



Advancement of International Education

Effat International Experience: Challenges and Future Vision

Remarks

By

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at

The Inaugural Launch for International Education Week



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

**In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful and Peace with blessings**

be upon our Prophet Muhammad "salla allah alahi wa salam" and his  
followers and companions,

President Beverly J Warren,

Provost Todd Diacon,

Associate Provost Marcello Fantoni,

Distinguished Guests,

Respected Faculty, Staff and students,

Good afternoon,



I am thrilled and honored to be here at "The Tree City" with all "Kentites" celebrating **The Inaugural Launch for International Education Week** that is happening across **America**. I would like to begin by thanking President Beverly Warren for inviting me and giving me the opportunity to share with you my thoughts and experiences.

- **Reality/ Challenge of Globalization** -

I always find myself thinking about the beauty and wonder in a world that embraces internationalization, recognizing



the importance for diversity, tolerance and appreciation of the new. As the world today changing constantly our old boundaries, we find ourselves connected to changes happening everywhere and these changes forces us to make the best of globalization, increasing our knowledge and education through different platforms of exchanges. Today, even with much access to information, we are too easily disconnected from each other, forgetting to ask important questions with independence. When we forget to ask, we raise walls to keep others away when in fact we



need bridges. I believe that education today must teach students that problems cannot be solved by one person. Instead, they must be solved together, as we recognize our common ties even with our differences.

**- Role of Universities in Changing Society -**

Now, universities and colleges are taking on greater roles in our societies, as centers of thought and brilliant minds that will leave their marks tomorrow. They are actors on the international stage, sharing ideas and breaking barriers. They are the drive behind our world's need for knowledge



and strong scientific partnership. Through them, a global citizen is shaped, a global network of shared vision is built, helping change our societies and the world. There are beautiful stories to be found in cooperation between colleges and universities across the world.

**- Importance of Women as Key Actors-**

We must commit ourselves to the truth that women are important players in this process, I know that this might not be an issue in this part of the world. Women must be educated and empowered as much as possible. This is



important to the future of our planet and humanity, as well as hundreds of millions of women around the world. Social equality requires education first. Educating women brings out the beauty of our creativity and innovation. Education allows all of this and much more. It is a chance at a new life.

- **Internationalization of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia**

Internationalization of higher education in Saudi Arabia started really early with the unification of the kingdom. In



fact, the whole advancement of education had its own roots on the international models of education. It blended the cultural and religious requirements into the western models of education. The model schools for boys started in the early 50's then in 1955 Queen Effat Althonayyan, the wife of the late King Faisal (God rest their souls in peace), established (Dar Alhanan School) the first model school for girls in Saudi Arabia. In the late 1970, the government started higher education by establishing King Saudi University then 7 more universities were added by 1995.



Private higher education didn't start till the late 90's and Queen Effat requested the first license for Effat University as a private non profit female university in 1998.

It is remarkable to note that in 1970 the literacy rate among Saudi men was 15% and a mere 2% among Saudi women.

Looking at the 2013 UNICEF statistics, less than 5 decades later, the literacy rate is 99% and 97% for Saudi men and women respectively.

In 1929, the Kingdom sent the first wave of exceptional students 14 -all male- students from the Hijaz region on



some overseas scholarships. This cultural approach continued and from its inception women were allowed to study abroad as long as she is with her Mahram or what we call Guardian in English (her husband, father, brother or son). This scholarship grew tremendously with the discovery of oil in the Kingdom. With the turn of the 21st century and after more than 80 years, the number of students on scholarships reached more than 193,000 students spread across 56 countries to attain academic degrees from the most prestigious universities world-wide



in the scientific, medical, engineering, practical disciplines and specialties required in the job market and the large developmental projects across Saudi Arabia. And so far more than 50,000 students have graduated with more than 98% success rate.

