



AUS holds Mathfest to encourage school students to be critical thinkers and problem solvers

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Over 150 students and teachers from 10 Sharakah partner schools of American University of Sharjah (AUS) celebrated the field of mathematics at the AUS MathFest held recently at the university campus. The event stresses the importance AUS places on encouraging students to become critical thinkers and problem solvers.

Organized by the AUS Office of Enrollment Management in collaboration with the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, the day-long event comprised individual and team competitions for students as well as a team competition for high school math teachers. MathFest included a 75-minute test that consisted of multiple choice and written questions that each participating student solved individually. The test covered standard math topics from the schools' curricula of up to grade 11, including logic, analytic and plane geometry, and basic algebra.

Dr. James Griffin, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and Associate Professor of Math and Statistics, welcomed the students and teachers and said, "Today is really about community engagement and the relationship between us as a university and you as schools in the community. When you have time today in between your problem solving, look around you, get to know us a little because we are getting to know you. Because sometime in the near future this could be your home."

Ali Shuhaimy, Executive Director of Enrollment Management at AUS, also welcomed the students to the event. "We at this university take education seriously and always try to extend a helping hand to students and the community at large because it is part of our mandate to make sure opportunities are available for students as well as to make sure there is a bridge between us and the schools," he said.

The student with the highest grade was Mohamed Ibrahim from Al Shola Private School, Sharjah. The second place winner was Tamer Azzam, also from Al Shola Private School, Sharjah. Third place went to Youssef Mahrous El Sawy from Al Nahda National School, Abu Dhabi. The first place winners of the teachers' competition were Taghrid Zeidan Yassin, Hassan Hleihel and Yousef Abdel Gani from Rawafed School, Abu Dhabi.

Dr. Hana Suliemnan, Head of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, said the event aimed at promoting mathematical thinking of the students. "We need to provide academic programs that prepare students for the fast changing world. A survey published recently said that six of the top 10 skills needed by employers in the UAE were mathematics and statistics. Therefore, there is no better time than now to be interested in these fields," she said.

Participating schools in the MathFest included Al Najah Private School-Abu Dhabi, Alshola Private School-Sharjah, Madar International School-Al Ain, Sharjah American International School-Sharjah, Sharjah American International School-Dubai, Al Mawakeb School-Dubai, Dubai International School, International Community School-Abu Dhabi, Rawafed Private School-Abu Dhabi, Al Nahda National School (boys)-Abu Dhabi.

The event was held as part of the Sharakah program under which AUS has signed Memorandums of Understanding with a number of secondary schools in the UAE whereby the university will offer workshops to teachers and students; offer patronage of selected research, cultural, social and sporting activities and events organized by the Sharakah partner school; award partial scholarships to deserving students selected from lists provided by the schools; and offer university preparation courses, including SAT and TOEFL preparation courses, as well as recruitment of outstanding students from varied sociocultural and economic backgrounds to AUS.