



**Professor Dr. Ahmed ElZatahry, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, in an interview with the Sout Al-Jami'ah:**



**Developing undergraduate programs to graduate students with more than one major**



# QU developing undergraduate programmes enabling students to graduate in more than one specialisations: Professor Dr. Ahmed ElZatahry

- ◆ Professor Dr. Ahmed ElZatahry – Dean College of Arts and Sciences at Qatar University in an interview with 'Sout Al-Jami'ah' magazine.
- ◆ A new advanced policy for postgraduate studies that students will benefit from
- ◆ The interview was conducted by Asia Al Awadi, Maha Al Awlaki and Fatima Abu Matar



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**P**rofessor Dr. Ahmed ElZatahry – Dean College of Arts and Sciences – has revealed new plans to develop the educational process and improve the outputs at the level of the college departments to help enhance university's position, reputation and the competency of its graduates for job market.

In a comprehensive interview with Sout Al-Jami'ah, conducted by students of the journalism course in English, he said that the development plan includes enhancing the practical side of students, because graduates of Qatar University are enjoying the required competency, but they need more practical experience and skills, and this is what we will develop at the level of all departments and mass communication.

ElZatahry added that the College of Arts is one of the largest colleges of the university and we follow up on our students throughout the study years and afterwards, as well as in the job market, indicating plans to build companies with owners.

He revealed a plan to build partnership with employers for matching stakeholders requirements, skills, knowledge and capabilities that the students are having.

The Dean of the College said that the promotion policies of teaching staff are based on new foundations with focus on certain points and quality not on quantity, giving utmost priority to community service.

Full text of the interview as follows:  
**What is your future vision for the development of the College of Arts and Sciences at the level of scientific programmes and departments, and how much, do you think, that the college graduates have specialisations in meeting the requirements of job market?**

I believe that the college graduates are highly academically qualified graduates, but they need more practical experience, and this is something that we are working to develop in programmes. And not only that, but we are also working on developing our bachelor's programmes enabling students to have multiple specialisations and skills to get more opportunities in job market.

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**The College of Arts and Sciences is having for lion's share in terms of the number of students and teaching staff compared to students and teaching staff of the university. What are the key challenges to the college, and what is your vision to overcome them?**

We have the largest number of students and a diversity of programmes. We have the largest number of teaching staff. I believe that we are more than 50% of the university's strength.

Therefore, the logistic plan needs to make efforts in providing places for a large number of students. The college follows up the academic development and journey of students in job market even after their graduation. These are the challenges which we are trying to address to ensure a smooth operation.

**You have introduced a new policy for academic promotion for College of Arts and Sciences which is a role model for other colleges of the university. Can you share with us some highlights of this policy and when it will come into effect and how much this policy is following the democratic method?**



The new promotion policy is based on points and this system was created first time in the university. It means we are looking for quality more than quantity. As you know, the teaching staff applied for promotion based on their research works for example five research papers for the promotion of an associate professor and seven papers for the promotion of a professor.

But we wanted to develop a promotion system reflecting on the quality of the research workers that were submitted. This thing has become very important for us. The new system requires teaching staff to supervise their students supporting them to solve the problems of the community.

The point based system considered a number of such factors which are required from a teaching staff when he applies for promotion.

This is a type of internal filtering evaluating teaching staff according to quality of educational outputs including their skills of teaching, research and caring students and activeness in com-

munity service among others. **Graduates of social sciences and humanities face great difficulties to join the job market as a result**

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**of technological development and the lack of the required practical skills. What have you prepared to address this challenge?**

I go back to the same question that your colleague kindly asked us that we are working on upgrading the programmes where the student

has the opportunity to graduate with more than one specialisations by having a dual speciality or a joint specialisation and there is a difference between them.

We provide extra skills through the upgraded programmes so that the students have more skills. We work on partnerships with business partners enabling students to work with them because the problem is always between the quality of the graduate's outputs and the quality of the curriculum and its content. The college should understand the requirements of job market in a bid to deal with students properly for such outcomes.

The Mass Communication has been upgrading constantly in a bid to add more practical lessons so the students can feel that they are living practical life and those in job market.

Academic staff is a valuable asset for the community. They are being evaluated based on three aspects. First of all, they should be active in solving community problems through their researches, which is very important for us. The second and third aspects are teaching skills and services.

I believe that a professor who is excellent in research work would be also competent in teaching.

students about their relations with academic staff because lack of proper coordination will affect on making study plan. The students' affair section has been directed to increase the number of academic guides and specialist guides for natural, humanity and social sciences.

**Dr. Ahmed is one of the famous researchers in the world. Can you tell us about your most important academic achievements, and what is your original speciality? What are the aspects of uniqueness as a university professor before becoming a dean? How do you see your scientific future?**

I was very lucky in serving many schools as I started my journey in Egypt. I graduated from Cairo University in chemistry and physics. Then, I moved to Switzerland's ETH, one of the best institutes in Europe. I travelled to Holland, the US and China to pursue my higher studies.

I am also lucky that I did not want for high studies on the scholarship of Egyptian government but it was provided by the university itself enabling me to get admission in those international universities as a best deserving candidate.

I am also enjoying excellent reputation as a professor in Qatar as most of my students got university scholarships to pursue their higher studies in famous universities of the world because of their high level academic performance.

Now I am doing administrative job because six months after my joining to Qatar University in 2015, I became Head of Materials Science Department. Afterward, I was appointed as Dean of Higher Studies where I served for four years. I also worked as Advisor to President of Qatar University.

Now I am working as Dean College of Arts and Sciences at Qatar University.



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**For sure, you are facing many challenges regarding academic guidance that has an impact on study plan of students. What are the major challenges and what are your visions to deal with it?**

The academic guidance is essential for students. If they know their study plan properly they supposed to not have any problems with their academic plan. The academic plan is prepared by professor, student and academic guide.

The role of guide is to advise students in registering the subjects and those related to it. Clarity of study plan is a very important factor. The arrangement of study plan is difficult somehow therefore we provide solutions to students in this regard.

Sometimes system allows students to register their courses but they do not have any background about it. Awareness about the matter is needed. We asked academic guides to hold workshop in coordination with the faculty to create awareness among students about study plans by the beginning and end of the semester.

The move aims at reminding