Welcome to the January 2018 issue of this IT Newsletter!

The active participation of the staff has been a notable mark of success that smoothens the journey of the department towards the road of competence and excellence! A strong community of people in the department made such a success a reality! The staff’s prime concern is to impart a positive difference towards student success! Such is revealed by the distinguished records and prestigious awards conferred among our students during competitions. The staff has a vibrant research and staff development culture. The professional grooming and supervision from the staff may help in building the existing capacities and talents of our students’ for their future career.

In this issue, we have the following news that are equally worth-reading: IoT Hackathon Competitions at HCT, HCT Best Programmer Competition 2018, 2nd Department Meeting, Unlock Blockchain, Game Development Workshop, E-Learning Workshop, Workshop on Research Methodology, Webinar-Mode Workshop, Workshop on Statistical Methods for Research, Chatbot Workshop, Graph Theory Workshop, A Demo on the Use of Evacuation Chair, General Health and Safety Orientation for Students, Faculty Mentored Undergraduate Research Award Program (FURAP), and the Virtual Collaborative Platform of Ejaad.
IoT Hackathon Competitions at HCT

The Department of Information Technology and the Engineering Department fostered a collaborative effort during the HCT Internet of Things (IoT) Hackathon Competitions which lasted for four (4) days starting from January 29, 2018.

The theme of the event was “20.8 billion devices will be connected by 2020. Are you ready for the jobs that these may create?” The event was formally launched by Dr. Khalid Abdulaziz Ambusaidi, the College Dean, together with the other heads such as Dr. Huda Salim Al Shuaily, Head of IT Department, Ms. Samira Al Esry, the Head of EEE Section, to name a few.

The exhibition showcased IoT solutions developed by IT and Engineering students in five (5) categories, namely: Smart Home, Smart Campus, Smart City, Industry of Things, and Internet of Everything, under three (3) domains: Safety and Security, Pollution, and Energy Saving. In total, seven (7) IoT projects will be participated in by IT and Engineering students. These students’ projects are governed by Competition Rules in which winners on this Hackathon Competitions will represent HCT in the forthcoming IoT Olympics Hackathon Oman, planned to happen on March -April 2018.

HCT Best Programmer Competition 2018

A student competition event called “Best Programmer Competition 2018” was conducted last January 23, 2018 in N419. The aims of the competition were the following: (1) to target talented students who are gifted with problem-solving skills; (2) to equip the student-participants with valuable problem solving skills; and (3) to enable talented students to form a team of programmers which can be further trained in order to participate future competitions.

The competition, which lasted for four (4) hours that included one hour of short workshop, made use of the same competition mechanics followed during the previous International Collegiate Programming Contest (ICPC). Each participant was provided with five (5) questions to be solved within three (3) hours. Sixteen (16) students from the various levels and
ments of the College participated during the event as contenders. The winners dubbed as HCT Best Programmers are the following: Hajer Saleh Al-Sharji as First Placer and Ahmed Muneer Al-Masroori as Second Placer.

The event was organized by the IT Department through Dr. Eman Said Al-Abri, Software Engineering Lecturer, along with the following students: Mohammed Al-Wahaibi, Ahmed Al-Mukhaini, and Muntadhar Al-Ajmi.

2nd Department Meeting

The department had conducted a department meeting last January 11, 2018 at 10AM in the Multi-Purpose Hall. Dr. Huda Al-Shuaily, Head of IT Department, delivered her welcoming message to the staff. At the outset, Mr. Faisal Al-Toubi, Internet and E-Security Lecturer, provided a brief overview about the triumph of students who gained prestigious awards during the Huawei’s International ICT Skill Competition Finals in China. Dr. Fatma Al-Abri, Head of Academic and Assessment Committee, presented academic-related matters and responsibilities. Mr. Russel Diona, Networking Program Coordinator, presented some updates regarding the forthcoming IoT Olympics, a widely-disseminated event to be attended by the higher education sector.

