IN FOCUS
Oman in the 21st Century

WHAT’S INSIDE
Flipped Teaching, Student’s space, Events & Activities and more...
Hello friends...

We bring to you another informative issue of The Dhow. Though the interval has been rather long, it provides you with an update on various MEC activities during 2014-2015.

The focus, this time is on Sultanate of Oman's position on the world scene, in the 21st century. In the 21st century, Oman has gained considerable recognition worldwide in almost all spheres. We have for you write-ups and opinions on how some of us perceive Oman's position in the world today.

Another interesting topic featured in this issue is the innovative practice of “Flipped Learning” adopted by MEC this academic year. This is an innovative approach to teaching and learning that promotes active learning by ‘flipping’ the traditional lecture-homework teaching approach on its head. MEC is the first Higher Education Institution in Oman to use the flipped learning approach across several disciplines. This initiative was taken in line with the college's commitment to enhancing students' learning experience. Discover more about this new approach in this issue.

Other features include brief profiles of the Quality Assurance Office (QAO) at MEC and the Centre for Foundation Studies and also bring you some insights into Big Data and Smart City, Anti-plagiarism drive and a short poem on the fear of numbers. A report on the MEC Week also features in this issue.

You will have the chance to read some interesting articles in the students’ section contributed by some of our enterprising students. There are a few in Arabic too!

Recounts of the English Club Annual Events during 2014-2015 provide you “a bird’s eye view” of the various activities conducted by the Club. Reports from the Placement and Industrial Relations Office give information on student related activities like the 7th Career Fair, Global Leadership Programme, Student Exchange Programmes and others, plus workshops conducted for students by AIESEC. Last but not the least, we have a brief write-up on the 10th Annual Graduation Day celebrated on December 2, 2015 at the Al Bustan Palace Hotel to felicitate our graduates.

Finally, on behalf of the Dhow team I would like to thank all the contributors of this issue, for having made this issue possible. We wish you all happy reading, and look forward to your continued support by making more contributions for The Dhow.

Good-bye and good luck.

Deepali Bhatnagar

The Dhow

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Oman is a beautiful, peaceful and upcoming country of the Gulf region with an immense wealth of natural beauty. As a nation, it has a harmonious blend of cultures and practises cultural and religious tolerance while maintaining its traditions, culture and heritage at the same time. The land is not only endowed with abundant gifts of nature but also blessed with gentle, welcoming and hospitable people, believing in peaceful co-existence.

In the 21st century, Oman has gained considerable recognition worldwide in almost all spheres. The nation has made notable advances in the fields of education, tourism, business and growth of infrastructure. In the field of Higher Education, the private sector has taken off in a big way, especially in post-secondary level education. Development of tourism and viable strategies to promote it have brought Oman to the forefront on the tourism map and made it one of the favoured destinations for tourists from all over the world, especially from the western countries. This focus on tourism is likely to give the nation an economic boost and socio-economic stability in the coming years.

Infrastructure development is another area which is being prioritized. The latest example in the growth of infrastructure is the current development taking place in Duqm, which comprises a ‘Special Economic Zone’ boasting the second biggest port in the Middle East and encouraging investments in a petrochemical factory, a refinery, an airport, hotels, housing, roads and railways to link the country with its neighbours (Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). Oman has made several reforms in the business industry also, over the last few years, improving the country’s goods and financial market efficiency too!

As a nation, Oman has made remarkable strides in the last forty–five years under the foresightedness, able guidance and selfless leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said. It has a bright future, gaining prominence on the world map in the 21st Century. One can confidently say that it has often been rightly referred to as “The Jewel of the Middle East.”
In this era of infrastructural development emerging all around the globe, the country we inhabit today is a part of this process. Oman is a country with an emerging economy and plenty of foreign investments and is known for its strength of petroleum industries and surplus mineral reserves in its soils. It consists of huge amount of oil reserves which rank 25th all around the globe.

On development basis various aspects are considered, such as the greenery and beauty of the country which is maintained in balance with the infrastructure. Oman is also rich in its splendid beauty of wildlife and marine life. It not only proves to be rich in wealth but also its rich culture and hospitality. Oman holds friendly foreign bonds all around the world and is encouraging toward tourists and expatriates. In the year 2010 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had ranked Oman as the world’s best developing country in the coming 40 years. Locals and other nationalities settled in Oman give it credit for the safety and security provided to them throughout their years of residing here. Oman is ranked as the 59th most peaceful country in the world concluded by the Global Peace Index.

The people honor and credit the ruler of Oman, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said entirely for where the country stands today globally. Plenty of human resource development projects are carried out for the education and uplifting of the citizens and their lifestyle. Oman has high educational standards of teaching affiliated with foreign universities such as Coventry, Bristol’s, South whales, Westminster etc. A lot of opportunities are provided to the youth to showcase their talents which are rightfully credited by the official bodies. Being an expatriate and living in Oman is a blessing in disguise since there are plenty of countries around the world where people don’t find peace and security for their families.

Life here, since eighteen years, has built a special bond of love and tranquility with Oman and its people. Personal experiences have a lot to convey and prove that the people living around you will always come to help you at your door step. One hopes for further development of the country with success and honor, to prosper in the upcoming years, and for the people to live a blissful life and achieve success in all their endeavors.
Oman is an ancient country with a rich historical background. It is the second largest country in the Gulf with a vast geographical area comprising a varied topography. Oman's land area is composed of valleys and deserts, mountain ranges (the Hajar and Dhofar ranges), and the coastal plain.

Oman is known as the “green desert”, as it is rich in natural beauty such as the lush green slopes of the Jabal Akhdar, which appear to be covered with green carpets. Moreover, the fabulous terrace farming with pink gardens of rose and pomegranates are also part of it. Thus Oman is home to immense natural beauty. It can also boast of high altitudes with breath-taking wadis where in flow the shiny waters of the falaj, with unique charms and many more hidden treasures. This leads the country to become a desired tourist destination. The country maintains the best environment and practices strict rules of cleanliness. It is a clean and green country and a peaceful place to live in, with the friendliest and most humble people residing in it.

In the present times, development is taking place at a fast pace in this nation, touching the highest peak since the last four and a half decades of the renaissance. The most crucial aspect which affects a country's progress is the leadership it has, which in the case of Oman is the excellent and wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said who has guided the people of Oman to achieve so much.

His Majesty is regarded as the benevolent and far-sighted leader who has improved the country both economically, socially and politically. He fulfills every minor and major need of his public living even in the remotest part of the country and keeps them happy and contented. He has dreams of bringing his country to the forefront, as one of the well-developed ones amongst the other countries of the world. By Almighty’s grace Oman is gradually coming in line with the other nations and has achieved recognition all over the world.

Oman’s revenues which are mainly from the production of crude oil, are consistently invested in building of national infrastructure, particularly roads, schools, hospitals and other utilities. Oil is exported out of the country too. The location of Oman is of a great advantage for the country as it has got a strategic trade location, coasting the Gulf of Oman and the Indian Ocean, giving it an economic advantage. This also makes it easy for the sea trade. Moreover, the country’s involvement in fisheries and agriculture, on a large scale, also fulfills its needs.

Oman has come across many challenges during its developing stages, but has been able to face them and overcome them successfully. It has always kept good relations with other countries of the world. The nation has always chosen the path of brotherhood and peace. Oman is also a very strict follower of every discipline and rule it has, such as the controlling of road traffic and making sincere efforts to prevent accidents. Similarly, even other crimes are at the lowest rate in this country.

