AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, DC

Department of Economics

Working Paper Series

Let a Thousand Models Bloom: Forging Alliances with Western Universities and the Making of the New Higher Educational System in the Gulf

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No. 2008-01
March 2008

http://www.american.edu/academic.depts/cas/econ/workingpapers/workpap.htm

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Working Draft: Please do not cite or quote without permission.

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One of the most intriguing contemporary institutional developments in the Arab world concerns the emergence of new Western-style universities in the small Gulf Cooperation Council countries of the Arabian Peninsula. These new institutions are challenging the national, Arab-language universities of the region by presenting a different educational model that emphasizes instruction in English by faculty who have normally received their highest degrees from Western universities. The new colleges and universities follow more closely Western curricula, textbooks, and academic requirements, and in order to strengthen the credibility of this effort, these institutions have often forged alliances with American, British, Australian, and Canadian universities.[1] While data are hard to come by, provincial governments, nation-states, private organizations and individuals have founded at least fifty-four new colleges or universities over the past two decades in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman.[2]

This essay has four major goals:

1. To provide a more precise historical and causal account of the development of Western-style universities over the past two decades.

[1] Shafeeq Ghabra and Margreet Arnold were perhaps the first to explore this topic in their monograph "Studying the American Way: An Assessment of American-Style Higher Education in Arab Countries" The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus #71, June 2007. However, I believe their focus on the importation of American higher educational systems is too narrow. Because of the diversity of alliances, it would be mistake to interpret these processes as one in which only American-style universities are being created. Indeed, even some Indian, Iranian Pakistani and Russian universities are involved in promoting curricula for expatriate students living in the Gulf.

[2] I am not including Saudi Arabia in this discussion. While Saudi Arabia is experiencing a wave of educational experimentation as well, the trajectory is different and clearly affected by the much more extreme form of state-sponsored gender segregation and theological control in this country.

2. To use some aspects of institutional economic analysis to consider the difficulties associated with establishing new higher educational institutions in a region that is not traditionally associated with high-quality universities and colleges.
3. To categorize and analyze the implications of the different affiliations and alliances that the new GCC institutions have forged with Western institutions.
4. To consider the ways in which reforms in higher education are transforming social relations within Gulf societies as well as its relations with the West and its regional neighbors.

I end this essay by concluding that the emergence of the new universities of this region represents the development of a fertile zone of experimentation and entrepreneurship that parallels and reinforces the dynamic political economic transformations that are occurring in the small Gulf Arab states.

The Recent History of Western Style Universities in the GCC

No discussion of higher education in Gulf Arab states can take place without considering the unusual social framework of work and education in these oil rich territories. Since the advent of the petroleum-based export economy, increasing numbers of expatriate workers have flowed into the GCC countries. Legal regulations prohibit most non-professional workers from residing in family-based households; while professional employees and business people have attained the income levels that permit them to bring nuclear family members with them. This relatively affluent section of the

workforce has come to demand the educational services necessary for the maintenance and reproduction of managerial and professional class family life.[3]

The new Gulf Arab states had little ability to provide these services to expatriate workers. Indeed, to offer basic education to its own citizens required rulers of all the GCC countries to import teachers and administrators from the neighboring Arab world (particularly, Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, and Syria). Before the advent of oil revenues, the indigenous populations of the region were largely illiterate, and some mosques were the only institutions that provided formal educational training.

Since the state sector focused on educating nationals in Arabic, different communities turned to their national institutions to create expatriate schools based on the curriculum and organization structure of their own countries. Many of these primary and secondary schools emphasized instruction in English and administrators organized the curricula to provide students with the credentials necessary to enter higher educational systems of their country of origin. Thus, a complex, multi-tiered system of primary and secondary education emerged in the region, which presented potential consumers with a wide array of choices and educational models by the mid-1980.

Diversity in higher or tertiary education was slower to develop in the GCC countries. It is fair to say that the state sector enjoyed a monopoly during the 1970's and 1980's. In most cases, national universities were founded shortly after GCC countries achieved independence. The two exceptions are Oman and Bahrain; both the University of Bahrain and Sultan Qaboos University were founded in 1986. On the other hand,

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[3] As Rebecca Saunders points out, the high paid expatriate workers receive the services that "global citizens" would expect. There is a very different and more restricted set of opportunities facing the low-paid expatriate "global foreigners". Rebecca Saunders, "Uncanny Presence: The Foreigner at the Gate of Globalization", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East 21* (2002): 88-98.

Kuwait University began in 1966; Qatar University opened its doors in 1973; and the United Arab Emirates University commenced in Al Ain in 1976.[4]

Despite the early pre-eminent position of national universities, it is clear in retrospect that there were deep flaws in this educational system. The national universities began as part of an autocratic national modernization program. The universities were closely identified with the ruler and his family, and the fact that a large majority of the faculty were foreign Arab nationals facilitated hierarchical control, since any discordant message of dissent could be more easily isolated and controlled. The result was an authoritarian and bureaucratic model of governance that still discourages creative innovations for fear that they might be disruptive. As Ghabra and Arnold state, "Many Arab state-owned universities have been reforming their methods of instruction, but this reform has been slow because of the size of the bureaucracy." [5]

Alternatives did exist for national and expatriate families. National citizens could often obtain generous state funding to send their talented sons to Western universities.[6] In addition, expatriates often looked to their home country for higher education opportunities. The result was that the most talented and/or well-connected students pursued university education outside the country. This created a two-tier system of tertiary education in which the national universities provided the less prestigious product.

