جامعة زايد
ZAYED UNIVERSITY

Tomorrow's Teachers: Success Through Standards
Conference Summary

Under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, a two day Conference on March 31 and April 1 was held on the topic, Tomorrow's Teachers: Success Through Standards. Zayed University and The Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Award for Distinguished Academic Performance presented four plenary sessions, and sixty breakout sessions to over 900 delegates. The delegates included both K-12 and tertiary teachers and Ministry of Education personnel from the UAE. Several other countries also sent a small number of delegates.

Dr. Tony Townsend's (Monash University, Australia) speech was entitled, "What We Have Learned from 20 Years of School Effectiveness and School Improvement Research and What This Means for Schools and Teachers". Christopher Cross' (U.S. Council for Basic Education) speech was entitled, "How the Drive for Academic Standards Has Driven Education Reform in the US" . Dr. John McBeath's (Cambridge University) speech was entitled, "A Question of Standards". The International Council on Education for Teaching (ICET) launched its Middle East Center with speeches by ICET Executive Director, Dr. Darrell Bloom, National-Louis University, Dr. Kamal Dawani, University of Jordon, and Dr. Mohammed El Shibiny, Sultan Qaboos University.

The sixty breakout sessions focused on such diverse topics as standards and testing, teachers of the future, critical thinking, Zayed University's teachers education program, teachers' knowledge base, assessment of learning, incorporating standards into teaching, using technology to improve teaching, increasing student achievement, accelerated learning, art standards, cooperative learning, motivational techniques, model classroom teaching techniques, school mathematics standards, portfolios, literacy standards, standards and the teaching of English, Arabic teaching, standards and early learners, and creative teaching.

The Conference conclusions and suggestions follow from a review of the sessions and informal discussions with participants. They are as follows:

1. Throughout the UAE, discussions about the advisability of developing curricula linked to international benchmarks should be fostered.
2. Schools interested in improving school effectiveness through school-based collaborative professional development initiatives and standards-based approaches should be encouraged.
3. Dialogue among curriculum groups with representatives across the different levels of education in the UAE should consider reviewing and reframing standards for each K-12 curriculum area.
4. Teacher professional development should be viewed as an important educational goal.
5. Additional Conferences and Seminars which focus on implementing standards in specific disciplines should be held.