Oman’s image in the 21st century is coming up like a bright star on the world map, mainly with its growing economy and development of infrastructure. The development is expected to reach its peak over a decade or two with more and more businesses developing such as the competitive malls which hope to boost the economy in a big way and contribute in the country’s progress. The Royal Opera House, which is the first of its kind in the Arab world, has brought Oman in front of the eyes of the world. Moreover there has been a lot of development in the infrastructure, such as the many new roads constructed over and around the mountains for the convenience of the people in order to reduce the traffic issues.

There are many more projects in progress such as the Muscat International Airport, the Duqm Port, the completion of the Salalah Airport, the Supreme Court and various other mega projects, giving the nation an opportunity to invest and develop. This has provided an opportunity for the natives for employment, to earn a modest living and to enhance their skills. Electricity and Telecommunication networks have reached even the most remote parts of the country. Schools and hospitals are also being built in the remotest areas for easy access and for the benefit and comfort of the people. Amongst the top thirty countries having the best roadways, Oman ranks 8th and stands 2nd in rank among the gulf countries.

As Oman is home to many natural treasures, it has become a centre of attraction for people all over the world, who come to explore its beauty and to view the charm of the country. It is mainly due to its promoting tourism in a big way that Oman has found a place in millions of hearts in the world.
The jewels of Oman include the green mountains with foggy skies and rain and dewdrops over the leaves that provide the most breath-taking scenario. Also the drizzle over the area makes one feel relaxed and pleasant.

Salalah, the second biggest city of Oman after Muscat, the capital, is like heaven on earth, especially during the summer months. It is a city in the Dhofar region which has a season called the Khareef season. It starts from mid-June and lasts until mid-September. It is the best place for experiencing peace and tranquility. Salalah is a fabulous and most sought after tourist destination of Oman. Visitors from all over the world come to this spot to enjoy the pleasure and charm of the place. The Khareef season is accompanied by the best harvest at the place. Fresh fruits and vegetables are harvested here.

Apart from this, there are many other mind blowing spots in Oman, like the highest point of the mountain ranges at Jabal Shams plus the deep explorable canyons surrounding the area, where people come for trekking. The huge caves such as the well-known Al Hoota caves and green wadis all over Oman also give it a unique touch. Hence Oman has become a tourist attraction for many.

Another fast growing field is that of Education, which is gaining momentum in Oman in a big way. There has been a lot of focus on this area in the last few years. Education has a very crucial role to play in one’s life other than playing a key role in the development of a nation. With the establishment of many universities and colleges offering various courses, the people of Oman are getting education up to the highest level, in all fields and disciplines, and therefore having a lot of opportunities for jobs in every sector, thereby contributing in the Omanization process. Many private schools, colleges and institutions are giving opportunities to the people of Oman and the Omani government is also providing them with the best facilities in this field.

Omani citizens have shown their hidden talents and made their nation proud and known almost all over the world in other fields also, including sports. Azza Bint Said Al Rashid Al Zakhwani, the first lady pilot in the Gulf, is from this nation.

Ahmed Al Harthy has made his nation’s flag fly high, having participated in the formula one race, in the west. He is Oman’s top racing driver and one of the Middle Eastern Sultanate’s leading international sportsmen. He is the 2012 Porsche Carrera Cup Great Britain Pro-Am 1 Champion.

Last but not the least, Fatmah Al Nabhani has made her country proud by playing tennis for Oman around the world and there are many more such high achievers who have raised the Omani flag high, all over the world, making their nation a popular one.

Lastly I would like to conclude with these words: “Oman has now moved on from the dark ages to a bright image in the 21st century”. Oman has a bright future as it has the best vision, mission and leadership with His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said as its glorious leader and the people willing to make a difference!

My Country: Oman
-Mohammed Yousuf Al Rawahi

Oman is a mystique land with a lukewarm breeze, which courses through, carrying a sensation of peace, tranquillity and hospitality. Encapsulating, the basic culture and traditions of a nation with so much to give, it is a nation with an abundance of colour and humble pride, which is ever so ascending.

The Sultanate of Oman introduces itself, as a front emerging from the water, mesmerizing the globe with its charm, beauty and mystery. She is a nation that entices diversity candidly, inviting change, but solid at its core, leaving a taste of pleasant emotions and the sound of harmony and non-aggression. Alluring tourists from far and wide, captivating them to discover its mysteries, it is an astonishing land with its deep heritage and high picturesque mountains.

It is slowly rising in the world, spreading neon lights on to the globe. It is an emerging nation, turning its face up to a crowd, presenting the best possible picture of itself. It is a puzzle to be put together, with joined hands and open minds.
“What is Oman’s position on the world scene in the 21st century, according to you?”

The above topic was placed on the MOODLE Forum and here are some of the responses received.

Yasser Ali Akbar Pir Muhammad Al Balushi

I will quote the words that His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said once said “A new era for a bright future for the nation and Omani citizens has just begun”. The Sultanate of Oman is well-known as a peaceful country in the Middle East. According to the 2013 Global Peace Index, the Sultanate of Oman was on the 45th position out of 165 countries in the world.

I salute His Majesty, because this was only possible because of his leadership and clear vision. We Omanis will never forget his preaching on tolerance among cultures and cooperation between nations.

Since the past four decades till now, the wheel of development has accelerated considerably as the Sultanate of Oman has galloped ahead in diverse fields right into the 21st century filled with hope and high ambition. I cannot stop myself from admiring and commenting that there is a massive change in our education system, empowerment of women, health and business, as well as technology and various systems to date.

Nassr Nasser Abdullah Al-Ubaidani

An excerpt from: Competitive Oman: The Road Ahead
By the International Research Foundation and Gemma Corrigan, World Economic Forum

“In an effort to move towards a knowledge- and service based economy, Oman has focused its attention on building sustainable and high-quality infrastructure and transport services, a skilled and flexible labour force, and a more advanced education system to develop, attract and retain the world’s most talented people and in turn support the growth of the country’s business community. To build and retain talent, Oman has made extensive educational (and labour market) reforms in recent years, an important part of Oman’s “Vision 2020”. Emphasis has been placed on improving standards and the quality of basic education, with a greater focus on the sciences and on increasing female participation among students and staff” (The International Research Foundation and Gemma Corrigan, World Economic Forum, 2012-2013).

Saud Sultan Hamood Al Rashdi

As stated in the World Economic Forum (WEF) report, Oman ranks 32nd among 144 countries, on the Global Competitiveness Index (2012-13). The Sultanate of Oman is positioned in the transitional stage, transiting from Stage 2 to Stage 3 as regards allocation of Arab countries to stages of development, according to the findings from the Global Competitiveness Index 2012-2013 (The Arab World Competitiveness Report 2013).

It is placed high in reliability of police services, having low expenditure in crime and violence, low levels of organized crime, and a corporate taxation system. It offers ample opportunities in employment for women and stands high in having a balanced government.

Oman is a young nation yet it has achieved quite a high position internationally. This is due to the foresightedness and great leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said and his vision for this country to be at the forefront, among others.


Ghalia Saleh Mohamed Al Raiisi

‘Oman’ is synonymous with ‘peace’. Oman is not only a part of the Arab nations who form the Gulf community; Oman is the world-wide reference to peace and coexistence.

At this time, even an impossible ambition can be achieved if determination and willpower come together, which is because of the far-sightedness of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos. God bless him and give him a long life. The vision of His Majesty and his wisdom has led Oman to progress at different levels which speaks a lot about the development of the country. The wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos is the reason that Oman is coming close to being at an equal level with countries which are at the threshold of the developed world.

