

FP NEWSLETTER

Issue 2

Together we succeed

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Together we succeed

Dear Colleagues,

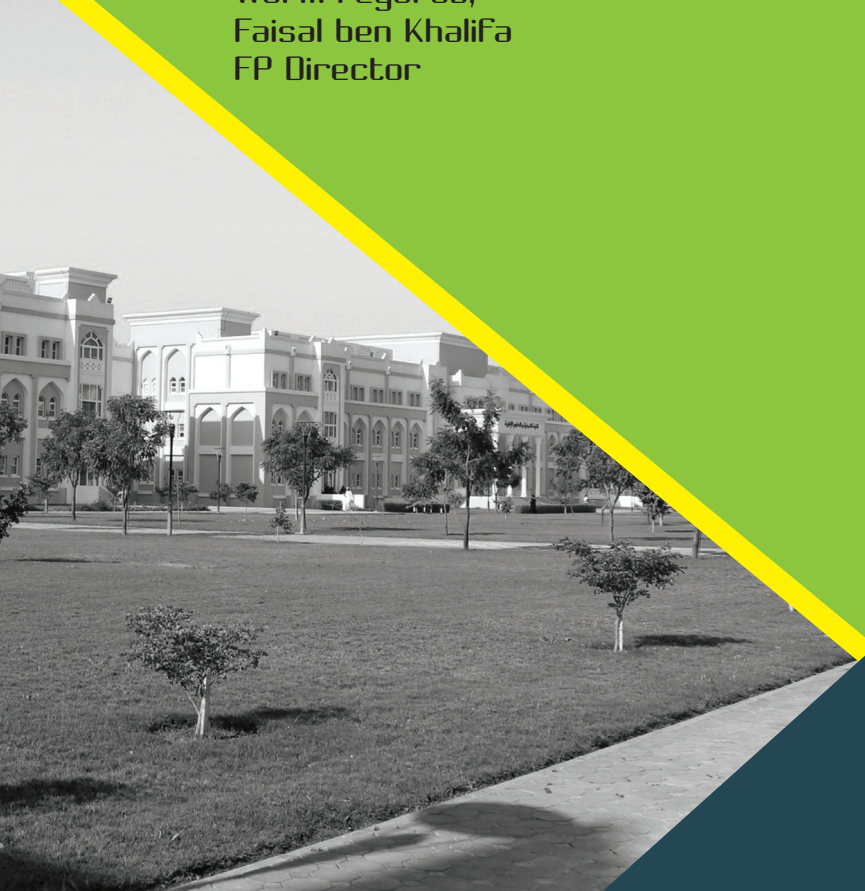
Welcome to the second issue of the FP e-Newsletter! It's with great pride and excitement that I would like to announce the successful completion of an important milestone in the lifetime of the Foundation Program, i.e. OAAA Quality Audit. It was thanks to a hardworking and highly committed team that this feat was ably achieved in no time, with an international team of professional external auditors lauding our Program for the numerous blessings it holds for its stakeholders. Fueled by unbounded motivation, the FP team is heart and soul willing to go the extra mile towards the betterment of its services to not only meet, but exceed, expectations.

The issue will also take you on a journey where you will learn about some worth-sharing committee work and achievements. Some of these are the 1st FP Open Day event, Student Chronicle and many other happenings and activities. In this connection, I would like to extend a big thank-you to the committee heads and members for the colossal work they are painstakingly doing, and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavours.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to reiterate FP's commitment and determination to occupying a position of distinction by disseminating quality outcome-based education. Classroom dynamics, extracurricular activities, motivational speeches, community services, and an unparalleled 24/7 communication with students is not only the hallmark of FP, DU, but is now an ingrained mindset.

I hope you enjoy the updates. Until the next newsletter, keep safe and stay blessed.

Warm regards,
Faisal ben Khalifa
FP Director



Foundation Program Achievements

OAAA Quality Audit Visit

An international Audit Panel paid FP a three-day visit between 31 October and 2 November 2017. The visit was meant to audit the Foundation Program as a first step towards the program's accreditation. The Panel held interviews with the VC, FP Director, Deputy Director, Program Coordinators and FP staff and Post-FP staff, academic and non-academic. The Panel also interviewed FP morning and evening students and FP alumni. Moreover, the Panel visited FP labs and DU library and checked FP website and the online Placement and exit exams. At the end of the visit, the Panel gave a preliminary feedback session in the presence of the DVC, FP director and Quality Audit Heads. The preliminary feedback was highly positive.

