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PCI Chair surprised with award while on Jordanian visit

On a recent trip to Amman, Jordan, **Dr. Said AbuBakr**, chair of the Department of Paper Engineering, Chemical Engineering, and Imaging (PCI), received an award from Yarmouk University for his role in establishing its chemical engineering program in 1982. “They surprised me with an award for my work in establishing the program that now has more than 500 students,” he said.

The surprise came from **Dr. Sultan AbuOrabi**, Yarmouk University president and a WMU alum (MS '76 chemistry) who had invited AbuBakr to Jordan to discuss Yarmouk-WMU collaboration and the development of a paper and printing science and engineering program at Yarmouk, the first of its kind in the Middle East.

In his previous position as president of Jordan's Tafila University, AbuOrabi, a 2005 WMU Distinguished Alumni Award winner, had signed a memorandum of understanding with WMU, which brought 14 PhD students to WMU.

In addition to discussing the Yarmouk collaboration, AbuBakr also promoted WMU to a variety of Jordanian officials and students.

AbuBakr visited Allain McNamara, the Fulbright director in Amman, to publicize WMU's willingness to accept Fulbright scientists. He also brought WMU promotional materials to Amideast, a central clearing house for students who study abroad. “Everyone who wants to study in the U.S. must go through the Amideast office,” AbuBakr said. “They get applications there, so I brought them information about how to study here.”

He worked with Zohre Allowzi, assistant director of Amideast, who agreed to give WMU the opportunity to speak to prospective students via webinar two or three times a year.

At the University of Jordan, he spoke to 18 prospective students about studying at WMU. In an informal Q & A format, he discussed how applications are evaluated at WMU. “It was relatively simple stuff, but sometimes with the culture gap, you have to be clear,” he said.

He also met with **Dr. Hussam Khasawneh**, a CEAS alum (PhD '06 paper engineering) who is now a scientist at the Jordan Royal Scientific Society. “He was the first ever pulp and paper graduate to work at the society, and now the society is in the process of



Dr. Said AbuBakr (left), PCI chair, was presented an award for his work in establishing a chemical engineering program at Yarmouk University from **Dr. Sultan AbuOrabi**, Yarmouk University president and WMU alum (MS '76 chemistry).

building a pulp and paper research center – the only one of its kind in the Middle East,” AbuBakr said.

After earning his PhD in 1982, AbuBakr joined Yarmouk University. He and another faculty member developed the Yarmouk chemical engineering program, which had its first class in 1983. AbuBakr then left for Wisconsin in 1984, where he spent the next 16 years at the University of Wisconsin and at the USDA Forest Products Laboratory. He came to WMU in 2001.

AbuBakr chairs the CEAS International Education Committee, which has initiated programs in China, South Korea, Germany, Japan, Turkey, Finland, Jordan, and Brazil. The committee exemplifies the globalization cornerstone of CEAS, one of four established when Provost **Tim Greene** served as CEAS dean.

Send your thoughts or suggestions for future topics to the editor at jerrie.fiala@wmich.edu. Thank you.