In my opinion, the Sultanate of Oman is one of the TOP countries in all fields starting with being a peaceful country and having His Majesty as its ruler. It has gained a high level in various fields like health services, safety, education, airports, transportation and road networks, tourism etc. Furthermore, the women in Oman have reached excellent positions and are motivated to do more. I believe ‘YES’ they are doing their best keeping all difficulties behind them and facing the hurdles they may come across due to their responsibilities at home and at work. On the other hand, the Sultanate always gives recognition and never hesitates to give awards for those who are creative and accept challenges for a better life and also work for world benefit.

I’m very proud to be an OMANI girl who is led by H.M. SULTAN QABOOS wisdom.
If we are looking for the meaning of success, we will find lots of definitions on the world wide website or in the dictionary, but I prefer to write my own meaning of success which is:

“A successful person is a person who can achieve his goals and convert the impossible dreams to possible reality.”

The question now is, how can we achieve success in our life?? What are the secrets that are behind successful persons? The answers are as follows:

- When you believe in Allah and thank him for his gifts
- When you make your parents feel proud of your achievements
- When you help someone who needs your hands to stand up again
- When you smile for everyone and make them feel happy
- When you score very high grades after you work hard for a long time
- When you serve your society with your heart and soul
- When you deal with people in a good manner and forgive them for their mistakes
- When you manage your stress and convert the negative feeling into positive things
- When you make your manager feel happy of your efforts in the work life
- When you cover your life with goodness and are happiest
- When you believe in yourself and be confident to say the truth without being scared of anyone or anything

There are many other things that can make us successful persons. Let us try to do those things to feel happy and to make our society better because we do have the power and the ability to do that.
Job Mobility is a phenomenon spreading quickly in most countries of the world. What is “Job Mobility” and when and how does it happen? A simple definition of Job mobility is when people move from one job to another, the movement that involves change in the work environment, work place, occupational change or geographical change. On the other hand, that movement is also possible due to some reasons such as salary, social movement or working environment. Job mobility is a complex phenomenon and is dependent on many factors. A lot of questions emerge, to observe if this phenomenon is positive or negative in nature or whether it is healthy for a society or does it affect it badly. What are the motivational factors that lead to the occurrence of such a phenomenon and whether these motivational factors influence other aspects. People think that the main reason is the salary which motivates one to move to another job, but there are other factors that act as incentives.

What are the jobs of tomorrow?
Types of jobs differ from decade to decade and changing jobs is not constant because there are some factors that affect this. These are:
1. Advances in technology
2. The work environment using new techniques
3. The customer’s need for more services

People have to be aware of the future job because job profiles and occupations change rapidly. They have to study the economic trends and the growth of the industry and other areas to put themselves in the right job. Based on that, they have to train themselves in specific fields according to their expectation for the next 5 or 10 years or change their occupation profiles. (L.Krannich, 1994, p.53 ).

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, some occupation profiles become obsolete and are not required in the labor market. An example of this is: there are a lot of students who have an MBA degree and are still without any job. On the other hand, changes in technology also affects the industries. Therefore, to find a good job is dependent on three factors: interests, skills and abilities. (L.Krannich, 1994, p. 54).

Determining the best job for you
The Jobs Rated Almanac in America helps to determine the best job for a person based on six criteria namely: income, stress, physical demands, environment, outlook and security. Based on these criteria people can change their jobs, evaluate their existing job, and specify the best job suited to them. However, the new job needs skills, training and more experience in the labor market. (L.Krannich, 1994, p.63).

On the other hand, training is very expensive and not everyone can afford to pay for training or attend some training courses. However, at the same time, people have to put in their planning for future for which training is a key element and good investment for those who are thinking of changing jobs. Despite that, there are some specific institutions that provide scholarships, loans and study programs for people but one has to research and work harder to get those beneficial offers. However, a person should keep in mind that there is no relationship between costs and performance; you can find a good program at a low cost or find an expensive program with very low performance. The best strategy to find your way is to identify your options and start research. (L.Krannich, 1994, p.83 ). In order to do that, you have to first identify your objectives and goals, not based on yourself, but based on the employers’ requirements, because you are searching for a job for your future not for a temporary phase.

To begin, start drawing on your past and present and identify your strengths and weaknesses. Then visualise your future, based on your abilities and skills. After that, look to the employers’ needs and state what you can do and what you will be offered to accept, based on your objectives. However, your objective should reflect your honesty and integrity and the employer’s needs (L.Krannich, 1994, p.159 ).

To quote an example: Though jobs related to spatial mobility are a widespread phenomenon in Europe, this phenomenon is not affected and is not dependent on the nature of a country, or a gender, but depends on the rate of global social, economic, political and demographic changes, which lead to increasing demands on mobility. An extended mobility of employees is considered important in the ‘knowledge’ society and for social changes in Europe. However, job mobility is a key challenge situation in Europe because they face problems with how to encourage people without creating family and personal problems. The daily long distance commuting does not affect only the person who has to be mobile but the close environment as well. In addition, gender provides an obstacle to mobility of women who have families. Therefore, it has a negative effect on family development in case of women but not in the case of men. That happens because women find it difficult to balance between the three elements in life, which are home tasks, job and children. (www.jobmob-and-families.eu, 2011 ). In conclusion it can be said that job mobility can have both positive and negative effects at the same time.
SQU Mobile Application Strategy
-SAUD SULTAN HAMOOD AL RASHDI

One of the major trends in IT is the growth of mobile devices. As mobile devices become smarter and exhibit more features, their usage expands beyond their original scope. In this article the results of an empirical study on the use of mobile applications in Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) are being presented. Furthermore, the article will examine the different trends within the university for the usage of mobile devices in higher education. Based on the study, a mobility strategy is being developed for the university to adopt before embarking in mobile application development and rollout. In addition, Gartner strategy model is being used as a tool to aid the development of such a strategy. Finally, the main findings of the study are stated in conclusion to say how the mobility strategy helps.

As mobile devices penetrate the different enterprises, many organizations are considering developing mobile applications to cater for this trend. Although the development of the mobile application is one of the many pillars to achieve enterprise mobility, it is important for organizations to start developing a Mobility Strategy first. The objective of this part of the article is to highlight the development of a mobility strategy for Sultan Qaboos University based on the Gartner Strategy Template. In order to develop such a strategy, it is essential to conduct an empirical study for the students, staff and academic faculty in SQU to address the need for mobile applications. In addition, the survey results will be analyzed and a mobility strategy will be developed based on the Gartner Model for the university.

This study represents the starting point for the university to understand the importance of mobile application in higher education. There is a need to assess the existing willingness of university administration to take this onboard. Furthermore, there is a need to conduct a readiness assessment for the university to understand how best the above strategy can be executed.

In this article, the findings of the empirical study for the mobile application within SQU have been presented. Although the survey didn’t cover the full scale of students, staff and academic faculty, it represents a good sample representing the university composition. It is evident from the study that majority of the students are using android based mobile devices and they demand mobile applications to be offered for free. Furthermore, the survey results show that the top 2 applications SQU students are interested to have are the university social activities and lecture assignments. Although the students, staff and academic faculty didn’t clearly indicate what type of video streaming they would like to have, the survey showed a majority of respondents considered the video element of mobile application to be important. The survey also indicated the number of challenges the respondents face in the implementation of mobile applications within the university such as the continuous support and update of the mobile applications.