Benchmarking Best Practices with the University of Nizwa

To further activate the signed MOU with the University Nizwa (UN) the Foundation Program Academic Council (FPAC) conducted a videoconference with UN's Foundation Institute (FI)

to discuss best practices. The discussion was chaired by the directors of the two programs and lasted for one and a half hours. It revolved around sharing basic information about the two programs with regard to numbers of students, levels, placement and exit tests, pass mark, materials used, etc. The discussion gave both sides an insight into how both programs are run and turned out to be beneficial for both sides.



FP Open Day

The inaugural Foundation Program Open Day was held on the 27th of November 2017 in and around the Common Classroom Building here at Dhofar University. All faculty and more than 200 students participated in an array of activities. The purpose of Open Day was twofold: to provide students with an opportunity to exhibit their talents, and to add fun to the language and skills learning experience through a variety of extracurricular activities.

As part of the talent exhibition, students from across all three levels showcased a range of artwork and handicrafts, including pen-and-ink drawings, paintings, and sculptures. A program called FP-s Got Talent featured performances by students in dance, music, makeup tutorials, and a live street art-style painting demonstration.

From an academic perspective, the day was also a success. An online English trivia game on the Kahoot.com platform was well-attended and received.





Similarly, the English Club Meet for Term 1 was incorporated into the day and attracted a large number of participants who competed for prizes in a puzzle solving game, an essay contest, and speech presentations. The meet concluded with an award ceremony for competition winners. In addition, the Outstanding Student Award Committee held their Term 1 ceremony to recognize top students from Terms 2 and 3.

Coming just on the heels of Omani National Day, the Open Day also celebrated the Sultanate and a spirit of service. A poster for Oman's 47th National Day was set up in the square between the buildings. Faculty and students were invited to write words of gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said under the student submitted hashtag #47YearsBecauseOfAGreatMan. Within yards of the poster, our FP Community Service Committee organized a Bake Sale to raise funds for the benefit of the Salalah Autism Center. Over 100 Omani Riyals were raised from items provided by FP faculty and students.

Feedback on the events of the day was positive from both faculty and students, leading the celebration of Open Day in Term Two as well and on into the future.



Recruitment

The Foundation Program would like to again extend a warm welcome our newest staff member to the program. Lise Lacasse has joined us this year in the English Language Unit. Lise comes to us from Canada. She has previously taught in Princess Norah University (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia) Dec.2012- Dec. 2014 and Mohammed University (Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia) Sept. 2008- June 2010 and has more than 15 years of experience teaching English. She is currently teaching in Level Two.

Staff and Student Induction and Numbers

Here at the Foundation program, we began the year expecting approximately 200 to 250 students to enter the program in Term 1. Instead, we received around 450 new students. As a result of the hard work and dedication of the Administrative Committee and our registration team, all students have been successfully placed and inducted into the Foundation Program. This proved particularly challenging for Level One resources to teach the 5 extra hours of Level 1 English. With teachers working overtime and part-time teachers for both English and Math, all students have been well served in Term One. The Foundation Program also welcomes back 40 staff members for this academic year. The English Unit has a team of 29 staff, Math is taught by a team of 5, and our IT team consists of 4 teaching staff.

FP Alumni Committee

Another very exciting development here at the Foundation Program in the past few months is the forming of the FP Alumni Committee. The aim of this committee is to increase our engagement and benefit from the students who have successfully passed through our program and onto their studies at the university. The committee started the year with some very exciting activities that celebrate our successful students and also benefit current ones. First, peer tutoring revision sessions were organized in the days before Midterm Exams. Four Alumni students assisted 12 current students in their preparation for exams. Second, a skills workshop was prepared by one of our former students on 'Presentation Skills'. 27 current students attended, in addition to a good number of FP faculty and staff. Finally, the committee rounded out the term with a second skills workshop prepared by a DU graduate student on the subject of 'Class Attitudes'.





