Villa College Goes International

Villa College in collaboration with Commonwealth of Learning has launched a short course for international participants. The course is designed to teach the participants how to facilitate Online instruction. It is an online course designed and developed by the Commonwealth of Learning and offered through a Maldivian institution for the first time. Twenty nine (29) participants from fifteen (15) different Commonwealth countries are participating in this course. It is a six weeks course which would run from 18th February 2013 to 29th March 2013. The course participants are from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Botswana, Dominica, Gambia, Lesotho, Maldives, Mauritius, Namibia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Seychelles, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, and Vanuatu.

The course is designed to be delivered online where all the participants will take part in the course while staying in their home countries. The course will be facilitated by a consultant from Commonwealth of Learning Dr. Roger Powley. Dr. Powley holds a PhD in Instructional Systems and has facilitated a number of courses in this field.

The course is hosted on the Student Portal, the ROSE portal, designed to deliver online instruction to Villa College students. During the delivery of this course all the technical assistance required is being provided by the Villa College CICT team.

Strategic Plan for 2013—2018

Villa College’s new strategic plan from 2013-2018 - Villa College: Moving Forward has been drafted and is in the final stage of compilation and implementation. With the overarching aim of becoming among the top 50 Universities in the region by 2030, Villa College aims to achieve this target by strengthening its student capacity, process capacity and financial capabilities.

The senior management of Villa College has been conducting several meetings to finalise the strategic plan from 1st of January 2013 and will be moving towards making the operational plans in early March.

Villa College Participates in APQN Conference

Villa College in its bid improve quality has become an APQN member and has participated in this year’s APQN conference.

Director of Institute for Academic Development Aishath Didi and Coordinator of the Faculty of Education Fazeela Ibrahim attended a meeting in Bangkok, to celebrate the 10 Anniversary of the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN). Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA), in cooperation with APQN organized the international Conference on Innovations in External Quality Assessment: Chain of Quality from 13 – 14 February 2013 at the Sukosol Bangkok, Thailand. Villa College became an institutional member of APQN in 2012.

The Conference brought together high ranking officials and administrators responsible for external quality assessment from APQN member countries. The conference paved the way for the participants to share and discuss External Quality Assessment (EQA) trends and innovations.

First keynote was presented from Thailand by Professor Dr. Channarong Pornrungroj, the Director of ONESQA. A though provoking speech highlighting “EQA Trends and Innovations in Thailand” was given with emphasis the lessons-learned from twelve year of EQA practice.

Second keynote was delivered by Dr. Jagannath Patil, APQN President. He presented “EQA Trends and Innovation in Asia-Pacific”. APQN members shared their good practices and lessons-learned from the regional perspectives on quality assurance, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nantana Gajaseni, Executive Director of the ASEAN University Network (AUN) and Prof. Zita Mohd Fahmi, Executive Secretary of ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) provided an in depth perspective on ASEAN Quality Assurance under the topics of “IQA in ASEAN” and “EQA in ASEAN” respectively.

One of the highlights of the Conference was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between APQN and ONESQA to establish and function as a Quality Hub and a lead agency in the region to promote capacity building on quality assurance in Asia and the Pacific.
CSR
Bahiyya Pre-School: Villa College’s CSR Initiative

Our Rector, Dr. Anwar, out of his dedication and commitment to make a difference in the education system of the nation, has taken the initiative to guide and support Bahiyya Pre-school for the betterment of the education provided to the young children in Baa. Eydhafushi. Villa College started working in collaboration with the school at the beginning of January 2013.

The main goal of this project is to support and facilitate the current team of teachers in the school, to provide quality education to the young minds through play-based learning. The pre-school, since its inauguration in the year 2000, has been functioning without much professional guidance, and thus, has been engulfed in a culture of providing extremely formal education through the extensive use of books and worksheets.

The pre-school teachers, with a lot of hard work, has remained successful in keeping up to the demands of the parents throughout the past years, by enabling the students to read and write when the students go for their primary schooling. However, neither the teachers nor the parents of the children were aware of the importance of play-based learning for infants at the foundation stage of their learning. Therefore, Villa College has taken the initiative to undertake the change of introducing play-based learning, which requires making both teachers and parents aware of its necessity.

In this regard, a lecturer from Villa College together with an Early Childhood specialist has occasionally made two trips, one before the school re-opened for the academic year in January and the other in mid-February, to train the teachers as well as conduct sessions and workshops for parents. We have been successful in convincing these parents by organising hands-on activities for them during workshops and through the use of videos which show research regarding what goes on inside the brain of infants.

Pre-school teachers have been given professional guidance on how to select themes, prepare monthly lesson schedules based on the themes and prepare lesson plans during the sessions held for teachers. Moreover, their lessons were observed and they were given feedback of the observed lessons.