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[4] Kuwait University web page, http://www.kuniv.edu.kw/breif.php; UAE University web page, http://www.uaeu.ac.ae/about/brief_historyshtml; Qatar University web page, http://www.qu.edu.qa/html/theuniversity.html; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Bahrain; Directorate General of Private Universities and Colleges, Ministry of Higher Education, Sultanate of Oman, *Higher Education Institutions in the Sultanate of Oman* (Muscat, 2007).

[5] Shafeeq Ghabra and Margreet Arnold were perhaps the first to explore this topic in their monograph "Studying the American Way: An Assessment of American-Style Higher Education in Arab Countries" The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus #71, June 2007: 3.

[6] Daughters could also gain access to state support, but families have often been less willing to send their female children to foreign universities.

These extra-territorial options remain important, but recent events suggest that there has been a growing demand for more university and college alternatives in the Gulf States themselves. I hypothesize that this demand comes from four sources. First, within expatriate households, a growing number of children who have been born and raised in the region feel much less connected to their national homelands and look forward to continue living and working in the region. Second, the increasing numbers of formally educated national women adds a new population that wishes to pursue higher educational opportunities, but are less likely to receive permission from guardians to receive their education in the West.[7] Third, recent discussions of globalization have placed an extra premium on English language instruction, and this has created an intensified demand by nationals and expatriates for universities within the region that can meet this need. Finally, the crisis sparked by the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks has made it much more difficult for students from the Gulf to gain entry to the United States. Moreover, the fear of living in the United States and, to a lesser extent, other Western countries has also risen appreciably and led parents to search for safer high-quality alternatives within the Gulf itself.

Such demand pressures do not guarantee that a supply of new higher education institutions will be forthcoming. Governments can refuse to license new entrants, and, in any event, there might not be the funds necessary to launch such ambitious projects.

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[7] The issue of gender integrated universities remains a controversial issue in most Gulf Arab states. The decision of Sheikh Sultan of Sharjah to open the gender integrated American University of Sharjah in the mid-nineties led to significant expressions of opposition within the Emirate of Sharjah itself. As a result, the ruler also decided to build the more traditional, gender segregated University of Sharjah. In Kuwait, parliament passed a law in 1996 that forbids coeducational classes. The American University of Kuwait has responded by building partitions within the classroom so that both men and women can attend the same class session. Ghabra and Arnold, p. 7. This issue deserves to be explored in more detail. See also Mary Ann Tetreault, "Kuwait: Sex, Violence and the Politics of Economic Restructuring in *Women and Globalization in the Arab Middle East: Gender, Economy and Society*, ed. Eleanor Abdella Doumato and Marsha Pripstein Pouousney (Boulder: Lynne Reiner, 2002): 215-38.

Despite these very real hurdles, the list in Appendix I of new universities established over the past twenty years suggests that these barriers to entry began to fall substantially during the 1990's.

There are several reasons why conditions in some Gulf States permitted the emergence of a mixed and competitive higher education system. There already existed a Western model of higher education in the Arab world. The prestige of the American University of Beirut and the American University in Cairo meant that the creation of private universities based on Western curricular principles was recognized by the population of Arab families searching for high quality education alternatives for their children.

This tradition intersected with increasing pressures on governments to provide a greater number of higher educational opportunities. Thus, in 1995, "The government of the Sultanate of Oman responded to increasing demands for access to higher education by secondary school graduates by allowing the private sector to invest in higher education through the establishment of private colleges." [8] Shortly after that, four private universities were founded, and by 2007, twenty-four private institutes, colleges or universities had been founded in Oman servicing a student body of approximately 19,000 students. This compares to the enrollment in public sector universities of at least 26,000 students.[9]

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[8] Directorate General of Private Universities and Colleges, Ministry of Higher Education, Sultanate of Oman, *Regulations and Guidelines for Establishing Private Universities, Colleges and Higher Institutes* (Muscat: Department of Educational Services, 2005): 7.

[9] Information computed from data presented in Directorate General of Private Universities and Colleges, Ministry of Higher Education, Sultanate of Oman, *Higher Education Institutions in the Sultanate of Oman* (Muscat, 2007).

This privatization trend was only partially followed in the United Arab Emirates. In addition to allowing business groups to form new colleges and universities in Dubai, the federal structure of the United Arab Emirates encourages and intensifies competition amongst the emirates for prestigious economic and cultural projects. Because the ruler of each emirate has substantial control over his own region, the federal government has less ability to constrain projects launched by ambitious rulers. While the founding of new colleges and universities began in Dubai, one of the most intriguing interventions was initiated by Sheikh Sultan bin Mohamed al Qassimi, the ruler of Sharjah. In 1997, the Sheikh established two new universities, the gender-integrated American University of Sharjah, and the sex-segregated Sharjah University in his newly designated "university city". Both universities began to attract students from throughout the region, and shortly after their founding, colleges and universities began to spring up in Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar. The federal government of the United Arab Emirates also began to innovate by establishing a Dubai and Abu Dhabi campus of Zayed University for national women.[10]

As these examples suggest, members of the ruling families are often directly involved in these projects. For example, a recent for-profit institution in Kuwait is sponsored by Shaikha Dana Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, who is a prominent member of the Al-Sabah ruling family. She is not only founder of the American University of Kuwait, but also Executive of the Al-Futooh Investment Company, which has holdings in the Kuwait Projects Company, the United Education Company, Syria Gulf Bank, and Kuwait Hotels Company.[11]

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[10]Zayed University web page. http://www.zu.ac.ae/html/aboutzu.html

[11] http://www.zawya.com/cm/profile.cfm?companyid=284054.