The staff were also informed about the achievements of the department over the past three (3) months as reported by representatives of the various department committees as follow: Dr. Amando P. Singun, Jr., QA Officer; Ms. Mercy Claravall, Media Committee Head; Mr. Ruel Gilbang, E-Learning Committee Head; Mr. Anand V.K., Department Staff Development Committee Head; Mr. Roby Surendran, Final Exam Committee Head; Ms. Jeba Rosline, Advising, Timetabling, and Registration Committee Head; and Ms. Shaima Al-Amri, Head of Student Development Committee. Sumptuous lunch, courtesy of Dr. Seema Al Raisi, Dr. Muna Al Rahbi, Dr. Najiba Al Zadjali, Dr. Maryam Al Barwani, Dr. Shadha Al Amri, Ms. Khalida Al Siyabi and Mr. Faisal Al Toubi, was served thereafter.

Workshop on Research Methodology

As part of the HCT’s Staff Development Program, the Human Resource (HR) Department of the College invited Dr. Safiya Al Sharjia, Database Lecturer, and Dr. Ashish Rastogi, Information Systems Lecturer, as Resource Speakers during a workshop entitled Research Methodology last January 9, 2018 in BS003. About fifty-eight (58) staff members from various departments in HCT attended the said workshop. The main objective of this training program was to talk about Research Methodology to give awareness to staff and researchers about the various methodologies in research. The event focused on the methods and the systematic approaches in the writing of research papers. Moreover, the attendees had a hands-on experience in using the open source online software called “myendnoteweb” to manage the references. Further, the resource speakers briefly discussed about the data analysis using SPSS.
Dr. Huda Salim Al-Shuaily, Head of IT Department, and Ms. Shaima Al-Amri, Internet and E-Security Lecturer, attended a Conference in Dubai entitled “Unlock BlockChain: The Future of Sharing Economy” last January 14-15, 2018 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The aim of the Unlock Blockchain Forum was to bring together experts, research scientists, and business partners to discuss on how to build a platform to share learnings. “Blockchain is a continuously growing list of records which are linked and secured using cryptography.”

The event was highlighted with impressive keynote speeches of prominent speakers such as chief executive officers, company founders, executive directors, managing partners, research scientists, and other blockchain specialists.***

Game Development Workshop

A workshop called “Game Development” was exclusively participated in by fifteen (15) students who were eager to learn the basics of game development. Nader Al-Zadjali was invited as the resource speaker during the two-day workshop held last January 18-19, 2018, in N419.

The learning objectives of the workshop included the following: (1) to demonstrate knowledge on the basic concepts of modeling, (2) to demonstrate skills on texturing animation, and (3) to demonstrate proficiency on scripting game logic.

The workshop was organized by the Department Student Development Committee through the active supervision of Ms. Shaima Al-Amri, Internet and E-Security Lecturer, and Ms. Bashayer Al-Ajmi, Information Systems Lecturer. ***

“The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.” - Alvin Toffler

Unlock Blockchain Forum

Webinar-Mode Workshop

Mr. Leopoldo Maglalang delivered a webinar-mode workshop entitled “Get-Connected for Teachers-Online Courses Preparation and Management” last January 11-25, 2018. This event was organized by the College Human Resource (HR) Department.

According to Ms. Nomilyn who was one of the resource speakers, “The Creation of Online Exam workshop will help the lecturers organize their question bank by creating a category. Through the categories, the questions to be included will be distributed accordingly and equally among all students.” ***

The Educational Technology Centre was contacted to install CISCO WebEx into the participants’ respective workstations in order to be able to use the CISCO Webex. ***

E-Learning Workshop

The Department E-learning Committee of the IT Department conducted a workshop last January 29, 2018 in N419, participated in by IT and Math Lecturers. Ms. Nomilyn Simon-Cayton, Database Lecturer, demonstrated how to create online exams, while Mr. Muhammad Nadeem Tariq, HCT E-Learning System Administrator, discussed about Turnitin.***
Graph Theory Workshop

The Department Staff Development Committee, in collaboration with the Department Research Committee, conducted a workshop entitled “Recent Research trends in Graph Theory” last January 25, 2018 in N424. The resource speaker was Dr. Kamal Kumar, Mathematics Lecturer.

According to the Resource Speaker, “The talk emphasized on domination theory in graph. The development of graph theory is very much similar to the development of probability theory.”

