



TIEC GAZETTE

April, 2005
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Texas Educators Help PMU Meet Women Students' Needs

Educators from TIEC-affiliated universities returned home enthusiastic after three days of detailed discussions with women advising on the creation of the new Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University (PMU) in Saudi Arabia.

"They believe in the unique things about PMU – the outcome-based approach, the emphasis on the core competencies, even mandatory physical education for women," said Dr. Rebecca Smith-Murdock, Director of International Programs University of North Texas.

"They believe that these will be truly unique things in Saudi Arabian higher education – as well as the region."

Dr. Smith-Murdock and Dr. Wanda Mercer, Vice President of Student Services at Tarleton State University, met with members of the PMU Ladies Advisory Committee in Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia.

The university, which is scheduled to open in the fall of 2006, will provide undergraduate education for 5,500 students at its new campus. Construction is to begin soon.

The discussions covered a wide range of topics in order that TIEC and PMU officials fully incorporate women's educational and cultural perspective into planning the university.

A key point was that degree programs and services at PMU be provided without regard to gender.

In the university plan, majors in Business Administration and IT are identical for male and female students. Engineering majors will be offered to men and an Interior Design major will be offered to women.

Committee members emphasized the need for team sports, clubs, special interest (non-credit) classes, and other activities and programs for female students outside class.



Dr. Rebecca Smith-Murdock (standing l) and Dr. Wanda Mercer (standing r) met with members of the committee advising PMU on women's perspectives in education. The committee includes (seated, l to r) Reema K. Al-Onizi, Nouf Al-Hakbani, Dr. Samar Arnaout Abdul-Ghani, and Dr. Nasreen S. Al-Dossary. The committee agreed that PMU will be an attractive educational opportunity for students who wish to study in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province.

Discussion also emphasized that PMU can distinguish itself by a constant emphasis on work ethic and work skills.

With members that include a university Vice Rector, employees of Saudi Aramco, and owners of their own businesses, the committee itself represents accomplished members of the business community in Saudi Arabia.

"I was impressed by the kind of authority many of the women wielded in business," said Dr. Mercer. "Their level of education, training, and sophistication in the world were impressive."

The committee agreed that PMU will be attractive to students who also seek an active education that requires students to synthesize, analyze and think critically.

TIEC Confers on Education in Albania



TIEC Vice President Dr. Ronald Aqua recently met and discussed higher education issues in Albania with Arben Malaj, Minister of Finance, Republic of Albania. The occasion was Minister Malaj's presentation on "Albania on the Way to Growth and Development" to the Bretton Woods Committee in Washington, D.C., on April 15, 2005. Participants in the luncheon meeting included (l-r) Minister Malaj; Dr. Aqua; and James C. Orr, Executive Director of the Bretton Woods Committee.