On 25th April 2016, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia unveiled its first 15-year vision to the world. It charted what the nation wants to be by 2030, and the guidelines on how to achieve that. There are nine areas highlighted in Saudi's Vision 2030, which may represent significant



opportunities for foreign educational institutions and research centers: -

1. Continuation of sponsoring Saudi students to further their tertiary education abroad. Currently, the Saudi government sponsors about 138,000 students studying abroad.
2. Train 500,000 public sector employees through distance learning by 2020.
3. Train 1,000 teachers and education leaders overseas annually.



4. Expand vocational training in order to drive forward economic development.
5. Increase the number of Saudi universities in the top 200 world rankings from the current two universities to at least five by 2030.
6. Encourage collaborations and partnerships between Saudi and foreign universities.
7. Systematically promote entrepreneurship and innovation, with a clear focus on commercialization.



8. Explore avenues for privatization to improve outcomes and efficiencies.

9. Ensure that Saudi generates an initial target of 9.5 gigawatts of renewable energy, with the localization of a significant percentage of the renewable value chain (including research).

Building on the achievements of the two Saudi universities that secured a position in the top 200 universities in world rankings, the Vision aspires to have at least five Saudi universities in the top 200 by 2030. This will require the

establishment of robust partnerships with international universities. Elements of such partnerships may include sister-universities, twinning-programs, two-way student exchanges, and joint academic sabbatical arrangements. An example of this is the recent announcement of the establishment of Prince Muhammad Bin Salman College for Administration and Entrepreneurship in collaboration with American partners.

**-Effat University: A True Example of Internationalization –**



Effat University is a true example of internationalization of higher education in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Since its inception, the effort of the founders, the board of trustees and all staff are connected with the international perspective of education. The adoption of Liberal education with customized formula, the 16 partnerships agreement (ranges from Mount Holyoke, Duke, Georgetown university to Global Liberal Arts Alliances), the necessarily international memberships for different international higher educational agencies, our admission criteria, our



entry examination test and our daily teaching and learning are all connected one way or another with the world.

Personally, I have always believed that the process of internationalization within the institution has allowed us to deliver a quality education and shaped our graduates as **Queen Effat Ambassadors to the world.**

Recently, we have created Semester aboard scholarship program to encourage our students to experience the international perspectives and benefiting from the insight they gain. We have also created another scholarship



opportunity for competitive programs (Varies in length some require short visit and some require one semester or more) that attract students from all over the world to come and experience Effat, while presenting them with opportunities to experience first-hand the rich history, culture, and social experience to be found in the Arabian Peninsula. Saudi Arabia has a unique heritage and culture that is wonderful to the new. Joining Effat allows students from all over the world to witness a unique culture and society in the region, leaving many touched positively.



That being said, it was not and still isn't easy to implement internationalization on an institutional level. And though we have done so, successfully I may add, it has been a long and ongoing process that required extensive effort, strategies that have been developed to fulfill the national and sector policies and programs as well as, a strong unyielding will.

- **The Road Ahead** -

While much has been achieved, much remains. To make our education as humanist as possible and as global as



possible, we seek international experiences that create a feeling of global citizenship and shared cause. This helps our students who connect to the world, looking for chances to share and make a difference.

- **Importance of needed action** -

Seeking internationalization however, cannot be one-sided.

Today, we witness much intolerance, which means we must understand our differences and discuss common ground. I must emphasize the role our universities, graduates and



networks play in spreading tolerance, cooperation and exchanges for the good of our societies.

- **The Path for Collaboration** -

Therefore, more initiatives and collaboration is needed to develop strong ties, and welcome the sharing of experience between our future leaders. These future leaders will go on to bridge culture and perception gaps in everything that they do. Effat seeks to take the lead on this, establishing international partnerships with institutions on important initiatives.



- Achieving Together -

It is my deepest hope that we can build towards equality on our common grounds, looking to improve our societies, and the lives of those in need. I pray that we find strength together in our love for human dignity.

God bless you all & Assalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh

May the Peace, Mercy, and Blessing of God be with you.