The two most ambitious interventions by ruling families have occurred in the last five years. In Qatar, the ruler Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani and his wife, Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Missned, have created a new educational zone and sponsored a series of branch campuses of prestigious American universities. Unlike the American University of Sharjah, each university specializes in a particular subject ranging from international relations (Georgetown) to medicine (Cornell University) to engineering (Texas A&M).

In Dubai, Sheikh Muhammad bin Rashid al Maktoum has created a more wide-ranging "Knowledge Village", which is a free trade zone that sponsors 350 companies that offer training centers, learning support services, and human relations services. In 2007, Knowledge Village launched the Dubai International Academic City. This campus houses a variety of institutions that grant diplomas and degrees. Each individual initiative is not as ambitious as those in Qatar. On the other hand, the DIAC already houses fourteen branch campuses, most of which have located in Dubai within the past five years. Unlike Qatar, which relies on U.S. universities, the national diversity of the institutions in Dubai is striking. There are two Indian-sponsored higher education bodies, one Pakistani, one Sri Lankan, one Russian (which teaches economics and engineering in Russian only), one Iranian, three British, one Belgian, two Australian, and one American. Moreover, Michigan State University will join the DIAC in the Fall 2008 semester. One unique feature of the Dubai plan is that students from different universities and colleges will share housing and recreational facilities.[12]

This brief account tells that a much more diversified and competitive system of university education has taken root in the Gulf Arab states. Even the institutions which

[12] See various editions of the Dubai Knowledge Village newsletter. DKV Diary. http://kv.ae.

are private are often sponsored by governments or ruling families. Clearly many members of the ruling elite are dissatisfied with the older national university system that was created at the time of independence. The emergence of different institutional models has both segmented higher educational services within the region and intensified the competition for students. As a result, children from national families, expatriate families residing in the Gulf, national families from other GCC countries, and families of non-Arab citizens living in the surrounding region face a much larger variety of higher educational choices. No longer is it necessary for students to travel to Lebanon, Egypt, Europe, North America, or Australia to receive a Western-style education. Moreover, children from Asian professional families can also choose to study at campuses that attempt to replicate the higher education experience of their national cohorts.

The Political Economy of University Creation

Starting and joining a new university entails a substantial amount of risk for both the buyer (parents and students) and seller or supplier (university). This risk is related to the need for the buyer and seller to constantly renegotiate their relationship with each other as the student's educational requirements evolve. Williamson's theory of idiosyncratic exchange is a useful framework for understanding this dynamic.[13] Before the student enters the university, his or her parents and the student might consider a variety of alternative institutions. Similarly, the university admissions office must sift through a large number of potential applicants before determining whether or not to

[13] Oliver E. Williamson, *The Economic Institutions of Capitalism* (New York: The Free Press, Macmillan, 1985): 61-3.

admit the student. However, once the student actually enters the institution, the alternatives available to the family and university shrink.

While the participants do not find themselves in a classical bilateral monopoly relationship, the higher education bargain increasingly bears resemblance to a case in which a buyer and seller confront each other without the existence of readily available alternatives. On the one hand, it is increasingly costly for a student to leave an institution before receiving his or her degree. Alternative institutions might compete for transfers, but only if the transfer student is willing to commit herself to paying for a minimum of credits at the new university. The ability of a student to relocate thus diminishes the longer his or her tenure at a given university. On the other hand, the university also faces diminishing alternatives (although not to the same extent) as a student gets closer to completing her degree. While a student can be replaced by a new student, universities need to produce a stream of graduates in order to establish a reputation as a reputable institution. This imperative can often lead to complex negotiations designed to ensure that the student meets the spirit of the rules for graduation, while granting the flexibility necessary to allow deserving candidates to graduate. Thus, students and university administrators find themselves in an increasingly tight embrace the closer the student gets to his or her degree objective.

Given the inherent uncertainty associated with making a series of large payments before the final credential is granted, buyers of the educational service must be assured that the institution is reputable. "This absence of ex post competition raises the possibility of 'hold-up' or 'opportunism' (the confiscation of the gains associated with

one party's investment by the other party)."[14] To attract students, universities need to signal they are moral, trustworthy agents, and this might be particularly difficult for new institutions unable to refer to an attractive indigenous tradition of modern higher education.

Moreover, any institutional or individual actor establishing a university must make large illiquid investments in classroom buildings, dormitories, equipment, and faculty before opening the institution. Even though the full panoply of courses cannot be offered until students work their way through their degree program, universities must signal to potential students and their parents that this new university will provide a valuable service. Because parents and potential students cannot observe the process that produces high quality education and because they, in any event, might not be able to distinguish a good program from a bad one, it is important for a new university to make credible commitments to a high quality product. This can be done through building impressive facilities and attracting well qualified faculty.

The contractual arrangements between university and professor bear striking similarity to that between student and university. Professors who are considering uprooting themselves in order to teach in a new location need to be assured that the institution has both the appropriate institutions to guarantee fair and decent treatment and enough financial depth to weather the strains that inevitably accompany the founding of a new university.

