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CSE and QCRI Send Computing Student to Heidelberg Laureate Forum

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Annual event a chance to meet winners of prestigious mathematics and computer science awards

As part of its mission to build the country's innovation and technology capacity, the College of Science and Engineering (CSE) and Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI), parts of Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), recently saw the participation of one of their aspiring students at the Seventh Heidelberg Laureate Forum.

Initiated by Germany's Klaus Tschira Stiftung, the annual event brings together 200 carefully selected young researchers to spend the week with the most exceptional mathematicians and computer scientists of their generation. The platform connects Forum laureates with the researchers in a bid to heighten their scientific knowledge and expose them to ample networking opportunities.

The 2019 Forum saw the attendance of reputed laureates including Caucher Birkar, Yoshua Bengio, Whitfield Diffie, and Martin Hairer, among others. Previous years saw the involvement of Sir Tim Berners-Lee and John F. Nash in acclaimed and internationally focused meet-ups.

Ghadeer Abouda, a PhD in Computer Science and Engineering student, who is jointly mentored by QCRI's Senior Research Director Dr. Ashraf Aboulnaga, attended the Forum as one of this year's qualifying researchers. Joining her was QCRI's Executive Director, Dr. Ahmed Elmagarmid, who was among the guests' list for this event.

This year's Heidelberg Laureate Forum brought together 23 laureates of mathematics and computer science to discuss some of the most fundamental issues facing science and humanity at large. These were tackled through a series of lectures, workshops, institute visits and other activities. The Forum also provided student participants with valuable opportunities to interact with the laureates in less formal settings.

Speaking after the Forum, Dr. Ahmed K. Elmagarmid, executive director of QCRI, said: "The Heidelberg Laureate Forum has quickly become one of the most esteemed platforms for expert discussions on mathematics and computer science. Its commitment to encouraging the next generation of leading academics and scientists is as refreshing as it is inspiring. To have an HBKU student among the 200 participants invited to this year's Forum also shows how far the Qatar Computing Research Institute has come over the past nine years. We're of course determined to continue being at the cutting edge of relevant debates, as well as innovations in research and development."

Reflecting on her trip, Ghadeer said: "The Forum brings together laureates of computer science and mathematics – including the ACM Turing Award, ACM Prize, Abel Prize and Fields Medal winners -- and promising young researchers from around the world with the goal of inspiring the next generation of scientists. I am happy and confident to say that it has served its intended purposes. I am fortunate and grateful to have been selected for this year's Forum, and I would highly encourage HBKU's capable students to follow in similar footsteps."

"The Forum is a great educational and networking opportunity for our researchers, enabling them to get a broad overview of state-of-the-art concepts in mathematics and computer science from some of the best minds in the field, and form professional connections with the laureates and their counterparts within a hand-picked group of attendees. I am very happy that Ghadeer was able to attend this year and benefit from these opportunities," said Dr. Ashraf Aboulnaga, Abuoda's mentor.

The College of Science and Engineering offers 14 state-of-the-art degrees tackling topical issues that include Sustainable Development; Information and Computing Technology; and Engineering Management and Decision Sciences.

The Qatar Computing Research Institute provides cutting-edge solutions through Arabic language technologies, social computing, data analytics and cyber security tools.

For more information on the work of Qatar Computing Research Institute, visit qcri.hbku.edu.qa, and to learn more about the College of Science and Engineering, go to cse.hbku.edu.qa.

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