Foundation Program Committee Updates

More than 20 committees serve tirelessly here at the Foundation Program to ensure that students are well served, making progress, safe, and provided with the support and encouragement that they need. Time would fail us to mention all of the work of these committees and their dedicated members. However, there are some key events and improvements that warrant highlighting here.

a. Staff Recreation

The Recreation Committee led us in celebrating the occasion of Oman's 47th National Day. One of our own students did a presentation on Omani Pottery, we played an online quiz to see how much staff knew about our host country, and we celebrated the day with food and prizes. To round out the term, the Recreation Committee also led us in an end of term potluck to celebrate the hard work that went into another successful term.

b. Community Service

Building a spirit of service and responsibility in our students and faculty is important here at FP. It is a key component to living as a lifelong learner. The FP's Community Service Committee aims to strengthen our relationship with the wider community through a variety of activities that benefit different segments of the community here in Dhofar. Each activity deals with aspects that are related to students' lives and aims at familiarizing the local community with the positive role that DU and its people play in their community. During our opening term, the Community Service Committee led us in two events. The first was a health camp organized in partnership with Lifeline Hospital. The camp targeted both academic and non-academic staff and students of DU and consisted of free checkups for all who attended. The second initiative was a bake sale held in conjunction with our first FP Open Day. The proceeds of the sale benefited the Dhofar Autism Center. Students played a significant role in making the event a success by pitching in with their food items and also helping to sell items at the table. More than 100 Omani Riyal was delivered to the staff at Dhofar Autism Center meeting with thanks from their staff.



c. Professional Development

Without a commitment to lifelong learning ourselves, we cannot pass on this value to others. Our Professional Development Committee here at the FP leads us in a constant pursuit to upgrade our skills and optimize our teaching and service to students. A workshop on 'Working with a Multi-Level Class' was organized for 35 members of the FP staff. Dual components of watching a training video on the subject, as well as healthy faculty discussion and feedback served to produce a good range of methods and ideas to work well with mixed classrooms. In addition to workshop training, discussion points on topics relevant to classroom teaching have been posted on Moodle for staff discussion and interaction.

d. Risk Management

To ensure the highest possible quality of instruction and program viability, it is essential to be constantly assessing and addressing risks that threaten the health and effectiveness of our FP program. The FP Risk Management Committee leads us in identifying and facing these risks, doing all we can to minimize or eliminate them. Awareness sessions have been conducted for both faculty and students with the end result that main risks have been identified and an array of suggestions for mitigating these risks have been collected by the committee.

e. Non-Smoking Campaign

Working toward a healthy and safe campus is central to ensuring both students and faculty can focus on the task of learning. Our FP Health and Safety Committee has led the charge in requesting that ash trays which encourage smokers to act against the published Dhofar University Non-smoking policy be removed. While these efforts have been largely successful, one still remains. The committee remains committed to seeing this also rectified. In addition, the committee has added a student representative to the committee and also pursued the installation of additional first aid boxes in the FP office block.

f. Sunday Digest

Allowing our teachers and leadership to remain focused on the vital task of teaching students and ensuring quality instruction is central to our aims here at the FP. With dozens of meetings and activities happening in any given week, time and attention can be taken away from preparation for class and student feedback. In an effort to improve coordination and awareness of activities, the News and Publications Committee has introduced the Sunday Digest here at FP. Each Sunday, a digest of the most important announcements, dates, activities, and committee activities is sent out to FP staff. Also, to ensure promotion of our key initiatives we have introduced the practice of stamping posters and posted announcements by FP secretaries to ensure that only approved activities are promoted in the name of Dhofar University and the Foundation Program.



7p Student Achievements

The Foundation Program recognizes all students who had notable academic achievements and honors them with the 'Outstanding Student Award' for academic excellence.

These outstanding students of the FP received the award on the FP Open Day. They have excellent academic results, excelled in extracurricular activities and exhibited attributes like regular attendance and punctuality.