Given the length of time necessary to produce the first outputs of a university (students with a degree) and given the necessity of costly investments to offer the variety

[14] Jean Tirole, *The Theory of Industrial Organization* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997): 16. Much of the analytic framework presented here is inspired by Tirole's discussion.

of programs necessary for a diversified higher education institution, it is very difficult for a profit maximizing institution to supply the necessary capital or attract the necessary students and professors. One cannot rely on purely pecuniary motivations for two reasons. First, institutions guided by profitability imperatives normally require a shorter payoff to their investment than a university can promise. Given the absence of credible pecuniary returns, one must appeal instead to rich donors' desire to use their contributions in order to create what Veblen called "invidious distinctions".[15] Providing funds normally buys naming rights and the ability to project one's name above the rest of the wealthy masses. There is something about university creation that seems to attract the participation of such actors who (at least in this arena) are not interested in maximizing monetary returns. The existence of non-profit universities is essential for attracting funds from a network of elites. There are few philanthropists who would think of providing funds to a profit-making institution without demanding a commercial rate of return for their own investment.[16]

Similar considerations apply to other motivations associated with the formation of universities. Religious institutions who wish to provide students with training that will create moral followers of their religion do not normally create profit maximizing educational institutions, and government officials often commit themselves to the granting of a permanent flow of subsidies to the universities which they sponsor.

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[15] Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Penguin Books, 1979): 26.

[16] Veblen wrote extensively on higher education, but he did not focus his analysis on the motivation of donors. Instead, he argued that the competition for funds was associated with the wasteful rise of university publicity offices and the creation of facilities not directly related to the advancement of knowledge. Veblen believed that competition among universities or colleges was inherently wasteful. See Thorstein Veblen, "The Higher Learning," in *The Portable Veblen* (New York: The Viking Press, 1962): 507-538.

Given the high start-up costs and problematic future, we would expect private, profit-driven institutions to provide smaller, focused services that promise training for specific occupations. In contrast to the formation of colleges or universities, the establishment of trade schools is heavily reliant on the employment of contingent teachers who are only employed if student demand is sufficient.

Moreover, profit making institutions will be less likely to be able to provide the guarantees that parents and academic faculty need before committing their children or livelihoods to a new university. The drive to maximize profits could suggest to many that a new university cannot commit to high value investments in facilities and specialized, but expensive educational programs. In addition, faculty often demand control over their own academic programs, and this is much more difficult to accommodate in an environment of relentless cost controls. For these reasons, profit-maximizing entrepreneurs are not likely to be able to successfully create free standing universities.[17] The recent experience of the Gulf suggests, moreover, that many of the new universities are heavily dependent on state or ruling family subsidies. We are not witnessing a trend toward the creation of for-profit institutions, but rather a more complex process in which state and business elites play important direct and indirect roles in establishing new higher education institutions.

Multifaceted Alliances with Western Universities

[17] Ghabra and Arnold note that for-profit institutions in Arab countries fail to focus on the student, empower faculty, and institute quality control of their curriculum. "Studying the American Way: An Assessment of American-Style Higher Education in Arab Countries" The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus #71, June 2007: vi.

How can potential customers (parents with eligible students) be induced to set aside the risks associated with sending a child to a university with a limited or non-existent history? What guarantees can be given so that interested academic workers are willing to uproot their lives in order to work in a new institution in a remote region not known for educational innovation? The previous discussion suggests that the institutional form (i.e. profit-making or non-profit) is an important factor, but it is unlikely that the way an institution is funded provides enough information to parents or faculty. It is in this context that establishing relationships with academic institutions outside the region can provide a signal that persuades consumers and academic workers alike to overcome their fears of the unknown.

Evidence from the Gulf suggests that there are five general types of arrangements of increasing intensity that can be deployed by those attempting to build new higher educational institutions in the region. The first is **symbolic association**. The university administration consults with administrators at a Western university and indicates in a rather general way that one's own academic program has is similar or modeled on those of its partner.

The second is **formal supervision**. The new university establishes a formal relationship with a Western partner, which is committed to developing and monitoring specific programs or even the total academic program of the new university. A variation of this model (which does not exclude embracing formal supervision as well) is to seek **formal endorsement** of a program or institution by a Western institution that normally provides credentialing services to higher education institutions in the West. Successful

completion of this assessment suggests that the academic program offered by the newer university is comparable to that of more established Western institutions.

A fourth model is **sub-contracting** with a Western university, which then provides academic and administrative staff to develop the new university. The new institution is a separate corporate entity and hires most of its own staff. However, it asks its Western partner to oversee either all or part of its academic and administrative development. The original sponsors relinquish direct administrative authority in order to create a more credible academic institution. Finally, a more extreme version of the sub-contracting model is to establish a **branch campus** of a Western institution. Unlike all the previous models, the indigenous educational entrepreneurs do not create a new institution with ties to Western universities. Rather, a Western university is invited to create a branch campus in the region, with the power to grant a degree in the name of that university. The Western institution takes responsibility for all key phases of the university's operation (except perhaps the building and maintenance of the physical plant) and receives a payment for its efforts.

One way to think about these alternatives is to view them as representing trade offs between increasingly credible associations with Western universities in return for decreasing amounts of direct control by national elites over the university administration itself. The sponsors of such universities (either business or state elites) must decide how much day-to-day authority they wish to exercise. If they wish to have direct control over hiring and academic program development, then less formal associations with partner institutions might be appropriate. On the other hand, this carries the risk that such associations have little ability to signal that the new university will be based on a

reputable and prestigious model. The following table makes the tension between the exercise of authority and credibility clearer.