Using Gartner Strategy Model has aided the development of the mobility strategy for the university. The demand for mobility clearly identified the appetite of the respondents for the IT capabilities required to address the demand. Furthermore, being able to supply such services to the community within SQU seems possible if the outsourcing model is adopted. In order to address the challenges, metrics were developed to measure the success of mobility strategy within the university.
MEC Activities
- MazoonMusabahAlsaadi

To experience uniqueness in education, there is one address: Middle East College. The college organizes many educational and co-curricular activities that contribute to the development of various aptitudes and skills of the students. There are a variety of activities and events that are organised annually. The college organized many activities and events last year which served as learning experiences for the students and enjoyable for the teachers and others. They were recreational activities which included an element of fun learning.

During the last year our college organised different activities and events such as MEC week during which more than forty seven activities were conducted. The activities included French and Japanese language classes and workshops in the field of paper recycling, creative thinking, writing poetry, drawing, security and safety and many activities that can help the students to learn new skills and also provide them with an educational, recreational, and cultural experience.

Actually, MEC activities have a very positive effect on the educational as well as recreational aspects of student life. These activities not only develop students’ skills and talents, they also create the type of environment within the educational framework which allows students to select the type and timing of activities in relation to their skills and abilities. The College also celebrates international events such as World Humanitarian Day and other international days. It is necessary to mention the foreign student exchange programmes and training carried out by the college during the holidays that provides students with a rare opportunity to have a unique experience and acquire knowledge in a number of areas /fields.

The college held a number of events and student activities over the last year such as events on the occasion of the National Day and student activities to facilitate the development of students’ skills in different areas. Several workshops were organised by the college, providing a good opportunity for students to participate in voluntary work in addition to participating in external and internal events. One of the very useful activities that was organized by the college was the Anti-plagiarism day which aimed at educating students about the meaning and disadvantages of plagiarism and how to avoid it. Finally I would like to mention that the college is carrying out many of the activities that contribute to the educational, cultural and recreational needs of student life, and these are meant for each associate of the college.
The term Quality Assurance stands for the mechanism that any organisation adopts in order to ensure a desired level of quality in the development and delivery of products and services. Quality Assurance (QA) is very vital to ensure alignment of various practices of an organisation with established policies and procedures and always provides a platform for continuous improvement leading to excellence. For a higher education institution, Quality Assurance is important for setting and maintaining academic standards, assuring and enhancing academic quality and for information about higher education provision (The UK quality code for higher education, http://www.qaa.ac.uk/).

Quality Assurance Office (QAO) at MEC is committed to ensure that the education it provides is of the highest quality for its stakeholders and meets the standards required by the Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA). Through on-going engagements with its partner universities it also complies with the precepts of the UK’s Quality Assurance Agency Codes of Practice. The office works closely with the Data Office and reports to the Managing Director through the Department of Strategic Initiatives. The objectives of the QAO are available at http://www.mec.edu.om/web/Departments/Support-Departments/Quality-Assurance-Unit.

The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA) has indicated that HEI accreditation is a two-stage process: Quality audits followed by Standards Assessment at four yearly intervals as indicated in the Institutional standards conceptual design framework document available at http://www.oaaa.gov.om/Institution.aspx#Inst_Assessment_New. MEC is now preparing itself for the second stage of accreditation in 2017. All policies and procedures have been reviewed, revised, published and communicated to all stakeholders through the Content Management System (CMS). The QAO has also made provision for all other documents related to QA to be available on the CMS.

MEC institutional practices are driven by its approved policies, procedures and processes. As a first step to accreditation, the QAO will conduct an institutional internal audit in June/July 2016. The successful accreditation of MEC in 2017 will place MEC on a new and higher pedestal of providing quality education in Oman as envisioned by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said.
Are we ready for a smarter world?
- Jitendra Pandey

With the advent of computers and internet technology, there has been a major revolution in every field. These days you cannot think of any business without the use of IT systems. We were settled with this and enjoying the benefits and here came the world of smartphones. There has been a wave of social networking with the help of these applications and websites but before we can settle for it, another emerging technology is appearing and taking over the world. This new field of interest is what we know as Smart city which is likely to lead to a smarter world. To understand the concept of smart world let us first understand the concept of BIG data, the very key component of smart systems.

What is BIG Data and why has it become a pillar of interest for many researchers. How big this BIG data actually is? If we try to understand the concept of BIG data, it's very simple. Handling and storing of data has always been a challenge for organizations, since its inception. However, the good thing was that in the past, the data which was being handled by the organizations was organized and controlled as per their requirements. Whatever issues they had were related to data management and data analysis. With the advent of smart phones / sensors / BYoD and other social media, the amount of data which is being generated presently, is neither organized nor is it in control of the organizations. What becomes more difficult for them is to do the analysis as per the requirement of their businesses.

Here is a very simple example to explain what type of data is captured and what analysis is needed. Think of a scenario where Saif is surfing for a new watch to gift his father. He has already made some purchases in the past from the same website. Since the website has the information of Saif’s previous purchases and his browsing history, the portal can recommend products on the page as per his previous searches, rather than showing general advertisements in which he may not be interested. Now, once Saif selects the watch to be gifted, again the website can recommend further products on the basis of his surfing behavior.

Another example is of Abdullah driving from Al-Khuwair to Al-Seeb via SQ highway when suddenly he gets a message on his smart phone regarding a traffic jam at the Airport. He can take another road and avoid the chaos and save time. Signals on traffic lights can be managed with the help of traffic sensors, based on the extent of traffic from a particular side rather than giving fixed time slots for all sides, irrespective of traffic at that particular time.

Imagine Huda is walking on the beach in the evening and suddenly she feels body pain and falls unconscious. She has a smart watch on her wrist, the app on the watch measures her Blood pressure and pulse and accordingly sends the information as an alert to the hospital for the emergency services. Within a few minutes the ambulance is available at the location. The family members are also informed meanwhile and they also reach the hospital to help her.

With the advent of these kinds of services, hypermarkets, online shopping portals and social media are generating data and to manage the data generated by these is what we refer to as BIG data. There is a choice for the organizations to just leave this information and proceed with their day to day activities but the smarter way of living and doing business is to utilize this information and improve the quality of business and quality of life around us.
I was not well-aware of the rules and regulations of plagiarism. When I received an e-mail from the Centre for Academic Practices that there is a workshop on the topic of Plagiarism, I registered for it. Dr Kiran G.R, Deputy Dean, MEC who heads the Academic Board and who has wide experience and vast knowledge in this connection was the resource person for this workshop.

Plagiarism is stealing the ideas or words of another person or ideas from the work of another. In my opinion, plagiarism is the main obstacle in the path of creative thinking. It is very important for every teacher to understand the concept of plagiarism, because some of the teachers and students are not well aware of this topic. The main objective of this workshop was how to minimize plagiarism and what further action needs to be taken with zero tolerance to resist the culture of plagiarism in our education system and promote the culture of research and encourage staff to publish papers.

According to Dr. Kiran, there are many factors leading to plagiarism but the key factor of plagiarism is “innocence” as many students are not well aware of the college policies in connection with plagiarism. However, the truth is that it is morally a bad thing as you are violating the law by copying the ideas of another author without citing the source or mentioning the reference. Another factor is the language issue which causes a writer’s block. The student usually contacts a ghost writer which means paying for writing the assignment or report. He showed us different examples of plagiarism. He also explained how to prevent plagiarism.

1. Ask for help when you are stuck. Contact your teacher or senior to better understand the topic.

2. Do not wait for the last date of submission to write your assignment. Start work well in time and submit before the last date to get formative feedback.

3. Save information about all your sources. It is better to save information of all the original sources so that you can cite and reference later.

