CEDAT Student's Paper emerges among the best in EWB 2013

UAE:

Topics such as the importance of education, the influence of mentors, public-private partnerships and improving critical thinking were debated on Tuesday 2nd April 2013 as hundreds of international and UAE students explored ways in which to bridge gaps, in order to provide educational opportunities for global communities at the 7th biennial Education Without Borders 2013 conference (EWB 2013).

The student-oriented conference, held this year under the theme of Bridging the Gap ... Innovative Solutions to Global Educational Challenges, was convened at the Sharjah Higher Colleges of Technology as part of a week of educational celebrations and activities hosted by the HCT to mark the milestone of its remarkable 25-year history.

The student delegates, together with the Nobel Laureates, leading educators and technologists, participated in 32 interactive student paper presentations throughout the day, which enabled the students to be heard as future leaders.

The conference, which has run since 2001, was officially inaugurated by H.E. Sheikh Nahayan Mabarak Al Nahayan, Minister of Culture, Youth and Community Development and Chancellor of the Higher Colleges of Technology in the presence of Nobel Laureates Prof. Klaus von Klitzing (Physics, 1985) Sir Harold W. Kroto, (Chemistry, 1996), Prof. Douglas Osheroff (Physics, 1996); Prof. Yuan Tseh Lee (Chemistry, 1986),Prof. Martin Chalfie (Chemistry, 2008) and Prof. Jerome I. Friedman (Physics, 1990).

H.E. Sheikh Nahayan saw the genesis of EWB as positive interactions between participants. "I cannot imagine that mankind will ever invent anything more satisfying than what we are now enjoying, namely, the fellowship of human beings interacting with one another in person," he said.

Sheikh Nahayan added there was immense value in hosting such international events: "You are here because you value and seek international dialogue. You who submitted, in advance, your own innovative solution to global educational challenges have made a special contribution to the success of this seventh edition of Education Without Borders."

"I must say that for the sake of the future of global education, I fervently hope that you all make global education the object of your life's work. You have realistic, practical ideas that spring from truly creative thinking. Even the (student paper) abstracts convey a passionate commitment to solving problems and strengthening education around the globe," he added.

"Your intelligent, imaginative, and practical ideas and your tireless dedication to putting them into practice will bring life and light to the world. Thank you for giving hope to our future."
His Excellency told the audience that "education must be never-ending". "That view implies the absolutely critical importance of the beginning—a sound basic education that enables literacy of both language and current technology, mathematical competence, a familiarity with the scientific

method, an historical and cultural consciousness, and an appreciation of other cultures and other ways of life," Sheikh Nahayan said.

From the 32 presentations six paper winners, adjudged to be the best of the hundreds of entries, were announced, namely:

Paper Presenter	**University**	**Title of Paper**
Daniel Ddiba	Makerere University, Uganda	Mentorship: A missing link in Education in Sub-Saharan Africa?
Austin Halbert	University of North Carolina, USA	The Business of Open Education
Kate Denman	Institute of Education, UK	The creation of a participatory toolkit that educates students and communities regarding violence women
Ahmed Yousof	Indiana University of Pennsylvania, USA	HERO I" Project: Language-Based Simulation Game that Promotes Cultural Understanding Among Nations
Khawla Othman Hassan	Higher Colleges of Technology, UAE	Developing Global Awareness through Education – An Emirati Experience
Geetanjali Sharma	National Law University, Jodhpur, India	Hobson's choice – Does it exist in legal education?

The delegates were also treated to a panel discussion involving the Nobel Laureates and special guest NYIT President Prof. Edward Guiliano, which was moderated by television broadcaster, Riz Khan. The eminent panel discussed a wide range of topics, focused on the theme of what students want out of higher education, and answered questions from the audience.

A constant refrain from the panelists was connecting students' passions with their studies. Prof. Jerome Friedman told the students they needed to have a passion, challenge themselves and "do something that makes you a better person", both personally and in your community, while Prof. Martin Chalfie said students should follow the mantra of "I am only limited by my own imagination and by what I can do, not by someone else's ideas". "Doing every single silly thing you want to do can be quite liberating," he said.

"Winning the Nobel Prize is not the pinnacle of your career, we are still continuing being scientists because that is what excites us," Prof. Chalfie said.

Sir Harold W. Kroto told the capacity gathering that, as a young man, he was fortunate to have two teachers who nurtured his interest in both chemistry and the arts and architecture. "They both did what teachers must do; unlock the creative potential in students," he said.

Prof. Klaus von Klitzing agreed, saying that he firmly believed that it was a student's parents and teachers who influence that person's educational direction. And on the subject of critical thinking Prof. Guiliano said that it was more important now in the digital age, as "there is now too much knowledge because of communication, therefore students should go to university is needed to take a critical approach to that information".

Prof. Douglas Osheroff said "(having) critical thinking is obvious, but creative thinking may be more important". "With science and in my laboratory I am trying to trick Nature into giving up one of her secrets," he said. His fellow Nobel Laureate Prof. Friedman agreed saying that critical thinking in universities was vitally important to deal with the information found on the internet. "The internet is both a blessing and a horror, providing vast amounts of information and vast amounts of misinformation. With critical thinking students should be able to challenge information, question it and find the facts. Universities need to teach ethics and values as part of their curricula," Prof. Friedman said.

On the issue of global educational challenges Prof. Edward Guiliano said with the internet and mass communications the approach should be to look at fewer local problems, but more global issues. "We tend to think globally but act locally and to do that we need both basic research and applied research," he said.

The EWB 2013 conference was centered on the following eight sub-themes:

- Education: Enhancing Access; Ensuring Student Success;
- The Role of Education in Meeting Global Challenges;
- Emerging and Innovative Models of Higher Education;
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) Education: Initiatives and Challenges;
- New Media and Mobile Learning: Enabling and Educating Learners;
- University Internationalism – Reaching Beyond Traditional Boundaries;
- Transitional Futures for Higher Education – From Academic Enterprise to Economic Growth Engine;
- Research and Teaching mandates: contradictory or complementary?

The Education Without Borders conference is a biennial international student conference creating networks across cultures in order to understand, and generate solutions for some of the world's greatest challenges such as global warming, access to education, sustainable development and renewable energy. This is achieved by engaging the world's most innovative students and leaders of business, technology, education, and the humanitarian sector in a collaborative forum that culminates with commitment to action.

It engages world leaders, as well as rising stars from the fields of business, government, sports, science, culture, media and the like to mentor and inspire these young students. The EWB conference is all about breaking down the borders between students of different nations and cultures and between students and academicians with regard to learning.

Article from: http://ewb.hct.ac.ae/news/international-students-feted-at-hct-7th-education-without-borders-2013-conference/