Forms of External Alliances

Type of Association	Limits on Administrative Authority	Credibility
Symbolic Association	Little to no effect on administrative decisions.	Depends on prestige of partner institution and seriousness of collaboration.
Formal Supervision	Requirement to respond to recommendations.	Allows administration to claim that programs are subject to review. Depends on prestige of partner institution and extent of collaboration.
Formal Endorsement	Must pass certain benchmarks in order to receive benchmark. Administrative priorities constrained.	Allows administrators to claim that university has reached a reputable standard if credentialing agency is seen as reputable.
Sub-Contracting Partnership	Sponsors hand over key administrative responsibilities to personnel who are the employees of the partner institution.	Allows sponsors to employ specialists who are seen as primarily involved in creating high quality education institution. Success depends on prestige and competence of sub-contracting party.
Branch Campus	Sponsors hand over all	University promises that its

Maybe change this name to "direct provider"	administrative responsibility to parent university. No longer responsible for hiring or academic program development.	branch campus degree is equivalent to degree of home university.

One could also read this table in a second way. Rather than viewing these arrangements as making the association with the western university increasingly credible, one could also argue that the Western university is engaged in a progressively riskier and resource-using enterprise. A symbolic association suggests little about the seriousness of the proclaimed relationship, while establishing a branch campus implies that the Western university will be able to produce a campus in the Arab world that is qualitatively similar to that in the United States. Failure to do so will leave the university open to charges that undermine the integrity of the administration. Moreover, a serious alliance requires commitments of labor and other resources from administrators and perhaps faculty. In other words, the attempt to make the association more credible in the Gulf places burdens on the Western university itself. One might also expect that universities in the West will demand more expensive payments from their partner institutions or sponsor as the arrangements become more tightly interwoven.

The Evidence[18]

The framework presented in the previous section does not provide clear guidance on classifying the various arrangements that actually exist between universities and colleges in the Gulf and Western institutions. Without having more direct information on

[18] For a listing of the new universities and colleges created in the past two decades with a more speculative assessment of the types of ties with external universities, see Appendix I and II.

the actual administrative implications of these associations, it is difficult to confidently place each relationship in the appropriate category. The general rule of thumb used here is to use the descriptions to indicate whether or not the institutions have made commitments to each other that require further consultation and interaction. For example, Al Buraimi College in Oman proclaims on its web site that is has in important relationship with California State University, Northridge "because of its long and famous history regionally internationally … Our programs came to the standards of CSUN's programs and comply with the abilities of an Arab student." I view this statement as indicating a symbolic association, since it is not at all clear that Cal State University, Northridge ever gave its stamp of approval to Al Buraimi College's programs. Moreover, it is unlikely that the Cal State administration could endorse the claim made by the Al Buraimi College web site that "Any BUC graduate can complete his study at any other American University." This suggests to me a **symbolic association** with a Western university that one would not normally associate with international activities.

The information presented by Mazoon College (in Oman) on its web site implies a similar conclusion, when it states on its web site that, "Mazoon College was established in the year of 1999 with a mandate to provide an opportunity for learning, research and development of our students at par with world class standard of education. For fulfilling its commitment, the college is having collaboration with the University of Missouri, Rolla, USA and Vanasthali Vidvapeth, Jaipur, India." We do not know what kind of relationship Mazoon College has with these two institutions; the arrangement is not particularly well specified. (We can also tell from the syntax of these statements that

Mazoon College is most likely offering higher education services to Indian expatriate students.)

On the other hand, Dhofar University (also in Oman) states on its web site that its Board of Trustees "was developed with support from the American University of Beirut, which will continue to oversee its academic programs … to ensure quality standards commensurate with the ambitions of Dhofar University. " This description suggests a relationship of **formal supervision**, in which the authorities of Dhofar University agree to consult with and perhaps be guided by the recommendations of the American University of Beirut.

Sponsors of the American University of Kuwait have made a similar arrangement with Dartmouth College. AUK's web site notes that, "The American University of Kuwait and Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire (USA) have signed a memorandum of understanding that allows the two institutions to initiate a series of advisory, consultative, and cooperative projects over the next five years. Areas of interest include consultation on curriculum development, advice on university administrative issues and student participation in programs with the Rassieas Foundation and the Tuck Business School's prestigious "Bridge" program for undergraduates." The specificity of this arrangement leads AUK to boars that, "The Memorandum of Understanding reflects AUK's commitment to creating the best in liberal arts education, drawing from the rich tradition and expertise of Dartmouth, and Dartmouth's recognition of the AUK commitment to quality."[19]

Sometimes, universities maintain contracts with several different universities. For example, Sharjah University in the United Arab Emirates notes that it has cooperative

[19] http://www.auk.edu.kw/about_auk/auk_dartmouth.jsp

links with the University of California San Diego, University of Jordan, University of Arizona, American University of Beirut, University of Exeter UK, International Islamic University Malaysia, Monash University Australia, and the University of Adelaide Australia. In this case, it is not as clear that the university is engaging in formal consultation with all of these institutions, a subset of them, or none at all.

Often, **formal supervision** and **formal endorsement** are closely linked to each other. Muscat College in Oman, for example, has asked the University of Stirling in Scotland to supervise three of its bachelor degree programs—the BA in Accountancy and Finance, the BA in Business Studies, and the BSc in Computing Science. Students commit themselves to a third year of study at Muscat College. The curriculum is equivalent in standards to that available in Stirling, "but not necessarily identical in content."[20] In order to ensure comparability, Stirling is responsible for examining the students, although the examinations themselves are developed in an iterative process between faculty of Muscat College, University of Stirling, and external examiners. The 2003 Memorandum of Agreement between Muscat College and University of Stirling states that, "The University is responsible for the academic standard of awards made in its name and so it alone, through its Examination Boards and approved processes, is responsible for determining the level of performance reached by students taking the approved third-year programme of study."[21]

Given this serious relationship, the students pursuing the third year course of study at Muscat College are also considered students of University of Stirling. Moreover, the staff teaching the third-year course of study formally becomes members of the

[20] The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (UK), *Overseas Quality Audit Report: University of Stirling and Muscat College, Oman* (May 2005): 2.
[21] Ibid.: 3.