Turnitin, a plagiarism detecting software was introduced across all faculties and centres at Villa College on 13th of February 2013 for final submission of assignments. This was done against the backdrop of unceasing concern over the issue of increasing level of plagiarism; as a way of responding to the needs of both instructors and students. The software was not acquired with the intention of using it as the punitive or plagiarism policing tool it is often perceived to be. Rather, Villa College adopted Turnitin as an educative tool to be used positively and formatively to deter plagiarism by supporting students. It is also meant to supplement the plagiarism prevention workshops Villa College students are required to undertake at the beginning of their courses.

Turnitin is currently integrated with the moodle in the Villa College student portal to enable our students to upload their assignments. It has many advanced features that can be useful for students. For instance, the originality report generated by the software provides students rapid feedback about the level of similarity between their work and those that are already published and archived. Having access to this kind of preliminary feedback provides students the opportunity to discuss their concerns with the lecturers and thereby improve draft versions of their written assignments with guided follow up. It also provides students with a deeper understanding of how and when to appropriately attribute work to others.

Although, policies relating to Turnitin is will come into effect commencing from May 2013 semester, all the students are nevertheless encouraged to upload their work to Turnitin and check for originality. It is hoped that through the use of Turnitin, Villa College will be able to build students’ confidence in writing and support them in producing authentic work.

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Student Portal

Villa College Student Portal is a web-based system where teachers and students can log-in to access important information. The Student Portal has enabled prompt information and necessary updates for students and teachers.

Using Student Portal the students and teachers benefited from getting access to electronic media such courseware, learning materials, discussion forum, assignment, quiz/exercise and chat.

Student Portal has reduced the printing and paper costs, and benefits the environment by using fewer resources. It also made it easier for students and teachers to access important information from anywhere, at any time of day.

Best Practices
Villa College Adopts Turnitin to Support Students

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Courses Offered
May Intake
Deadline: 3rd April

Q1 Campus
• ACCA
• CIM
• MBA
• Master of Education
• Master of Information Technology
• Bachelor of Shariah
• Bachelor of Information Technology
• Bachelor of Business Administration (Hons.)
• Bachelor of Accounting (Hons.)
• Bachelor of Education Administration (Hons.)
• Bachelor of Education (Maths) Hons.
• Bachelor of Education (TESL) Hons.
• BTEC HND in Business
• Diploma in Primary Teaching
• Advanced Certificate in Accounting
• Advanced Certificate in Business Administration
• Advanced Certificate in Information Technology
• Foundation in Teaching
• Advanced Certificate in Multimedia Technology
New Semester Starts

Villa College’s Academic Year started on the 14th of January 2013. A total of 1040 new applications were received for January 2013 intake and out of those, 769 new students enrolled to different programs at Villa College. Both existing and new student enrollment in January sums up to 2312 active students studying at Villa College.

Currently there are five campuses of Villa College; QI Campus, Knowledge Village, Fuvahmulaku Campus, Lakeside Campus and Etydhafushi Campus. QI Campus is the main campus which is located in Male’, and the other 4 campuses are located in different regions of the Maldives. Knowledge Village is located in Sun Island Resort and Spa, where Marine Studies and Water Sports programmes are conducted. Villa College Fuvahmulaku Campus (VCFC) is located at Gnaviyani Fuvahmulah, Villa College Lakeside Campus (VCLC) at Sh. Funadhoo and Villa College Etydhafushi Campus (VCEC) at B. Etydhafushi. These campuses offer programmes from Certificate levels to Masters Degree level.

Our dedication and commitment to provide quality education to wider audience has reached new heights this January. Villa College has become the leaders in terms of reaching the atolls. Villa College will be further expanding its services to other atolls of the country providing quality education wherever you are.

Important Dates in March and April 2013

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<td>15th to 16th</td>
<td>Application deadline (Semester 2)</td>
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<td>Result Release (Semester 1)</td>
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Access to Higher Education

Leaders in Reaching the Atolls

Our dedication and commitment to provide quality education to wider audience has reached new heights this January. Villa College has become the leaders in terms of reaching the atolls. Villa College has opened two new campuses in the atolls making us the higher education institution with the most number of campuses or centres in the atolls.

Currently Villa College has four campuses and an outreach centre in the atolls.

These include Knowledge Village Campus at Sun Island, Villa College Fuvahmulaku Campus (VCFC) in Gnaviyani Fuvahmulah, Villa College Etydhafushi Campus (VCEC) in Baa Etydhafushi, Villa College Lakeside Campus (VCLC) in Shaviyani Funadhoo, and an outreach centre in Seenu Hithadhoo.

Villa College will be further expanding its services to other atolls of the country providing quality education wherever you are.

Teaching

Teaching Practice with a Difference

The first round of students has started their Teaching Practicum this semester. This includes six students from Bachelor of Teaching Mathematics and seven students from Bachelor of Early Childhood Education program.

Our Teaching Practicum is offered in three different modes. Modes 1, 2 and 3 are offered for a duration of 4 weeks, 8 weeks and 12 weeks respectively. The modes vary depending on previous teaching qualifications and experience of students in the field.

To encourage commitment and hard work from the student-teachers, the results of the practicum varies based on the performance of the student-teachers, and thus offers grades from FF to HD, rather than a mere pass or fail.

