

Quest Lab scholar gets scholarship for Ph.D



Mr. Safdar Aqeel Safdar, a research scholar at Quest Lab, FAST-NU, Islamabad campus, has received fully funded Ph.D position at Simula Research Laboratories, Oslo, Norway. Simula Research Lab is ranked as the top most software engineering research institutes according to JSS rankings.

Mr. Safdar Aqeel completed his MS Computer Science from FAST-NU, Islamabad on a fully funded research position offered by Quest Lab as part of ICT R&D Funded MBT-Toolset project. His MS thesis work focused on empirical evaluation of EMF compliant UML Modeling tools and the result of his thesis was published in one of the top model driven software engineering conferences, European Conference on Modeling Foundations and Applications, (ECMFA' 15), Italy. Based on his excellent performance in

research, he was offered a Ph.D position at Simula Research Labs, Norway, one of the research collaborators of MBT-Toolset project. The funding covers all logistics, tuition fees, traveling and conference support as well as monthly stipend.



Prize distribution ceremony for high achievers

Lahore campus recently held a prize distribution ceremony to honor academic high achievers for Spring and Fall 2014

semesters. Dr. Zafar Iqbal, Director Lahore Campus, presided over the ceremony and distributed medals along with departmental

heads. 122 students were awarded medals on their brilliant performance and academic achievements. In his keynote address, Dr.



Zafar Iqbal drew attention of students and parents toward the challenges faced by mankind in modern world. He emphasized the need for developing a holistic perspective of life and society with excelling in technical education and skills. He congratulated the students on their outstanding academic performance.

Seminar on quality assurance in HEIs

Peshawar campus organized a seminar on "Quality Assurance in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)" on June 1, 2015. Director Peshawar Campus Dr. Tariq Raheem, faculty members and administrative staff of Peshawar campus attended the seminar. Manager QEC Mr. Farrukh Idrees participated in the seminar

through video link from Islamabad. Prof. Dr. Farman Ullah was the resource person. He is the Chairman, Department of Plant Protection at University of Agriculture, Coordinator Training Cell, and Director Quality Enhancement Cell of the university. The talk delivered by the resource person was very informative

and covered all important aspects of quality assurance. Dr. Farman explained the "Model of Quality Assurance" in detail that how internal quality assurance practices contribute to achieve benchmarks of external quality assurance. Dr. Tariq Rahim presented FAST-NU shield to Dr. Farman Ullah as a token of appreciation.

Students explore country's Northern Areas

Eighty students and staff members from Karachi Campus were taken on a nine-day journey to explore Northern parts of Pakistan. They travelled to highlands of the northernmost areas of Pakistan. This tour was arranged by Dramatics and Extra Curricular Society (DECS) headed by Ms. Ingila Rahim. The expedition began on 4th of June and the visitors returned to Karachi on 12th of June, 2015.

Director Karachi Campus, Dr. Zubair A. Shaikh, Dr. Aziz ur Rehman Saifi, and Ms.



Sumara Rashid Khanzada also accompanied the students along with their families. The group explored the beauty of the Gilgit-



Baltistan Region including Bisham, Fairy Meadows (Rai Kot), Naanga Parbhat, Gilgit, Hunza, Ata Abad Lake and Khunjrab Pass.

Self-Assessment visit in Karachi

Quality Enhancement Cell, Karachi



campus, successfully completed three Self-Assessment Reports (SARs) of its academic programs BS Electrical Engineering, BS Computer Science and BBA.

The self-assessment reports were evaluated by designated assessment teams comprising external and internal experts in the respective fields. The assessment teams conducted detailed assessment of programs on the basis of standards of quality education provided by Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) of the HEC.

According to the experts' evaluation the BS (EE) program obtained a score of 87.32, BS (CS) program got 85.08 and BBA stood at 76.93 in the 100 point rubric index of HEC. Campus Director Dr. Zubair Ahmed Shaikh appreciated the efforts of Assistant Manager QEC, Mr. Sheikh Masood Ali and all the departmental heads. He advised them for further strengthening and enhancement of the academic programs through self assessment processes.