University of Stirling teaching staff "under applicable University ordinance." (This ordinance seems to largely involve the review of Muscat College staff member's qualification by panel consisting of the Dean of Faculty, a member from one of the concerned university departments, and a member of the faculty not associated with the Muscat College arrangement.)[22] In this interesting case, Muscat College has established a unique relationship that promises to more closely integrate Omani students and the faculty of Muscat College with their University of Stirling counterparts. This requires faculty time and effort, and one gets the impression from reading the Overseas Quality Audit Report that University of Stirling departments and faculty were initially unprepared for the commitment to a relatively obscure educational institution in an obscure part of the world. The University of Stirling has responded to this challenge by establishing faculty links between Stirling and the relevant departments of Muscat College. This model requires faculty in the Western institution to become directly involved in the academic programs of its partner and represents a serious time commitment.

The American University of Sharjah (AUS) is an example of an institution which combines **sub-contracting** with the **formal endorsement** of an American accrediting body. In this case, the ruler of Sharjah, Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi decided to contract with American University in Washington, DC to hire most of the key administrators of the new university.[23] One of the chief goals of the first administration of AUS was to seek accreditation by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. This required the administration to construct

[22] Ibid.: 13.
[23] In the interests of full disclosure, I taught at the American University of Sharjah between 1998 and 2000. I am also a tenured member of the American University faculty in Washington, DC. Most of the information presented here comes from personal knowledge.

governance structures, library facilities, and academic programs that would meet the demands of the Middle States Association. The thinking was that seeking this formal endorsement was necessary to implement the reforms that would guarantee the formation and maintenance of a high quality institution. The contrast with Muscat College is instructive. While American University takes some administrative responsibility for the functioning of AUS, the arrangements forged between the two universities do not include the faculty in both institutions. Neither side has much knowledge or interest in the other, except for those administrators at American University who are lucky enough to do lucrative consulting work for AUS. Instead, American University contracted out its work by hiring administrators who, in general, had no institutional history with American University itself.[24]

Another model to consider is that being pursued by the Emir of Qatar. He has attempted to short circuit the rather cumbersome process of accreditation by inviting prestigious American universities to establish **branch campuses** within Qatar.[25] The ruler of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani created the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, which is led by the Emir's wife, Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Missned. The foundation has created a multi-institutional education city. It maintains the infrastructure, and then provides a subsidy to selected American universities to set up branch campuses. The institutions that are participating are:

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[24] One interesting issue raised by this contrast between Muscat College and the American University of Sharjah is that the university system in the United Kingdom seems to demand much more explicit accountability of any institution that develops a partnership arrangement with a Gulf university or college. On the other hand, the more anarchic, less regulated American system allows local university administrations to form alliances without worrying about external supervision.

[25] The ruler of Ras al Khaimah in the UAE has also approved the establishment of a branch campus of George Mason University (scheduled to open in 2009). Box Hill College of Australia is opening a similar institution in Kuwait.

- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Carnegie Mellon (Computer Science and Business)
- Georgetown University (Foreign Service)
- Cornell University (Medical School)
- Texas A&M (Engineering)

Each university involved in this project stresses that the degrees that students obtain are equivalent to those granted in the United States. At the same time, this is not a typical branch campus, since each university has formed a joint advisory board comprised of four member selected by the university, four by the Qatar Foundation, and three independent members who are selected jointly.[26]

Not all branch campus models are associated with such prestigious institutions. For example, one of the older higher education institutions in the United Arab Emirates is the American University of Dubai. It web site states that. "The American University in Dubai is a branch campus of American InterContinental University." While this institution is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, it is fair to say that it does not have the stature of a Carnegie Mellon or Georgetown.

A more problematic example is that of Preston University Ajman Campus. This institution was established in 2001 "under the concession agreement … awarded by the Government of Ajman with the kind approval of His Highness Sheikh Humaid Bin Rashid Al-Nuaimi." Preston University appears to an institution which grants a variety of degrees through distance learning. It is privately owned and incorporated in Alabama,

[26] The University of Wollongong in Dubai has a similar model of governance, although this campus should be considered a free-standing university rather than a branch campus of the University of Wollongong in Australia. Ghabra and Arnold label the Qatar branch campuses as "semi-state universities". (p. 12).

although the Ajman web site claims that students who study at the Ajman campus will receive degrees from a Preston University which is located in Wyoming.

This last example bears resemblance to some of the more problematic or, to use a more colloquial but descriptive word, "sketchier" symbolic associations outlined in the beginning of this section. It is not at all clear that students participating in this institution are associating with an institution that has much standing in its home country. Preston is a profit maximizing institution that has avoided making large infrastructural commitments to facilities or permanent faculty. The university's literature trades on its American connections to attract students, but this is a far different model than that suggested by the alliances formed by the Qatari government. The branch campus model has very different implications for the universities and regions implicated in this exchange. In the Preston case, the university is similar to any other profit-making enterprise in the region. The ruler of Ajman will not suffer greatly if the Preston model fails, and Pretson's success does not depend on the "accumulation" of prestige or renown.