Workshop on Statistical Methods for Research

The Department Staff Development Committee, in collaboration with the Department Research Committee, conducted a workshop last January 18, 2018 in N422. The Resource Speaker was Dr. Eduardo Lacap, Jr., Mathematics Lecturer. The aim of the workshop is to demonstrate knowledge on the importance and timeliness of how statistical inference operates in a quantitative research paradigm.

The Resource Speaker outlined his topic as follows: (1) Revisiting the usual standard statistical tools - Reviewing a typical quantitative research method paradigm and discussing where statistical methods normally start; (2) Selecting appropriate statistical tool-based on an adopted universal guideline in statistical consulting, how do we properly select the appropriate statistical tool to carry out the goal of the research problem; and (3) Interpreting a statistical report in American Psychological Association (APA) style – Presentation of an APA style interpretation of a statistical report processed using IBM SPSS Statistics for selected common research question.

Demo on the Use of Evacuation Chair

The Risk, Health and Safety (RHS) Committee organized a practical workshop on how to use an evacuation chair last January 11, 2018 among the Department First Aid Responders and Fire Warden Group members. The demonstration aimed to provide a practical use of evacuation chair to quickly move people with mobility limitations, down the stairs or across rough terrain.

The invited resource speaker was Mr. Mike Medina, the College RHS Officer, who taught the participants on how to quickly open the chair, adjust it, secure the evacuee inside and then transport the evacuee to safety. Also, he taught how to manually handle the said evacuation chair to ensure that the operator makes use of the lifting techniques correctly in order to minimize the risk of injuring themselves while operating the chair.

Announcement

Any untoward incidents or accidents in the department must be reported to Ms. Ranjini Nair, the Head of the Department Health & Safety and Security Committee. The form is available in various locations: Back of classroom doors, IT Library, and http://www.hct.edu.om/rhs. The lecturers are also requested to keep copies of it in their Course Files.
General Health and Safety Orientation for Students

The College RHS Committee conducted a General Health & Safety Awareness for the students on January 25, 2018 in Multi-Purpose Hall. The IT Department students also participated in the said orientation. Other participants were students from other departments.

The resource speaker was Mr. Sarath Nair, Sustainability & Safety professional, J.D Institute, Oman. The aim of this orientation was to provide, coordinate, and work together to create and maintain a healthy, safe and secure working and learning environment.***

Alumni Corner

I am Amaal Al-Lawati, currently employed in Petroleum Development Oman (PDO). I completed my Bachelor’s degree in Software Engineering from HCT in 2014.

After my graduation, I did multiple trainings in Oxy, Omantel, Ithraa and Bank Muscat. I was then employed in Takatuf Oman for two (2) years as an IT administrator. I left Takatuf for a bigger challenge ahead of me in PDO.

Throughout my career journey, I continued my studies and pursued Technical certifications in fields not related to Software Engineering such as: SDA, ITIL, MTA (Windows Server Administration Fundamentals, Networking Fundamentals and Security Fundamentals). Currently, I am studying CCNA and CISSP.

I believe being equipped with technical certifications is a vital matter in order to compete in the job market and career life. The reason I chose to be certified in the security field is because until I cross the bridges of my insecurities, I cannot begin to explore my possibilities. The journey was and still is tough as I have multiple responsibilities including my family and my son – whom I dedicate all my successes to, but the beauty of learning is that no one can take it away from you! ***

“You are capable of more than you know. Choose a goal that seems right for you and strive to be the best, however, hard the path. Aim high. Behave honorably. Prepare to be alone at times, and endure failure. Persist! The world needs all what you can give.”

– E.O. Wilson

Ms. Amaal Al-Lawati, UIIR/2G3 IM&T, Petroleum Development Oman

EDITORIAL BOARD

- Moderator: Dr. Huda Al-Shuaily
- Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Amando P. Singun, Jr.
- Content Editors:
  1. Mr. Talib Al-Mahruqi
  2. Ms. Jacqueline Fat Yara
  3. Dr. Tripti Sharma
- Contributors: Department Committees
- External Affairs:
  1. Ms. Bashayer Al-Ajmi
  2. Ms. Khalida Salim Al-Siyabi
- Graphic Designer: Mr. Ibrahim Al-Azzi (Diploma Student)
- Publicity: Ms. Mercy Claravall

Page 5 of 5 | Volume 2, Issue 05, January 2018