WINNERS OF SPRING 2016-17

Toppers in English

201600126 - Hamda Mohammed Abdul Rahman Al Jilani

201601022 - Sarah Ahmed Ba Wazir

Toppers in Math

201600395 - Fatima Ahmed Mohammed Al Maashani

201600922 - Ekhlas Khalis Fatah Bait Farzah

201600366 - Fatema Suhail Siad Al Maashani

201600115 - Zamzam Salim Mohammed Al Maashani

Toppers in IT

201600447 - Nada Awadh Said Al Amri

201600432 - Asayl Ahmed Salim Al Baraami

201600300 - Riham Omar Abu Bakar Al Dhahab

201601022 - Sarah Ahmed Ba Wazir

WINNERS OF SUMMER 2016-17

Topper in English

201601181 - Salem Mahmoud Al Satari

Toppers in Math

201600088 - Areej Nedhal Saeed Al Anrieqi

201600183 - Haiya Marhoon Said Al Amri

201600748 - Mallak Hamood Hamed Al Rashdi

201600228 - Khair Abdullah Mohammed Al Kathiri

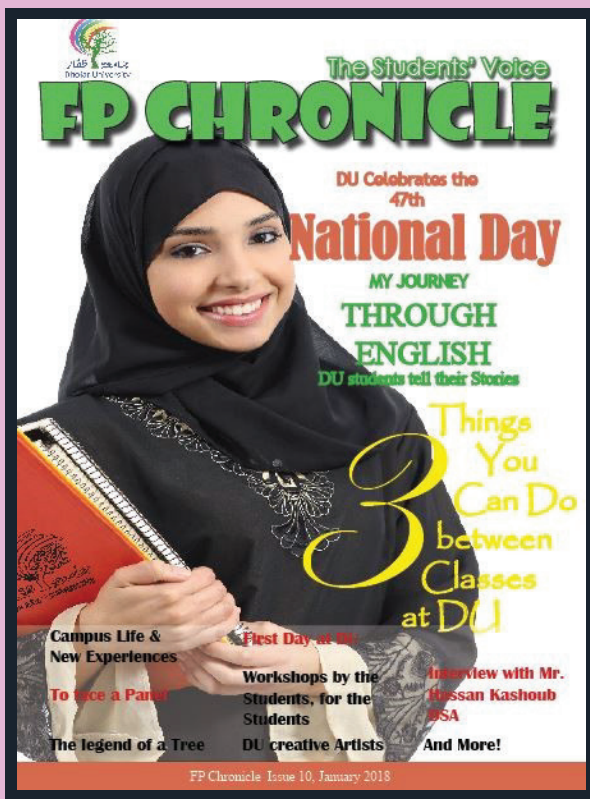
Toppers in IT

201600088 - Areej Nedhal Saeed Al Anrieqi

201600183 - Haiya Marhoon Said Al Amri

201600228 - Khair Abdullah Mohammed Al Kathiri

7p Student Achievements



The FP caters to the needs of students who need extra academic support. The Student-at risk-committee has a team of enthusiastic peer tutors and the FP Alumni working at the learning support center to help these students discuss their difficulties and come up with strategies to improve their academic performance. Student progress is tracked, appropriate and timely academic advice is provided by the instructors to help the students achieve their educational goals.

The FP chronicle- issue 10 was published in term 2. As you could see, the issue comes along with thoughtful changes that have not only impacted the layout but also the content as well. Twelve articles,

App reviews, several drawings and caricatures were included in the chronicle. The post foundation students assisted the Chronicle Committee in proof reading and editing of the FP students' literary contributions thereby helping our budding authors to grow as writers and editors.



STAFF ACHIVEMENT

- Three faculty members from FP received Awards on the Research Day at Dhofar University
Nathaniel Lotze - the best FP Faculty Award
Ahmad Abdul Hamid Al Ani - the best FP Community Service Award
Paul Benjamin Henry Pearce -the best FP Research Award, respectively.
- Another highlight was the promotion of Dr. Umamaheswara Rao Bontha (Rao) from a lecturer to Assistant Professor.
- The following teachers were promoted from instructor to lecturer in September 2017

Ms. Anita Venugopal
Mr. Hyder Husni Al-Mughrabi
Ms. Shanta Sasidharan
Mr. Adnan Eteiw
Ms. Fatima Mustahil Kashoob
Ms. Megan M. Putney
Mr. Waqas Javed Khan
Ms. Ebaa Momani
Dr. Wajdi Hamza Alredany
Ms. Theodore Marks