4. Give the references, providing reference to each direct quotation, paraphrase or summary.

5. Request for extension to complete your work if your task is not completed on time.

6. Say sorry if you are caught plagiarising. It is better to say sorry in a polite way and ensure you will not repeat it again, rather than argue.

I agree with Dr. Kiran’s opinion that Plagiarism is like a viral disease which is affecting most of the students but still we have time to counter it and deal with it. I am planning to conduct an awareness program on how to avoid plagiarism. In our college, once every semester we celebrate Anti-Plagiarism Day and last time students showed more interest to make this day more meaningful in the next semester. This kind of activity strengthens the credibility of students. Students come to know that it is a crime to steal others’ thoughts and ideas and they will be more aware of submitting the assigned task, done originally by them.

I learned many things in this workshop. I understood different examples of plagiarism which I was not aware of earlier. The knowledge that I gained from this workshop will be helpful for writing my paper easily. I will convey this knowledge to my students also, to say NO to plagiarism.
The Centre for Foundation Studies offers the General Foundation Programme that helps students achieve the language proficiency necessary for pursuing undergraduate programmes. It also serves students who are already enrolled in Bachelor’s Degree and Diploma programmes offered by the Middle East College. The modules offered facilitate students’ acquisition of the required academic skills to succeed in their chosen disciplines. All programmes are designed to meet practical and specific communicative needs.

In order to encourage students to engage in English outside the classroom, the Centre organizes various extra-curricular activities such as ‘The Souk’, “The Arab Scholars’ Day” and ‘The Anti-plagiarism Day’. The English Club, which comes within the ambit of the centre, carries out other extra-curricular activities throughout the year, such as ‘MEC’s Got Talent’, ‘FUN with Language Teachers’ and ‘MECORATOR’, in coordination with the Events and Activities Unit of the college.

For the academic year 2015-2016, a new module: Basic study Skills, which has now become a separate module, was launched to equip students with fundamental study and academic skills needed for post-secondary or higher education studies. The Centre is also offering free Arabic and French language classes and IELTS preparatory course to MEC staff as part of its community service.

At present, the Centre is preparing for the accreditation of the General Foundation Programme by the Oman Accreditation Council.

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I hate Mathematics
- Yasser Balushi

What to do with these addition and subtraction, My mind gets stuck when I see these decimal fractions
I cannot understand these tables
What to do with these variables?
How could it be possible that
2 + 2 = 4 and 2 X 2 is also = 4?
How can I measure a figure's shape?
Should I use a ruler or a tape?
How can I learn about currency?
Why can’t my teacher show some leniency?
One meter makes one hundred centimeters,
But how many millimeters make one litre?
Can anyone tell me the ‘Factors’?
By using calculator or a protractor?
We have become the first Higher Education Institution in Oman to use the flipped learning approach across several disciplines. This initiative was taken in line with the college’s commitment to enhancing students’ learning experience. Flipped learning is an innovative approach to teaching and learning that turns the traditional lecture-homework structure on its head to promote active learning.

Using flipped learning, the activities that usually take place inside the classroom now take place outside the classroom and vice versa. For instance, instead of having presentation-based lectures during class time at college, students gather the information largely outside of classrooms by reading, watching videos and listening to podcasts or other audio format. These resources are prepared by the faculty and shared with students in good time for them to prepare for the class time activities. When students come to class having already examined the key session content, class time can be used to offer more collaborative and responsive teaching employing techniques such as discussions, exercises, problem-based learning, case-based learning, practical work and peer-assisted learning. In other words, during class time students do what is typically thought to be homework, working with faculty or peers to solve problems and apply their learning to new contexts. In contrast to the traditional presentation-based lecture format, in flipped classrooms the role of the faculty changes from being a presenter of content to an expert mentor and guide (or learning coach). On the other hand, students become active learners instead of relying on the faculty as the disseminator of knowledge.

Flipped learning has a number of benefits including: increased student participation in class, increased student engagement with learning materials, increased conceptual understanding, development of employability skills such as team working and presentation skills and increased confidence level. In addition, flipped learning enables the development of digital skills as both the faculty and students have opportunities to make use of different instructional technologies.

At MEC, this approach has been trialed in selected modules across different disciplines during the second semester in the academic year 2014/15. In the main, evaluation of the pilot reports gave a positive feedback from both faculty and students. Here are some quotes:

From faculty
• “I now enjoy the opportunity to interact with students more than what used to happen in a lecture set up”
• “My students ask more questions and I get to know them better too”
• “I have noticed that my students tend to engage more with the course content and the contributions they make during class discussions show deep understanding of content”
• “Some of the students tell me that in the past they would not open and read a textbook but now they started referring to textbooks and I notice that they are clearer with concepts and applications”

From Students
• “Flipped learning is a good way to start interactive learning. It is easier and more interesting than the regular conventional style of learning” (Postgraduate student)
• “Good method, we can use the videos any time” (Undergraduate student)
• “Flipped learning is a very good study style, it allows the students to become better and understand well” (Undergraduate student)

After a positive pilot project, this semester the use of flipped learning has been expanded across the college to include all semester 1 and semester 5 modules! This expansion represents our commitment to ensuring that our students take responsibility for their learning. The college is planning to flip all modules in the next two years. We hope our students will enjoy the benefits of the approach and become outstanding graduates on the job market and at the same time make a difference in society.
According to Charles Darwin, “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent survives, it’s those most adaptable to change who survive.” Yet while technology and its applications have been growing at break neck speed, teaching of Mathematics has still followed the years old traditional methods. This results in students being disinterested or even afraid of the subject.

Keeping some of the above facts in mind, in the spring 2015 semester in MEC, flipped teaching was introduced for the first time in Oman, in Mathematics. It was applied in the Mathematics and Statistics module for Civil Engineering and also in labs of Probability and Statistics and College Math.

Flipped teaching creates an opportunity for the students to use their own time outside the class to learn about the subject and develop critical thinking skills and then use these in advanced discussions in class. So instead of following the traditional methodology where most of the teaching is done in classrooms, which is uni-directional from teacher to student, it was attempted to promote a higher level of teacher-student engagement with active participation in learning.

To facilitate this, videos were prepared by the teacher, using software like Screen-castomatic, Wacom tablet, Movie maker etc. which were tailored to suit the needs of the students. These were then converted into ‘You tube’ links and QR codes and sent to students through Moodle, in advance, before the class. Students were encouraged to view these videos, note down the key points and main formulae and come to class prepared for discussion.

This totally changes the classroom scenario. The teacher’s role changes to that of a facilitator. The classes become discussion oriented and activity based. The students feel satisfied as they have done the learning themselves. Interactive group discussions, quizzes and change of roles, where students are actively encouraged to teach others on the board, leads to enhanced student interest in the subject and reduced dependency on others. It encourages collaborative learning. The teacher no more dominates the stage, but becomes a guide to support student learning.

Flipped teaching is a self-learning process for the students and is in line with MEC’s mission and vision to modernize and use technology in the field of education.

It certainly has a great future.
An Activities Fair was conducted at Middle East College on the 20th October 2015, where different MEC Clubs presented various activities. The venue of this fair was the foyer of the Engineering block, in the Ibn Rushed building (IBR). Students seemed very excited and eager to join the different clubs. The foyer area was well arranged with covered tables and chairs where student volunteers and teachers were available to attend to students queries and promote their club. The promotions included some savories and other refreshments such as cupcakes and candies provided by the volunteers.

Various clubs such as the English Club, the International Club, Electronics Club, Design Club, Arts Club, Engineering Club etc. had their stations. Each club at MEC has its own credibility in the extra-curricular activities offered to enhance the talent of students, both physically and intellectually. The activities are held within the MEC campus as well as outside. The scheduled timings are communicated to the students through e mail.

