

Delivering the Benefits of Future Studies at Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University (PMU) The Center for Futuristic Studies

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AL-KHOBAR, EASTERN PROVINCE, SAUDI ARABIA, April 6, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Delivering the Benefits of Future Studies at Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University (PMU)
The PMU Center for Futuristic Studies

In recent decades, the interdisciplinary field of futuristic or futures studies has emerged to empower people to expansively envision the future and bring about positive change here in the present. A pivotal event in modern human history that has altered both the course of futuristic studies and revealed the field's value is the COVID-19 pandemic. Societal shutdowns and transformations worldwide in response to the pandemic have demonstrated the need for forward-thinking, as well as changed how people interact and learn remotely across borders with newfound ease and open-mindedness.

Just before the pandemic struck, Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University (PMU) founded the [Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd Center for Futuristic Studies \(PMFCFS\)](#) in 2019 at the university's Al-Khobar campus. With this center, PMU aims to be a pioneer in futures studies not only in its home nation of Saudi Arabia but also in the broader Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and worldwide. As the world adapts to the swift change ushered in by the pandemic, PMFCFS is helping shape the education of the next generation of leaders, enhancing the understanding of futures studies, and ultimately delivering the field's benefits to humankind.

"The Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd Center for Futuristic Studies is a world-class institute with a mission to research, identify, and spread the best and most sustainable policy solutions



worldwide through futures studies," said [Dr. Issa Al Ansari](#), President of PMU. "We firmly believe peaceful prosperity can be equitably achieved for all people in all places on our shared planet. The coordinated global response to the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced this view."

Futures studies take a holistic view of the challenges societies uniquely and collectively face. A few examples of these challenges are climate change, disease pandemics, environmental stewardship, and resource limitations. In addressing these and other, often-interwoven obstacles to peace and prosperity, futures studies do not merely seek to forecast what the future holds or to predict human behavior.

Instead, futures studies seek to examine and explore alternatives to a simple extension of the status quo by encouraging the formulation of novel perspectives. Agricultural innovation, technological breakthroughs, medical advances, and social progress, for instance, will likely all have roles to play; being able to fully and synergistically harness these potential gains will be critical.

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Dr. Issa Alansari (President)

In alignment with PMU's mission and vision, PMFCFS aims to position itself among the leading academic institutions in the Middle East as a research-led center. PMFCFS's approach to inculcating futures studies and ways of thinking includes educational outreach, problem-solving activities, and knowledge sharing. PMFCFS employs and engages a diverse set of scholars affiliated with PMU and through international collaborations, reaches and teaches a similarly diverse student body at PMU and abroad.

"Futures studies offer an efficient and effective means to create changes that benefit societies, starting by equipping our students—who are the next generation of leaders—with knowledge, experience, and perspectives," said Dr. Al Ansari.

Bringing the world to the Al-Khobar campus



Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University

An important element in futures studies is creativity, which is greatly enhanced by hearing new viewpoints from people across different cultures and histories. In its capacity as a global leader in the field, PMFCFS has sought to foster this creativity in its academics, students, and partners by hosting a number of conferences, seminars, workshops, lectures, and other events.

A recent and important event took place in December 2021, when PMFCFS hosted a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Chairs International Symposium in Futures Studies and Futures Literacy. The Symposium celebrated the establishment of the first UNESCO Chair in the Gulf Region, entitled "UNESCO Chair in Transitional and Inter-generational Anticipation." (A "UNESCO Chair" is the term for a project involving the partnering of a team at a university or higher education or research institution with UNESCO, a United Nations agency, to advance knowledge and practice in an area that is a priority for both the institution and UNESCO.)

The focus of the Chair is educational quality, in concordance with UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals that have been adopted by countries around the world to achieve a better and more sustainable future. PMU has received recognition for offering quality education, with the university ranking fourth among all universities in the Arab world in 2021, according to the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings.

"We have a shared mission with UNESCO in applying futures studies and thinking to solve significant problems," said Dr. Al Ansari. "An indispensable element of futures studies is quality education, and as a service provider of higher education, PMU is committed to doing its part."

Bringing PMU to the world

Reflecting PMU's growing role in the international collaboration in promoting and delivering the benefits of futures studies, the university has also opened a chapter of the World Futures Studies Federation (WFSF) representing the MENA region. A consultive partner with the U.N. and UNESCO, WFSF has members in over 60 countries and has been a driving force in futures studies since its founding in 1973.

Besides bringing the world to PMU in Saudi Arabia, PMFCFS also enables the sharing of perspectives from PMU academics with the broader world. For example, in October 2021 PMU partnered with WFSF in convening the [WFSF 24th World Conference](#), an international event held in Berlin, Germany.

Many other agreements, partnerships, and joint research collaborations are also in place and are actively being developed. Some of these other agreements include a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed in September 2019 with Teach the Future, a non-profit futures literacy organization based in Sacramento, California, United States, as well as an MOU with the Association of Professional Futurists (APF) located in Seattle, Washington, United States. In February 2020, PMFCFS signed a similar MOU with the Future Foresight Foundation (FFF) in Abu

Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Overall, PMFCFS is cultivating free and lively exchange to help ensure humanity meets our challenges, from the current pandemic to all the new challenges that lie ahead.

"The pursuit of futures studies here at PMU has connected so many people and continues to inform the current generation as well as the next generation of leaders who are teaching and engaged in higher learning here at our Center for Futuristic Studies," said Dr. Al Ansari. "A tomorrow where we all may flourish is possible, and through hard work and determination now, deeply informed by future thinking, such a desirable and propitious outcome can be realized."

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