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For information contact:

Lesley Kriewald  
Texas A&M University at Qatar  
Lesley.Kriewald@qatar.tamu.edu  
+974.4423.0424

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### **Students learn about, pilot drones in Engineering Heroes Drone Camp**

High school students from across Qatar spent their spring breaks learning about drone technologies as part of the Engineering Heroes Drone Camp hosted by Texas A&M University at Qatar.

Engineering Heroes is a unique and innovative academic outreach initiative that teaches principles of aviation, programming and power electronics as students are immersed in drone technology and its diverse applications.

Throughout the weeklong program, experts from Texas A&M at Qatar led about 30 drone camp participants through exercises and programming challenges in preparation for a drone obstacle course competition in which participants applied their learning to simulated real-world problems that drones can solve. An added challenge for the students was learning to program and navigate in three dimensions — not just forward and backward, and right and left, but also up and down — using cameras mounted on the drones.

The teams were coached by officers from the Reconnaissance and Surveillance Center of the Qatar Armed Forces, who also gave the students a preview of drone technologies being adopted by Qatar's military forces. At the end of the week, the student teams were required to fly their drones through an obstacle course — and to land their drones safely after particular reconnaissance tasks were completed.

Winning teams were chosen according to their performance in the obstacle course and their application of programming skills developed over the course of the week.

Participant Noora Al-Marri said Engineering Heroes was a fantastic experience and a worthwhile way to spend her spring break. "It has been an interesting and educational opportunity, through which I have learned a lot," she said. "Thanks to Texas A&M University and the team behind organizing this program, as having more of these programs encourages the younger generations to pursue studying STEM fields to participate in achieving Qatar's National Vision 2030."

Maersk Oil Qatar is the exclusive sponsor and industry partner for Engineering Heroes, which is one of several STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) programs organized by Texas A&M at Qatar and Maersk Oil Qatar through the Dhia: Engineering Leaders initiative. Dhia delivers strategic educational outreach programs to motivate young Qataris to choose educational pathways for careers in fields related to STEM.

Engineering Heroes Drone Camp was inspired by scientific research that is finding limitless possibilities for drone technology in industry, commerce and defense.

Dr. César O. Malavé, dean of Texas A&M at Qatar, said, “One of the greatest challenges Qatar faces is developing the technical workforce that it needs to sustain its phenomenal growth and drive the State toward the goals of Qatar National Vision 2030. It is imperative that we reach young students in Qatar through exciting and fun learning opportunities such as Engineering Heroes so that they choose careers in science and engineering. We are proud of these Engineering Heroes for choosing to invest in their futures and enrich themselves by participating in programs such as these.”

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#### About Texas A&M University at Qatar

Texas A&M University, recognized as having one of the premier engineering programs in the world, has offered undergraduate degrees in chemical engineering, electrical and computer engineering, mechanical engineering and petroleum engineering at Qatar Foundation’s Education City campus since 2003, and graduate degrees in chemical engineering since fall 2011. Texas A&M at Qatar has awarded more than 750 degrees since 2007. In addition to engineering courses, Texas A&M at Qatar provides classes in science, mathematics, liberal arts and the humanities. All four of the engineering programs offered at Texas A&M at Qatar are accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET. The curricula offered at Texas A&M at Qatar are materially the same as those offered at the main campus in College Station, Texas, and the courses in Doha are taught in English in a co-educational setting. The reputation for excellence is the same, as is the commitment to equip engineers to lead the next generation of engineering advancement. Faculty from around the world are attracted to Texas A&M at Qatar to provide this educational experience and to participate in research activities now valued at more than \$236.4 million, and that address issues important to the State of Qatar. Visit [www.qatar.tamu.edu](http://www.qatar.tamu.edu).