A brief overview of the clubs indicated that the International Club holds more student interest as the college students get the opportunity to communicate with students coming from different countries via the student exchange program. As members of this club, students can exchange their views, thoughts and activities with students of other countries and boost their enthusiasm. It is expected that students joining the Arts Club will have the opportunity to exhibit their extraordinary talent through their skilled handwork, which would be displayed in a designated area in the campus. The Design Club’s objective is to promote new inventions and creations of students developed by challenging their mental skills. The Engineering and Electronic Clubs expose the students to different types of contemporary software and mechanical technologies in the present era. The students should go all out to put in efforts and continue to show interest in these clubs enthusiastically.
Dr. Samia Naqvi presented a research paper titled “Student Created Digital Video and Foreign Language Learning: Voices from Omani Classrooms” at the 21st Century Academic Forum conference held at the Harvard University, Boston, United States. The presentation briefed the design, application, assessment and results of the project which was designed on the Vygotskian principles of socio-constructivism. The intervention was a longitudinal research study carried over a period of three semesters at the Middle East College.

The project concentrated on an ICT-based pedagogical approach that culminated in student created digital video commercials. The purpose of adopting this approach was to create an ideal blend of technology with foreign language teaching to improve the students’ language skills along with other sub skills such as creativity, critical thinking, researching and collaborative skills. The efficacy of the approach was assessed through the perspectives of students, instructors and observers, gathered through the student questionnaires, student focus groups, researcher’s reflective journal, teacher’s interview, and external observers’ comments.

The project adopted a non-traditional approach where all the principles of creative language learning were practically implemented. Hence, most students perceived the project very positively and appeared to have learned a lot through its various stages.

In accordance with the Vygotskian view, it is vital to ensure that the students’ skills are nurtured by providing them ample opportunities to stretch beyond their limits. Findings of the study revealed that the students found Digital Video (DV) creation task challenging yet manageable. In most of the cases, the students sorted their problems with the mutual support of group members and approached teachers only when it was inevitable. There was a greater use of enquiry learning strategies. The teacher needed to mainly facilitate the process. SCDV (Student Created Digital Video) increased learning motivation and enjoyment among learners and kept them busy with challenging tasks.

Students collaborated on diverse activities, employed real-life skills and engaged in authentic discussions making learning more constructive and meaningful. The project encouraged language teachers to engage students in tasks that promote creativity and critical thinking among learners.

It was a meaningful, purposeful, communicative and an entertaining student-centered activity where the teacher acted primarily as a facilitator. It provided students with an opportunity to interact with an international audience when they posted their videos on public sharing websites. The findings indicate that the favorable affective stimuli provided through this practice led to the development of English language and other sub skills.

The blend of technology and language learning that the researcher aimed at was certainly achieved. Most students rated the project as both challenging and motivating. The observers were appreciative of the practice also, saying that it was highly effective in the context of EFL. The presentation was well received at the conference.
Mec’s Got Talent was conducted on 23rd December 2014, in the Student lounge. The auditions for the contestants were held on 21st December. 16 participants entertained and thrilled the jam-packed audience with their mesmerizing performances in various skills. There were performances from non-participants also which added colour to the event. The judges for the competition were DJ Pulse, Abdullah Al Balushi and Ms. Asha Pillai.

The following participants were adjudged winners:
1. Jumaina, Saif and Majid Al Musalti
2. Ismael Khan
3. Mohammed Al Khusaibi

Dr. Tareq Al Damen, HOD, LC presented the mementos to the judges and announced the winners. Dr Kiran G. R., Director, Teaching and Learning, gave away the cash prizes to the winners.

Linguaquiz is an inter-session GFP Level 1 quiz competition. It is one of the longest competitions in Middle East College. This began in Week 5 with the prelims conducted to filter the best three students who would represent their teams in the semifinals and finals. Around 100 students participated in the prelims. Nine sessions of Level 1 participated in the semifinals conducted on 16th December, 2014. The finals were conducted on 21st December, 2014 and the finalists were sessions A, C, G and N.

The following were the winners of the competition:
Level 1 C-
1. Salma Al Hajri -14f12736
2. Iman Al Shihhi-14f12970
3. Intesar Al Tamami - 14f12547

The team declared runners-up comprised Level 1 G
1. Moza Al Mazroia-14f12463
2. Toqa Nasseb-14F12442
3. Lamis Raghi-14f12990

The winners were presented mementos by Dr. Tareq Al Damen, HOD, LC and Ms. Priya Mathew, Asst HOD, LC.
Fun Day With LC

The Centre for Foundation Studies, previously the Languages Centre (LC) conducted “Fun Day with LC” on February 26th, 2015 in IBK 005. The event was intended for faculty members where they could spend time together and have some recreation and fun. There were many competitions held for the academic staff. The coordinator was Mr. Mahdi Al Sulaiman.

Arab Scholars’ Day

Arab Scholars’ Day was organized by the Centre for Foundation Studies for GFP level 2 students. It was held on 1st April 2015, Wednesday from 10am onwards. All sessions actively participated in the event. Prizes were given to the sessions with the best displays. The coordinator was Mr. Abdul Ghuma.

Anti-Plagiarism Day-Spring 2015

The Anti-plagiarism day was organized by the Centre for Foundation Studies, for GFP level 3 students. It was held on 7th April 2015, Tuesday from 10am onwards. All sessions actively participated in the event. Prizes were given to the sessions for best display, posters and the best models. The coordinator was Ms. Asma Al Aufi.
The English Souk
-Spring 2015

The English Souk was organized by the Centre for Foundation Studies, for GFP Level 1 students. It was held on 25th April 2015, Wednesday from 10am onwards. All sessions actively participated in the event. Prizes were given to the sessions with the best stalls. The coordinator was Ms. Maha Al Darei.

Winners –External Competitions

1) Spelling- bee Competition at the Scientific College of Design

Ms. Hania Fatma (14F13047) won the second prize in the intercollegiate Spell Bee competition held by the Scientific College of Design on Wednesday, April 1st, 2015.

2) Intercollegiate Debate Competition held at Caledonian College

Our team represented by Ms. Budoor Bader Al Hamdani (14F12324) and Ms. Zainab Ahmed Al Zadjali(15S13448)) both Level 3 GFP students, won the second prize in the intercollegiate debate competition held by Caledonian College on 27th April. Budoor Bader Al Hamdani won the best speaker award in the competition.
Every semester, a complete week is dedicated at Middle East College, to enhance students’ experience by involving the students in meaningful and enriching activities. MEC Week, as it is popularly known, was organized from November 8 – 12, 2015 for the FALL 2015 semester. The college offered a package full of activities and educational workshops for students during these five days. More than 50 activities revolving around the following five themes were scheduled:

- Cultural Competence
- Social Engagement
- Innovation and Digital Competence
- Health, Safety, and Environment
- Entrepreneurship

Some of the activities that were conducted during the week under the above themes were: Memory improvement techniques, AutoCAD, Six thinking hats, Goal setting, Sign language for Deaf, Photography workshops, Eco city, Handicrafts, Paper lamps, Jewellery design, Innovative gadget design, Leadership and Team building, Math application in daily life, Fire safety, Traffic Safety Awareness, Learning basic French and Japanese, Poetry writing, Short Story writing, and Academic Writing.

The activities were open to all MEC undergraduate and postgraduate students, for participation. Repeat sessions of activities were available throughout the week from 8:00 AM-7:00 PM, which students could choose according to their convenience.

