



PRESS RELEASE: Ferris Welcomes Saudi Arabian King Abdullah Scholarship Program Students

Sandy C Gholston to: Archive

02/09/2012 08:25 AM

Included below is a press release regarding the collaborations that have allowed students from Saudi Arabia to come to campus and finish their bachelor's degree through the King Abdullah Scholarship Program for Technical Trainers on the Ferris campus in Big Rapids. Any questions about this release can be directed to Sandy Gholston, interim assistant director of News Services.

For Immediate Release
Feb. 9, 2012

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Ferris Welcomes Saudi Arabian King Abdullah Scholarship Program Students

BIG RAPIDS – In January 2012, Ferris State University welcomed 23 Saudi Arabian students from the King Abdullah Scholarship Program for Technical Trainers.

Ferris has partnered with Pittsburg State University (Kan.), the University of Wisconsin-Stout, and the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation in Saudi Arabia to host eligible students studying in engineering and technical fields. Technical and vocational training is an important part of the Saudi education and training system. The goal of the system is to create a more highly-trained workforce. The 68 Saudi Arabian students now are on course to pursue a bachelor's degree at the partnered U.S. institutions.

“Ferris is focusing more on diversity and globalization. Having a partnership with this specific group is very helpful in learning about their part of the world,” said Piram Prakasam, director of the Office of International Education. “We are very excited to have a stream of students from another institution attending Ferris.”

Prakasam said that OIE plans to continue this partnership for the next few semesters, as each student will complete at least one year of Ferris' Intensive English Program prior to their technical studies. In order to become trainers at technical colleges in Saudi Arabia, the participating students must also complete a short teaching qualification program.

KASPTT participants have already completed their technical certificates prior to attending Ferris and plan to return to Saudi Arabia to teach after earning their bachelor's degrees. Luzia Tartari, coordinator of international student recruitment and admissions, said that the purpose of a partnership with KASPTT is to “create a large pool of educated young people” to move their country forward once they return home with their degrees.

“The key thing that Ferris will take away is that these students are going to improve the Saudi

Arabian-U.S. relationship. I think that the key idea is for them to get to know the U.S. in a very personal way. The relationship between the two countries will be stronger,” Tartari said. “We welcome these students and the diversity they bring to our campus.”

Prakasam and Tartari said that the students will receive a hands-on education to take back to their workforce after they complete a four-year bachelor’s degree.

“Their technical degree helps them transfer easier to our academic programs,” Prakasam said. “The students will learn about their technical fields, social advantages and global consciousness through the courses we offer. Now, they get to look at the world through our eyes.”

Of the 280 international students who attend Ferris, 94 students are from Saudi Arabia. Ferris hopes to play a significant role in their education during the next four to five years.

To learn more about the Office of International Education visit:

<http://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/academicaffairs/international/>

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