English Microteaching Session 2015

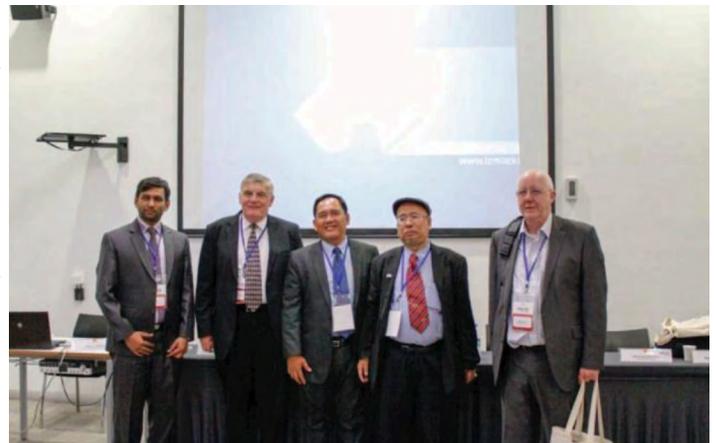
A micro teaching workshop was arranged by Dr. Sumaira Sarfraz, Faculty Member at Lahore campus, in coordination with Ms. Sahar Javed, Deputy Manager Quality Enhancement Cell. The session proved to be a great learning experience from quality assurance point of view. English Lab instructors delivered presentations about the stated and implied ideas in front of a group of students and senior faculty members with an objective to train the trainers.



Paper presented in CMC conference

Dr. Zia Khan, Assistant Professor, FAST School of Management, Lahore campus, as a lead author with Dr. David Ferguson, presented his research paper titled "Understanding the Complexity of Customer Advocacy Intentions Resulting from Continuance Commitment and Its Antecedents" in a highly reputed and well-established international marketing conference "20th Corporate Marketing Communications (CMC)" Conference arranged by Izmir University of Economics in Izmir, Turkey.

The CMC conference is organized every year under the umbrella of highly recognized Journal of Marketing Communications published by Taylor and Francis. The



research paper aims to add clarity between the constructs of continuance commitment and customer advocacy intentions by studying a sample of 155 international students within a Thai mobile phone telecommunications service industry. Dr. Zia's presentation was highly appreciated by the participants and session chair Prof. Philip Kitchen who is also the editor of Journal of Marketing Communications.

MARC achievements



The Management Advancement Research Centre (MARC), FAST School of Management, Islamabad, achieved three milestones during Spring 2015. It organized its first academic conference “Advancement in Islamic Finance and Business in the 21st Century” in April 2015. MARC also conducted its first training on “Writing Proposals for Ph.D Studies” in May 2015. Above all, MARC’s first funded project “Effective Management: Pakistani National Culture and Management Practices” started in June 2015. The centre has planned to organize six more trainings in coming months.

Ph.D thesis defended



Mr. Muhammad Farasat Shamir, Assistant Professor Mathematics, FAST-NU Lahore, successfully defended his Ph.D thesis titled ‘Exact Solutions and Symmetries in $f(R)$ Gravity’.

He completed his Ph.D thesis research work under the supervision of Dr. Zahid Raza. During his research period, he produced nine research papers in highly reputed international journals. He has also won two research productivity awards from Pakistan Council for Science and Technology (PCST). Mr. Farasat expressed his gratitude to National University of Computer & Emerging Sciences for funding his postgraduate studies.

Education Sector News

“Rebuilding of higher education after war”

A group of senior academics, university leaders, scholar rescue organizations and scholarship providers from around the world met at York University, England, on July 17, 2015 to agree an accord on protecting higher education during conflict and rebuilding it afterwards.

The accord is likely to call for the urgent identification of practical steps to shield scholars, students and the “valuable infrastructure of higher education institutions” from “collateral damage, direct threats, or the indirect threat of being appropriated for the cause of one armed faction or another”.

It is set to urge education institutions to offer a safe haven for academics or students to continue their work or learning. And it will urge international donors and development institutions to give particular attention to the rebuilding of the higher education sector following conflict.

The meeting was convened at the invitation of the Brookings Doha Center, the University of York and the Institute of International Education and under the joint chairmanship of the former president of Portugal Jorge Sampaio; Dr. Allan Goodman of the Institute of International Education, New York; Koen Lamberts, vice-chancellor of the University of York; and Professor Sultan Barakat, director of research at the Brookings Doha Center, Qatar.

The draft accord noted that higher education is “increasingly caught in the cross fire of conflict with devastating consequences for the sector and for conflict-affected countries”.

Institutions of higher education are “critical to addressing the challenges faced by conflict-affected societies, including inequality, underdevelopment, unemployment and social unrest” and their destruction or closure greatly hinders

progress towards peace, the draft accord noted.