The student-centric nature of the activities encouraged the MEC student community to conduct many of the sessions during the week. In-house experts across various departments, student clubs, and the eight Houses in MEC namely: Marjan, Zumrud, Yaqoot, Aqeeq, Fairoz, Almas, Lulu and Kaharman, contributed passionately towards this venture. Certain activities were outsourced also and were conducted by external experts. The workshops were engaging, leading to students producing posters, models, power-point presentations, drama, poetry etc.

Different community outreach programmes were also organized as part of the MEC week, to realise the MEC vision of contributing to the development of a harmonious and sustainable world through pursuit of knowledge. These included visits of MEC faculty and students to schools for PC assembling, ECO city visit, visits of school students to MEC, to attend sessions on Math skill improvement etc.

The week was a vibrant one with the whole MEC campus coming alive with various club and House activities. The Houses at MEC were involved in different inter-house competitions and open events. The competitions included Play station, Tug of War, Short Film, Best Photo, Table Tennis etc. Club Activities included a MEC Entrepreneurs’ Exhibition to help MEC student entrepreneurs showcase and expand their business. MEC Charity Souk was organised to generate money for charity and a Carnival was held to incorporate International Students’ initiatives. The Music Club members performed throughout the week at various locations in the college and entertained the audience.

On the final day of the MEC week, staff members of the MEC family had an opportunity to showcase their hidden talents through ‘MEC Staff’s got Talent’, organized by the Department of Management Studies. Staff enthusiasm reached its peak during the day where activities such as Art exhibition, Treasure Hunt, Yoga Sessions and Create Our Own Fashion etc. were conducted for staff.

MEC week was an enriching experience for the MEC student community and helped them to gain academic, extra-curricular and co-curricular experience through dynamic engagements outside the classroom. Thus MEC Week succeeded in channelizing student energy and skill towards national priorities.
The Placement and Industrial Relations office of Middle East College (MEC) organized its seventh Career Fair on May 5, 2015. His Excellency Mohammed Al Maskari, Director General, Knowledge Oasis Muscat, was the chief guest at the event.

The main aim of holding a Career Fair is to bring the industry and academia together under one roof for a comprehensive understanding of how each one functions. During the event, students had the opportunity to explore the different career options within the employment openings available in Oman. They also got to know about the emerging career trends across various industry groupings. For the graduating students of MEC, the Career Fair offered an excellent platform for them to present their credentials and explore the possibilities of being recruited by participating companies. More than 800 MEC students and graduates visited the fair. 25 organizations from different sectors, including MEC, participated in the event. They displayed the nature of their business, human resource policies and other related information that could prove useful for students when seeking employment in those companies, either now or in the future.

Some of the organizations that participated in the career fair were:

- Public Authority of Manpower Register
- Royal Air Force of Oman
- Information Technology Authority
- Oman Oil Marketing Company SAOG
- HUAWEI
- SME Development Fund
- Mohsin Haider Darwish LLC
- OCS Info Tech
- Renaissance Services SAOG
- Bahwan Cybertek LLC
- NCR
- Business Gateways International
- Marina Engineering Consultants
- INFOLINE LLC
- MENA HR Solutions LLC
- Al Burkan Group of Companies
- Middle East College

MEC has signed an MoU with the SME Development Fund to deliver workshops and activities related to entrepreneurship for MEC students to promote the culture of entrepreneurship amongst them. Furthermore, the purpose of the SMEF is to profitably provide financial assistance and business support services to existing SMEs that are seeking expansion, and also to create new SMEs, as a means of boosting economic activity and creating employment, thereby ensuring adequate returns for its stakeholders. The procedures and policies for operations of the Fund will be as per the procedure manual which will be approved by the Fund Board. The Fund has conducted more than 60 workshops in the field of entrepreneurship for more than 900 MEC students during the last year, which have influenced the minds of students profoundly and motivated many of them to start their own businesses.
AIESEC Workshops

AIESEC, probably the world’s largest youth-run organization, provides life changing leadership experiences along with volunteering and professional internships for young people across 126 countries and territories.

AIESEC has an important role to play for the youth of Oman too. It has conducted several workshops for the students of Middle East College also. These workshops focused on CV Writing and Presentation Skills and were presented by Sufyan Al Shafie, Director, Outgoing Exchange and Marketing, AIESEC, Oman. The workshops were organized by the Placement and Industrial Relations office. The first workshop, held on December 9, 2014, was about presentation skills.

The workshop centered on areas such as how

• to communicate effectively through a presentation
• to influence and persuade an audience
• to organize information in a clear concise manner
• to implement techniques for varying vocal tones and body language
• how to handle your audience with confidence.

Further to this, a second workshop was held on December 17, 2014 which focused on CV writing.

A group of 37 students attended this workshop. The objective of this workshop was to train students in writing an impressive CV, and to expose them to different types of CVs, elements and components of a CV and specifications of an effective CV.

Global Leadership Program

The International Office at MEC organized the Global Leadership Program for Coventry University students. Around 13 students from CU participated in the program for a period of 1 week that lasted from 21st to 26th March 2015. This program allowed the students to visit several Omani organizations, tourist destinations and places of historical importance. The aim of the program was to learn about the Omani culture and economy and at the same time interact with MEC students. Middle East College has now been arranging this programme known as the GLP for the last three years.

MEC Winter School programme offers a unique opportunity to the international students to share knowledge and learn about the history and culture of the Sultanate on a firsthand basis.

Mr. Kang He Han one of the students from Hanyang University said: “It was a great chance for me to visit the sultanate and from this program I got to know closer about the Omani culture and life at the same time I had made new friends from Oman and overall the Omani are kind.”

Middle East College hosted 20 students from Hanyang University, South Korea, for a Winter School, through their International Office. The programme lasted for a period of 26 days from the 26th of January 2015 until the 20th of February 2015.

MEC Winter School was a mixture of short courses, extra-curricular activities and filed trips to industrial and tourist destinations. The major focus of the programme was to teach the students Arabic and therefore intensive classes had been planned. The programme also covered sessions for teaching English, Omani and Islamic culture, Digital designing, photography and drama.

On their part, the Korean students taught MEC students the quintessence of Korean culture, Korean hip hop and Korean language basics.
MEC student delegation to Hanyang University, Korea

The Middle East College delegation, which consisted of 20 students, went on a visit to Hanyang University, Korea. This visit was a part of the International Student Exchange Program, in collaboration with different colleges and universities around the world. The student delegation attended a program that lasted 25 days, beginning on 5th July 2015. There were more than 900 participants from different nationalities. The program included various courses and trips to different places in Korea, including a visit to the Oman Embassy there. Mrs. Duaa Al Sabtiab, supervisor of the MEC delegation, said, “The international exchange program to South Korea was a beneficial experience to exchange knowledge between students from different nationalities and it worked on developing independence and responsibility essentially. Hanyang University provides various summer programs in different subjects like technology, sport, culture, languages and others. Moreover, there were some tourism and recreational trips on every weekend, which gave the students a chance to get to know the Korean culture and the tourist places.”

Sayyid Laith Al Busaidi, one of the student delegates said: “It was a great chance to join this successful program where we could get to know about the Korean culture, habits and traditions. In addition, we got the chance to represent the Sultanate and familiarize those from other countries with Omani culture.”

It is worth mentioning that Middle East College always works towards strengthening its relations with different colleges and universities world-wide, in order to give the students a chance to know different cultures and to learn about their habits and traditions.

