



## International Advisory Board

# Newsletter

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### From the Chair: Some Initial Impressions of KFUPM

KFUPM is a distinguished technological university that has educated many of the leaders of Saudi Arabian industry. The continued identification and development of Saudi business leadership and technological expertise is of singular and unique importance to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its future. Few other universities have a comparable responsibility to singly provide the first level of university training for young people who will be the business leaders of their country. Also, few other universities have a comparable responsibility to develop the technological expertise that is dominant in the economies of their country.

As illustrious as the first forty-four years have been for KFUPM, there is reason for excitement and optimism regarding the future. Energy and petrochemicals will continue to play a central role in the economy of Saudi Arabia and the world. The technological challenges of extracting and processing these natural resources will only grow. It is essential that KFUPM continue its quest to be a globally recognized elite technological university. Fortunately, the university is blessed with talented faculty, students, and leadership who appear willing and eager to take up this challenge. It also appears that there are partners in government,

business, and academia who are willing and eager to help.

The International Advisory Board (IAB) has been appointed by Rector Al-Sultan in 2007 to help the university become an even more globally renowned institution of higher education. The IAB comprises experienced industrial and academic leaders from around the world who bring a wealth of experience and a commitment to the important role of higher education in modern society. Our initial meetings have been quite productive, lively, and we hope helpful to KFUPM. While we recognize the challenges facing KFUPM, we are excited by its opportunities for improvement and greater impact. The IAB welcomes the opportunity to contribute to KFUPM's progress and looks forward to learning more about this remarkable university.

KFUPM's rich history, its importance to the Kingdom and the world, its talented people, and its commitment to excellence make me and the International Advisory Board quite optimistic about the future of KFUPM.

*Dr. Martin C. Jischke  
Chair of the Board  
President Emeritus, Purdue University*

### HIGHLIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

#### Education Gets Priority in National Budget

**Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah ibn Abdul'Aziz** unveiled the national budget for 2008. It has allocated a record SR 105 billion (US\$ 28 billion), more than a quarter of the new budget, for education and training. Saudi Arabia in recent years has been spending hugely on education and manpower training, which highlights the leadership's desire for building capacities and securing a better future for the new generation.

"The budget will also boost scientific research and technological development," the King said referring to financial allocations made for new research centers at universities.

KFUPM has received SR 821.99 million (~US\$219 million) in the 2008 budget.

#### New Centers for Higher Learning

**Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah** approved on December 2, 2007 the establishment of 29 new faculties and several other institutes and research centers – including for

nanotechnology – which give a major boost to higher education in the country. The Royal approval was based on the decisions adopted by the Higher Education Council, **H.E. Dr. Khalid Al-Ankari, Minister of Higher Education**, announced.

The new faculties and institutes are spread out all over the country and cover specialties that include nanotechnology, medicine, engineering, pharmacy, IT, computer engineering, and dentistry, among other subjects. H.E. Dr. Al-Ankari said Royal directives to give more attention to developing nanotechnologies have led to the establishment of two new research centers, one at King Saud University and the other at KFUPM. KFUPM will also host the Center for Strategic Planning Studies.

### **New Vice-Rectorship Established**

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**Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah ibn Abdul’Aziz** has approved the decision of the Supreme Council of Higher Education regarding establishing the Vice-Rectorship for Technology Development and Industrial Relations and appointing Dr. Faleh Al-Sulaiman as the Vice-Rector. This new position has been created to give a high profile to technology development and transfer from translational research, and establish a more productive relationship with businesses and industry in Saudi Arabia. This position is unique, and is one of the firsts, like many others, that KFUPM has taken lead of in the Kingdom.

### **KFUPM Shortlisted for KAUST Center**

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Out of forty-one proposals submitted by world’s leading scientific and engineering research universities for new research centers in response to the Global Research Partnership of King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), KFUPM has been short-listed to final round of proposals selection. The proposed center is titled: *Transformative Research in Petrochemicals & Polymers*. The global competition is the first major step in establishing KAUST Centers – university-based, multi-investigator research programs focused on KAUST mission areas – around the globe.

The KAUST Global Research Partnership (GRP) is a 10-year, peer-reviewed, merit-based program to fund research in the areas of science and technology that are important to Saudi Arabia, the region, and the world, while simultaneously linking KAUST to the existing global research enterprise. KAUST Center grants are for five years of support at up to US\$5 million per year.

### **Sabic Chief “Most Influential in Chemicals Sector”**

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**Mr. Mohamed Al-Mady**, Vice-Chairman and CEO of Sabic and Chairman of the Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association (GPCA) and a member of the IAB, has been named the world’s most influential person in the global chemicals industry. Al-Mady has made it to the list of **Top 40 Power Players** in the fields of chemicals worldwide that is published annually by the London-based international industry magazine, ICIS Chemical Business.

*We are proud of our close association with Mr. Al-Mady, and extend our warmest congratulations and best wishes to him for continued success.*

### **THIRD MEETING OF THE IAB**

H.E. the Rector had appointed task groups to address the following recommendations of the IAB made in its second meeting:

1. Explain the distinctiveness and critical importance of KFUPM’s mission.
2. Enhance the undergraduate experience.
3. Strengthen the quality of the faculty and its contributions.
4. Develop a financial plan to achieve the strategic goals of the University.

The task groups have submitted their reports, which have been sent to the IAB members for their review, comments, and these will be discussed in the January meeting.

### **Agenda**

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The agenda for the third meeting, among others, will discuss several wide-ranging issues such as strategy, thrust on selected research programs, regional competition, administration, and issues related to faculty and students, in addition to an update on the progress made on previous recommendations.

### **Brochure**

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A brochure highlighting the IAB activities and its functions has been prepared in both Arabic and English. This document is for general distribution, and will also be uploaded to the IAB homepage.

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