In the Qatar case, the ruler and the institutions have taken on far more risk. By linking the quality of the degree of the new campus to that of the home campus, institutions like Georgetown and Cornell, are making a commitment to import highly-certified faculty who can offer rigorous instruction and assessment. The Qatari government, on the other hand, has pledged to construct and maintain the large-scale and high tech facilities associated with higher education. Both the state and the universities have made a long-term commitment whose success will ultimately depend on educating a stream of students from the region. This outcome is by no means guaranteed.[27]

[27] An example of the risk associated with establishing a branch campus might be George Mason University's attempt to establish a branch campus in the emirate of Ras al Khaimah in the United Arab

The contrast of the Qatar experiment with the Dubai Knowledge Village is instructive. In the Dubai case, all of the educational institutions are branch campuses of foreign educational institutions. On the other hand, the ruling Maktoum family is not directly involved in supervising the workings of each university. Instead, the Dubai government provides the infrastructure, but basically offers the facilities to universities or institutes whose leaders believe they can operate successfully. The result is a much wider range of national diversity in Dubai, and perhaps, the offering of a somewhat less prestigious project.

Conclusions: Implications for the Region

The explosion of new higher educational institutions in the small GCC countries reflects a changing development strategy that further distances the region from the national-centric models of the past. The willingness to allow the state university system to become less central to tertiary education deemphasizes the project of providing educational services to national citizens who will then staff the state apparatus as professional workers. The new institutions have a broader scope. Not only is English the language of instruction, but students no longer come from just the national population.

The children of expatriate 'global citizens' now can receive higher education within the region. Nationals and non-nationals attend classes together as well as young men and women in increasing numbers of institutions. This development will have implications for employment patterns in the Gulf States. We can expect professional

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Emirates. A recent New York Times report on establishing branch campuses in the Gulf suggests that the curriculum offered to the small number of students at this new campus are hiring faculty with little to no connection with American-style education offering a curriculum over which they have little control. This is normally not a path that will create a high-quality educational experience, and this certainly can damage the reputation of a university.

workers involved in engineering, telecommunications, petrochemicals, banking, public relations, personnel management information systems, tourism, and education to come increasingly from these new universities. As a result, more members of the workforce will be native to the Gulf in the sense that they were born or grew up in the area, even if citizens or 'nationals' remain a relatively small minority of the total workforce.[28]

These political economic explanations or interpretations suggest that rulers and entrepreneurs are restructuring education in order to be more outward or "global". Programs of national development can no longer be insular or even focused on national citizens. Higher education workers must be linked directly or symbolically to advanced centers of education production, which because of the emphasis of English as a lingua franca, mainly reside in US, UK. Canada, and Australia.[29] While there is a reason to think that this imperative affects many Third World territories, there are particular reasons why we might expect it to be more intense in the small, oil-rich states of the Gulf. Its extroverted development, its great dependence on non-national workers, and its relatively weak state educational sector have combined to make the small GCC states a center of instructional experimentation that parallels the economic, cultural, and political experimentation and entrepreneurship that is occurring throughout the region.

It is tempting to view this process through the prisms of dependency theory or theories of imperialism and argue that Western institutions are coming to dominate and

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[28] It is clear that citizens will have privileged access to state sector jobs, which traditionally have paid above the rates of the private sector. On the other hand, it is not clear that these same citizens will gain access to private-sector jobs. Employers often argue that nationals lack the work effort to perform adequately, while nationals often complain of discrimination and sub-standard treatment. My own guess is that national women will be the pioneers that move into the private sector workplace. See my article Segmented Feminization and the Decline of Neo-Patriarchy in GCC Countries of the Persian Gulf, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 27 (forthcoming).

[29] It is possible that India and South Africa will also become global centers of education production. Perhaps in the more distant future, Anglophone African countries will also enter the market.

transform previously national institutions of higher education. The problem with this assessment is that higher education was never really indigenous to the Gulf, and the early university models reflected an English model that were "translated" and adapted by the first great national universities of the Arab world such as Cairo University. In any event, it is not clear that the adoption of the American or British models of higher education will facilitate the Anglo-American domination of the region. An alternative interpretation would be that the spread of American-style education will facilitate the creation of institutions that will be able train an Arab, Iranian, Central Asian, South Asian, and African professional class that can compete effectively with their Western counterparts. Western institutions are playing an important role in this process, but this restructuring may yet create a unique Gulf-style of university life under the control of Gulf elites. Such a development will not necessarily enhance American or British power.[30]

An important question remains concerning the sustainability of these new innovations. Ghabra and Arnold note that many of the new universities are plagued with "weak administration, poor recruiting strategies and practices, instability of faculty, corporate-style management of the university, a focus on profit, weak faculty representation…."[31] This critique points to a larger issue. It is striking that many of the new higher educational institutions emerging in the Gulf proclaim the virtues of a liberal education that stresses the importance of critical thinking. Yet, the administrative and political traditions are quite authoritarian. Directors of academic institutions traditionally

[30] Perhaps expatriate educational workers who have helped create these institutions are more like the traveling British machinists of the nineteenth century who helped spread industrial technology throughout Europe. Certainly, the British economy benefited from the expansion of European capitalism. On the other hand, this process ultimately reduced the relative political economic power of Britain.