MEC Student delegation to Coventry University UK for Summer School program

A student delegation from the Middle East College visited Coventry University, UK for participating in the Summer School Program organized by the University. The visit lasted for a period of two weeks from 3rd August to 16th August, 2015. The students took part in several courses in English language, culture and history, writing, media and several others. There were also organized trips to some amazing historical places of importance.

Mr. Arhab Al-Rahbi, supervisor of the MEC delegation said: “Our trip to Coventry University was joyful, interesting and well organized too. We met students’ delegations from many other countries who were participating in the summer school and it was a great opportunity for us to interact with each other. We had a memorable visit to London, Oxford and the historical village of Stratford-on- Avon.”

Sami Al-Rashdi, one of the student delegates said: “The visit commenced at the beginning of this month with a team of some of the top students in Middle East College. We were received by delegations from Japan, India, Germany and Russia. I am happy to say that we benefited a lot from this visit. We learned about English culture, the language, and many other aspects of the life there. We enjoyed the educational and recreational trips.”

It is worth mentioning that MEC has established strong links with various academic institutions around the world to enable its students to participate in different cultural exchange programs.
Middle East College celebrated the 10th Graduation on Wednesday, 2nd December 2015, at Oman Auditorium in Al Bustan Palace Hotel. This year, 360 students who graduated across 18 disciplines, were conferred diplomas, bachelor and postgraduate degrees at this prestigious ceremony presided by Dr. David Pilsbury, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Coventry University. The Dean, Prof. R C Bhattacharjee, dignitaries from various Ministries, eminent academics, parents and other distinguished guests were also present at the event.

In his speech Prof. R C Bhattacharjee, the Dean, congratulated the students for their achievements and praised them for their commitment, creativity and talent which together contributed in making them well rounded professionals with leadership qualities. He urged the students to be life-long learners and to utilize the multi-directional competence they have gained from MEC. In addition, he outlined the striking growth of MEC in the last 13 years, having made a modest beginning in 2002 with only 200 students and 3 programmes in Information Technology to more than 5500 students studying in about 19 different programmes in Engineering, Information Technology and Business in affiliation with Coventry University, UK and University of Wolverhampton, UK, at present. MEC’s unparalleled growth can be perceived as a story of achievements and success.

Hamida Abdulla Khamis Al Mamari was awarded the best outgoing undergraduate student award and Hilal Nasser Masoud Al Abdali was awarded the best outgoing postgraduate student award.

In her outgoing speech, Hamida Al Mamari said: “The graduation day is considered as a special day for each graduate as the efforts made by them during all the last years get rewarded, and today we are ready to chase our dreams and serve our country.”

Another MEC student Zahra Al Mahdi, a graduate in Multimedia Technologies, said, “I am proud to be part of the 10th Graduation Ceremony of Middle East College. The effort that MEC is putting in to provide the students with the best student experience is really commendable.”

To quote another successful student, Khouloud Abdullah Al Balushi, a diploma graduate: “What I feel is indescribable on being one of the graduates of MEC and today I am happy for the results of everything I worked hard for during my days in MEC.”

Taha Redha Al Qubtan, who completed his MBA-IT, said: “I am so excited to have finished my MBA with good grades! My journey at MEC was filled with wonderful moments and I really appreciate the support given by MEC.”

The college is strongly promoting a culture of entrepreneurship among its student community. Students and graduates are given all-round support including access to the technology, tools, and equipment to be used in entrepreneurial development in addition to training provided by experts.
نقول جلالته في خطابه بمناسبة العيد الوطني العاشر المجيد: (إننا نعمل ونخطط للتطوير المادي والاجتماعي لبلدنا يجب أن نضع دائمًا نصب أعيننا حقيقة وعلى كل واحد منكم المساعدة في هذا الواجب. كان وطننا في الماضي ذا شهرة وقوة، وإن عملنا باتحاد وتعاون فسناعيد ماضينا مرة أخرى، وسكونا للمحل المرموق في العالم العربي. ونحن نحتاج إلى مستقبل أفضل من سابقتنا. يجربنا الآن تحديات العالم، فلنحنا ن大火 في عالم حديث وقويم ومرادي ومحترف، وسنتواجه مع تحديات جديدة وتحديات قديمة.

كانت هذه الخطابات السامية، ليدرك بجلاء ذللك الحرص الشديد على بناء دولة عصرية شامخة البنيان، ثابتة الأركان على دعائم متينة من مبادئ الإسلام الحنيف.

وهي: أن قوتنا لا تكمن في الإزدهار المادي وحده، بل إن قوتنا الحقيقية تكمن في الراث العمانية العريقة، وشعارات ومبادئ ديننا الإسلامي الحنيف. لذللك يجب أن لا ندع مين يكافح من أجل بناء دولة عصرية بكل ما تحمله هذه الكلمة من معنى، ولكن دون إرغام ونعمل في سبيل النصر، ونستعيد ماضينا، ونستعيد مكانا في العالم.

ويتضح من كل ما ذكر جلالته من هذا الخطاب العام، وآخرته بأنه: إن إنشاء جامعة السلطان قابوس هي إنجاز عظيم، وهو يكافح من أجل بناء دولة عصرية بكل ما تحمله الكلمة من معنى، ولكن دون إرغام.

وإنها من واجبنا تشجيع صناعاتنا التقليدية وتطويرها حتى نضمن استمراريتها. كما يجب علينا المحافظة على كل خلق علمائنا ومفكريننا الأوائل، لأن ذلك نشأ من كل أنثى حماية الراحل، وتحقيق الشغف مع تحقيق الهدف، ونقوم بذلك لمن لا يحترم امتنا، ونستعيد مكاننا في العالم.

وإن كانت هذه الكلمات تأتي بشكل قيء، فإنها تأتي بخلق الحقيقة، و تحقيق الهدف، ونستعيد مكاننا في العالم.
قصة قصيرة

FATEMA AL ALNADHAIRI

هي قصة بلا عنوان، حكاها الزمن، وتعانق صداتها في السقوف والأركان. قصة مبدؤها بأن كان يا ما كان، قصة من قديم الزمن.

عانت في بلدة لا قصر فيها ولا تيجان، كانت هادئة كمسات الهواء على نبيت الربيع، وكان لها صديقتان، في القلب مميزتان، تجد وترفعهما الألغام والسلوان، نشأت حتى تعررت بين تلك الأحضان...

حتى حدث ما لم يكن في الحسبان... مفاجأة، مصيبة، كان وقعهاقلب أشد من الروان!

رحلت صديقتها بلا عودة، ولا استئذان، فظلت وحيدة بين الأسوار والأركان، كالبيئة بلا قبطان، والشجرة بلا أغصان، حتى حل عليها خبر غير حلالها من وحشت إلى أمان، وجدت البند التي تعبدها للحياة من جديد، بلا حاجة ل مقابل أو أوراق اتعالان ...

إنهم الحلم الذي ظلما تحرق شوقا للقياهم، والطموح الذي كتب مرايا لرؤواه، إنه الأمل: بأن لا وجود للمستحيل في هذه الحياة، إنه اليقين بعظمة حكمة وقضاء الله...

نعم، لا مستحيل في هذه الحياة، مهما أغلقت في وجوهنا أبواب، فلما بد من ضوء فاضت بعيني ببداية جديدة، نحو كل يوم ودفعة أو، توقف كل عرابة، وهم، تحبنا ما قد محببا فينا، وحوله إلى سراب...

فهذا قصة وأي قصة؛ لا زمن لها ولا مكان، بل أنها في كل بيت في كل قلب كل إنسان، فمن أخذ بنصيحتها عاش سلام، ومن لم يع معها عاش عذرا وعذبلاء!