an incomplete article titled Time to get active: fitness Challenge 2007 is on, on the last page.

We would like to apologize to Marium for the misspelling of her name and to all readers for the incomplete article. We promise to continue to put great effort into avoiding these mistakes.

Eatidal Al Qatami is confused by the question and then answers: “Babies because they’re so cute and innocent” then bursts into laughter after realizing what she said.

Fatima Al Fakhri blushes sweetly and answers “I don’t know…” while her friends scream you love pink! She answers, “I really do love pink!”

Shahriar Haque answers firmly: “My mom, and I don’t need a reason to love her!”

Rishav Bhowmick smilingly says: “Music because I can…because it bring me to a better mood when I’m in a bad mood, and it makes chill!”

Nasreen Zahan says with a grin and half her eyes closed “I love sleep because I’m a lazy bum!”

Maha Al Shirrawi answers: “I love my family and I love designing things! Do you want to know what I hate?” No it wasn’t the question, but a great idea for the next issue!
What if you could change history?

By Mariam Chandna
Staff writer

“If you had a choice to go back in time and be a certain historical figure, who would it be and why?”

“Alan Turing. That would make CS a lot easier!”
-Hatem Allsmail, CS Sophomore

“Mother Teresa. I have always been amazed by the good work she does.”
-Dana Hadan, BA Sophomore

“Charlie Chaplin. We’re in the same boat… no further explanations…”
-Shakir Hussain, CS Freshman

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Xna Presents:

The Talent Show!

Date: April 18th

Where: Lecture Hall 1

Bring: Your TALENT!

Put your name down for participation by April 10th.
For more information please contact:

Bayan Taha: byt@qatar.cmu.edu
Hala Abbas: habbas@qatar.cmu.edu
Wesam Said: wzs@qatar.cmu.edu

Show off Your SKILLS!

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Thursday 12th April
4:30 PM

Lecture Hall 1

Treasure Hunt