



International Advisory Board

Newsletter

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From the Secretary General

I report with great pleasure that the third meeting of the International Advisory Board held in Dhahran (January 12-13, 2008) concluded successfully.

The main points of deliberation included issues related to faculty, students, focused research agenda, challenges and opportunities where KFUPM can excel, and financial plans to achieve the strategic goals of the University. The IAB emphasized that the University expand its research role and increase the number of graduate students to better serve as a strategic resource for Saudi Arabia. It was noted that KFUPM should prioritize research programs that are worth investing the needed resources to become world-class, but other programs and partnerships should still be maintained. It should not only consider the immediate needs of the Kingdom – petroleum and energy – but also the long-term need to diversify the economy. Nanotechnology and IT are fundamental underlying fields that support other research.

The unique feature of this meeting was that the Board members had an opportunity to interact with faculty and students and held discussions with them to get an insight from their perspectives about the activities of the

University and their concerns. The deliberations from their meetings were later presented to the Board and detailed discussions on how best to address the issues and allay their concerns were held.

During the meeting a ceremony to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between General Electric and King Abdullah University for Science & Technology took place on January 12, 2008, which was witnessed by the Board members and others. This was first such KAUST agreement with a company.

The upcoming meetings – Nos. 4 and 5 - are scheduled to be held in London on August 22-23, 2008 and January 11-12, 2009 in the Kingdom, most probably in Riyadh. The agenda will include the aspirations and goals of the University in the coming five years as well as issues related to the University's current activities.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation to the Board members, who despite their busy schedule took time out to attend this meeting.

Dr. Khattab G. Al-Hinai

HIGHLIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

KAUST AND KFUPM Partner to Deepen and Expand Saudi Arabia's Research Capacity

Research focus includes energy, marine research, environmental science & engineering, materials science & engineering, polymer and catalysts, earth science, and nanotechnology

KAUST and KFUPM signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on March 4, 2008 to establish a collaborative research and academic development relationship that will support the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the region, and the world. The signing of this MOU marks the second collaboration that KAUST has created with a leading scientific research organization, and the first with a university within the Kingdom.

KAUST, a new world-class, graduate-level research institution currently under development in Saudi Arabia,

is pursuing global collaborations with institutions such as KFUPM as part of its efforts to build its intellectual capacity. The MOU with KFUPM marks KAUST's tenth research agreement with a major international university or private sector organization in the past nine months.

"KFUPM was one of the Kingdom's first universities to address the complex scientific issues directly related to petroleum and minerals, and their reputation as an esteemed educational institution is well known throughout Saudi Arabia," said KAUST Interim President Nadhmi Al-Nasr. "The growth and progress of Saudi Arabia and the regional economy depend upon the creation of ideas and innovation in scientific and technological fields. Working with KFUPM and others, KAUST intends to build a diverse community of scholars to promote the highest academic standards and student achievement, leading to the creation of a rich heritage of excellence in scientific and technological research."

His Excellency Dr. Khalid S. Al-Sultan, Rector and CEO of KFUPM and a member of the KAUST International Advisory Council, said, "We are honored to partner with KAUST and to contribute to its mission in creating a knowledge society in Saudi Arabia and being a catalyst of important discoveries that will benefit the Kingdom and the world."

KFUPM-Saudi Aramco Strategic Collaboration in Upstream Research

The KFUPM-Saudi Aramco Upstream Group comprising members from both organizations met on January 22, 2007 at KFUPM to discuss establishing a well-defined strategic collaboration between KFUPM and Saudi Aramco in order to achieve sustainable excellence in research of the exploration and production area in upstream sector.

This collaboration will be initially for a period of five years and will focus on selected research areas. The research programs will build R&D capabilities, research structures, and capacity. KFUPM faculty, researchers, and students will be involved in the research work. Another important element of this program is establishing collaboration with recognized research institutions. The members specifically discussed the objectives, purpose, methodology, and agreed on a roadmap for collaboration.

Yokogawa Opens R&D Facility

Yokogawa, a global industrial automation leader, has opened an application R&D facility in the Dhahran Techno-Valley of KFUPM. The company states that the facility is part of its strategic initiative to invest millions of dollars to effectively support Saudi Arabia's booming mega oil, gas, and petrochemical projects.

Created as a center of excellence, the facility was jointly inaugurated by Mr. Isao Uchida, chairman and CEO of Yokogawa Electric Corporation, H.E. Dr. Khaled Al-Sultan, Rector of KFUPM, Mr. Abdullah Jum'ah, President and CEO of Saudi Aramco; and H.E. Mr. Shigeru Nakamura, Ambassador of Japan to the Kingdom.

1st KFUPM Forum on Research Directions

The University organized the First KFUPM Forum on Research Directions from March 11-12, 2008, and invited three distinguished speakers, including two Nobel laureates. The program included lectures on specific and general topics, a question-and-answer session and a panel discussion. This Forum provided a good opportunity to hear and interact with the distinguished speakers, and enthused our faculty, researchers, and students to excel in their research endeavors.

2nd Conference on Planning & Development of Education & Scientific Research

The 2nd Conference on Planning & Development of Education & Scientific Research held from February 24-27, 2008 concluded successfully. A group of experts, specialists, and decision makers from institutions of higher education and scientific research in the region as well as international experts exchanged notes and shared their views on higher and scientific research activities and development in the Arab world.

The conference aimed at investigating and discussing various relevant practices and experiences. Special emphasis was given to linkages of higher education and research programs with the vital issues of the Arab world.

Wayne Clough named Secretary of Smithsonian Institute

G. Wayne Clough, president of the Georgia Institute of Technology, has been unanimously elected the 12th Secretary of the Smithsonian, the world's largest museum and research complex.

Roger Sant, chairman of the Board of Regents, said that Clough will usher in a new era at the Smithsonian, "bringing a unique combination of academic achievement, talent, leadership skills and experience in public service, science, management and development."

"During his remarkable career, Wayne has shown an ability to dramatically advance the institutions and constituencies he has served through innovative curricula, economic health, mentorship, national policy input and community relations," said Alan Spoon, a member of the Board of Regents and chairman of the search committee.

During his tenure at Georgia Tech, which started in 1994, he expanded the school internationally, more than doubled research spending to 441 million dollars from 212 million and led two capital campaigns that raised more than 1.5 billion dollars in private gifts.

We are proud of our close association with G. Wayne Clough and extend our warmest congratulations and best wishes to him for continued success in his endeavors.

FOURTH MEETING OF THE IAB

The agenda for the fourth meeting to be held in London in August 2008, among others, will follow up discussions on several wide-ranging issues such as strategy, research programs and directions, regional competition, administration, and issues related to faculty and students, in addition to an update on the progress made on previous recommendations.