It says: “We agree that our institutions of higher education should offer protection and safe haven to such individuals, for instance by hosting them through scholarships, fellowships, and other similar mechanisms that enable them to continue to learn, teach and contribute to the global academy.

“We call upon institutions of higher education around the world to join our efforts to offer this protection and safe haven,” the accord says.

It calls for stronger national and international legal standards to prohibit the military use and abuse of higher education. It also says efforts should be made to preserve the university space as a “zone of neutrality” where citizen-students can be united by their shared pursuit of education rather than be divided by ethnic, sectarian or ideological differences. Efforts should be made to reinforce the role of universities as national systems capable of reinforcing social ties in times of conflict and rebuilding them afterward.

Emphasis on rebuilding

The accord places a strong emphasis on the responsibility to rebuild higher education. It says more work is needed to protect institutions of higher learning in zones of conflict and incorporate the rebuilding of these institutions into post-conflict reconstruction and development plans.

The University of York’s Vice-Chancellor Professor Koen Lamberts said: “The situation is extremely hazardous in many countries. Without a functioning and thriving higher education system, societies cannot progress towards peace and prosperity while entire generations of leadership are lost.”

Credit: University World News

Conference paper presented

Dr. Shujaul Islam, Assistant Professor at Islamabad campus, presented research paper titled “Mobile Number Portability: Assessing and analysing the factors behind intention to switch” co-authored by Mr. Rafiullah, in International Academy of Business and Economics (IABE) – Summer Conference 2015 from June 18 to June 20 in Rome, Italy. IABE Conference is

a prestigious research forum in the area of Business and Management. His visit was fully funded by Higher Education Commission (HEC). The conference paper highlighted the Mobile Number Portability in context of Pakistan and how this network service affects the telecommunication industry in Pakistan. The presentation was highly appreciated by the participants of

the conference.



Self-Assessment in Lahore



FAST School of Management, Lahore campus, conducted a self-assessment visit on June 15, 2015. The visit was conducted to assess BBA and MBA programs against the defined criteria of Higher Education Commission's (HEC) Internal Self-Assessment.

It was successfully planned and executed by Program Team Members including Mr. Aamir Allaiddin, Assistant Professor,

Mr. Talha Salam, Assistant Professor, and Mr. Jamil Sabri, Assistant Professor, in coordination with Ms. Sahar Javed, Deputy Manager Quality Enhancement Cell. Dr. Zafar Iqbal, Director Lahore campus, and Dr. Hamid Hassan, Head of Department, supervised the process. Dr. Fahd Rehman, Assistant Professor LUMS, and Dr. Afaqi Muhammad Jamil, Fulbright Scholar, were also part of the assessment team.

The assessment visit was divided into different sessions for facilitating the assessment team and the process owners of the concerned areas to present current practices and discuss the best practices. The assessment team also visited the labs. Faculty interviewing and students interviewing sessions were also

arranged during the assessment process. The assessment team provided their suggestion and exchanged ideas with all the participants. At the end of the visit, the assessment team submitted their observations in writing to the QEC. The assessment visit was very important for sharing the best practices regarding learning and teaching.

Workshop on Novel Approach

On the initiative of In-charge Electrical Engineering department, a Continued Professional Development (CPD) activity was organized by NUCES IEEE Society from June 16 to 19, 2015 at FAST-NU Peshawar campus. Mr. Nauman Ahmad Zafar, Associate Professor LUMS, and Director of Energy and Power Systems Cluster, was the instructor of the workshop.

Mr. Nauman took the participants through a revision of the basic circuit theory following a unique approach. This workshop was specially organized for the faculty, senior year students and graduate students of the Electrical Engineering. More than 120 participants of the workshop were introduced to the novel approach of the introductory circuit theory course.

Mr. Nauman explained from basic principles of physics that why the circuits work, how they work and how manipulations in the circuits can be done to get interesting results. On the closing note, organizer of the workshop Dr. Muhammad Tariq thanked Mr. Nauman for conducting the workshop.



Talk at Ummul Qura University in Makkah



Assistant Professor Dr. Muhammad Tariq from Peshawar campus was officially invited by the Dean of Ummul Qura University in Makkah, Saudi Arabia to deliver a talk on "Smart Grid Communication Networks: Challenges and Opportunities". Around 100 students, teachers, and researchers attended the seminar. Dr. Tariq also answered the queries of the participants in the Question & Answer session. He was shown different research centers of the university. He discussed the possibility of induction of FAST-NU graduates in their research centers. They showed interest to hire fresh students for jobs and internship at their research centers.