Special workshops on various topics related to teaching and learning, and managing classrooms are held for students who are going for their teaching practicum. Workshops for students of Bachelor of Teaching English as a Second Language Program, who are to go for their Practicum next semester is also already in progress.

It is obligatory for the student-teachers to take the full responsibilities of a teacher within the duration of the practicum.

100% attendance is required of the student-teachers and any day absent has to be compensated for after the duration of the practicum, up to a period of five days’ absence. If for any reason, the student-teacher gets absent to school for more than five days, the practicum has to be repeated in another semester. Student-teachers are required to prepare an SOP (School Orientation Programme) which requires them to gather information regarding the school management, curriculum as well as the infrastructure of the school. The main purpose of this SOP is for the student-teachers to understand the procedure and operations related to instructional setting of the school.

Moreover, it is mandatory for student-teachers to pass in the four components of the practicum, which are namely, the SOP, Classroom Teaching, Professional Growth and Presentation in order to pass the Practicum. The same applies to all student-teachers, regardless of the mode of their practicum.

It can be proudly noted that one of our student-teachers has already been employed as a full time teacher in the school where she is doing the practicum. We congratulate all the lecturers who have immensely worked hard in bringing our students to a level, where they have the potential to work as excellent teachers in schools to make a difference in the education system of our nation.
Quality Assurance
Quality Given Paramount Importance at Villa College

Villa College was established on 17th October 2007, with only 20 students in 3 faculties. However, in just over five years the numbers have grown to approximately 2900 students studying in 8 faculties/centres. Villa College offers a wide array of programs from Certificate level 1 to Masters Degree.

Quality has always been given paramount importance at Villa College. Villa College, the first private college in Maldives, has always been keen to provide an outstanding educational experience to the students. Each student enjoys a self-fulfilling educational journey, with experiences to equip him/her to face any challenges at work or life.

In line with students’ needs, Villa College offers programs International, Foreign and Maldivian. Key international and foreign programs include Open University of Malaysia, ACCA and PADI programs.

Villa College, in her quest for quality, recognizes the importance of international acceptance of the college and graduates. Since, in partnerships, many a learning experiences can be enjoyed, Villa College has been enjoying partnerships (apart from the aforementioned) with Heilbronn (APQN). The college is keen to become a member of INQAAHE and other key bodies as well.

• Advanced Certificate in Human Resource Studies
• Advanced Certificate in Marine Studies
• CIII in Business Administration
• CIII in Information Technology
• CII in Human Resource Management
• CII in Accounting
• CII in Hospitality Operations

Knowledge Village Campus
• Dive Master Training Programme
• Water Sports Assistant Course

Eydhafulhi Campus
• Bachelor of Business Administration (Hons.)
• Advanced Certificate in Business Administration
• Advanced Certificate in Information Technology
• Foundation in Teaching
• CII in Business Administration
• CII in Information Technology
• CII in Information Technology

Courses Offered
• Advanced Certificate in Human Resource Management
• Advanced Certificate in Marine Studies
• CIII in Business Studies
• CIII in Information Technology
• CII in Human Resource Management
• CII in Accounting
• CII in Hospitality Operations

Deadline: 3rd April

Research
Creating a Research Active Faculty

Villa College organized and conducted a workshop on Action Research as part of its initiative to develop a research focussed faculty development. The aim of the workshop was to inculcate research within the staff at Villa College as well as prepare them produce research outputs for publications. The workshop was held from 21st January to 30th January 2013 at Villa College, Male’.

The aim of the workshop was to inculcate research within the staff at Villa College as well as prepare them produce research outputs for publications.

Professor John Landon was, until his retirement in 2006, Head of the Department of Educational Studies at Moray House School of Education, the University of Edinburgh. He has long experience, at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, of teacher development in using English as a medium of instruction in multilingual contexts in UK and in several European countries, Canada, Australia, USA and South Africa.

His principal research interest over the past 12 years has been in the development of mother-tongue based bilingual education programmes in South Africa. He has been working with South African researchers to compare the impact of early exit and late exit mother-tongue based programmes. He has been involved in a number of Action Research projects in this area leading to very positive results on learner and school development.

The workshop included several lectures to present an overview of the Action Research and processes to be followed in getting the Action Research up to a publishing level. In addition, the participants were required to formulate their research questions, design their data gathering techniques and start with supporting literature reviews.

The workshop was led by the Professor John Landon, an esteemed scholar especially in the area of Action Research.

Bahiyaa...contd from p2

In addition to this, demonstrations were done to show how improvements need to be made in their present way of conducting ‘sharing time’ and teaching. Ideas on conducting the lessons in more interactive ways were discussed and sessions were held to train them in appropriate ways of assessing pre-school students.

Despite the human nature of finding it difficult to accept change, the parents have started to look at this concept more positively. The teachers too have said to have felt a sense of achievement after implementing this model of learning, though initially they felt otherwise. They have noticed positive changes in their students as well, since they enjoy the lessons more.