[31] Ghabra and Arnold, "Studying the American Way: An Assessment of American-Style Higher Education in Arab Countries" The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus #71, June 200714

have ruled by fiat. There are few, if any, faculty senates that have the power to challenge administrative pronouncements, let alone assist in the development of policy.[32] Because the articulation and implementation of policy depend on a few people, these new institutions are often subject to arbitrary decisions that can range from a sudden shift in budgetary priorities to the removal of high-level administrators to the abandonment of academic programs. Such shifts can be quite damaging to an institution trying to introduce a new educational model.

These governance problems within the new universities and colleges are compounded by authoritarian decision-making within the larger polity. All higher educational institutions are unusually dependent on the support of individual rulers, and American-style institutions are bound to be more controversial. Efforts to integrate classrooms on the basis of gender regularly provoke opposition and, in the case of Kuwait, effective resistance. Even in the absence of gender conflict, it is inevitable that students will use the greater freedom granted them to experiment socially and intellectually. It is not difficult to imagine a ruler responding to these challenges by withdrawing his support for institutions that become controversial.

The problem of political legitimacy could be compounded by issues related to economic viability. One way to view the explosive growth in the supply or tertiary educational services is to consider this process as an example of monopolistic competition. Educational entrepreneurs attempt to create market niches highlighted by

[32] I do not want to overstate this argument. When I served as one of the first members of the faculty senate of the American University of Sharjah, it was striking how reluctant members of the senate were in confronting administration policy that was either ill-advised or harmful to their interests. At the time, I thought that this might be due to the authoritarian environment of most Arab universities and the less than secure employment environment that all of us faced. I changed my views somewhat what I witnessed the same reluctance to confront authority while a member of the faculty senate of American University in Washington, DC.

different academic emphases and different external alliances. The result will probably be overcapacity, the sort of inefficiency that Thorstein Veblen discussed in his earlier work on educational competition. This will probably mean an unusual amount of churning, with universities and colleges rising and collapsing with some regularity. Given the significant social disruption that can be caused by the collapse of a higher educational institution, we can expect that governments will respond with increased regulation and supervision. At this point, economic and political controversies might intersect to slow the Westernization process.

One of the paradoxes of the present period is that emerging higher educational alliances are tightening their alliances with Western universities just as the region's relations to the United States and United Kingdom are subject to unusual stress. One would not think that the conflict in Iraq and the rise of Islamism would provide a welcoming political economic environment for pro-Western experimentation. The fact that so many universities and colleges have come into existences suggests that there are strong social and political dynamics within the region supporting the deeper economic integration of Gulf societies with global and regional economic life. Despite the administrative and economic fragility of the new institutions which are just beginning to establish themselves, this paper suggests that the remarkable restructuring of higher education that has occurred in the GCC nations will be very difficult to reverse.

Appendix I

Partial List of New Universities and Colleges in the Gulf

Name and Date of Founding	Location
Gulf Centre for University Education – 1992	Kuwait
University of Wollongong in Dubai -- 1993	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
American University, Dubai – 1995	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Majan University – 1995	Oman
Caledonian College of Engineering – 1996	Oman
Modern College of Business and Science – 1996	Oman
Muscat College – 1996	Oman
Dubai Polytechnic – 1997	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
University of Sharjah – 1997	Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
American University of Sharjah – 1997	Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
Zayed University – 1998	United Arab Emirates
Mazoon University – 1999	Oman
Ittihad University – 1999	Ras Al Kahimah, United Arab Emirates
Al Zahra College for Women – 1999	Oman
Australian University of Kuwait – 2000	Kuwait
Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani – 2000	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Sohar University -- 2000	Oman
Oman Medical College – 2001	Oman
Gulf University, Bahrain – 2001	Bahrain
Ahlia University – 2001	Bahrain
Preston University, Ajman – 2001	Ajman, United Arab Emirates
Sur University College – 2001	Oman

Waljat College of Applied Sciences – 2001	Oman
Arab Open University – 1997	Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain
Middle East College of Information Technology – 2002	Oman
Weston Reserve University – 2003	Kuwait
Carnegie Mellon, Qatar Campus -- 2003	Qatar
Al Buraimi College – 2003	Oman
Dhofar University – 2004	Oman
Nizwa University – 2004	Oman
Royal University for Women – 2004	Bahrain
American University of Kuwait – 2004	Kuwait
British University in Dubai – 2004	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Scientific College of Design – 2004	Oman
Oman College of Management and Technology – 2004	Oman
Gulf College – 2004	Oman
Middlesex University, Dubai Campus – 2005	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Georgetown University, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Qatar – 2006	Qatar
Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar – 2006	Qatar
Virginia Commonwealth University, Qatar – 2006	Qatar
Bayan College – 2006	Oman
Oman Dental College – 2006	Oman
Box Hill College – 2007	Kuwait
Texas A&M University at Qatar – 2007	Qatar
Middlesex University, Dubai – 2007	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Herriot-Watt University, Dubai – 2007	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
American College of the Emirates – 2007	???
George Mason University – 2007	RAK, United Arab Emirates
Hult International Business School – 2007	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
European University College Brussels, Dubai -- ??	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Islamic Azad University, Dubai -- ??	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Mahatma Gandhi University, Dubai	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
St. Petersburg University of Engineering and Economics	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology	Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Source: Directorate General of Private Universities and Colleges, *Higher Education Institutions in the Sultanate of Oman* (Muscat: 2007). Various websites of universities and colleges. Shafeeq Ghabra and Margreet Arnold, "Studying the American Way: An Assessment of American-Style Higher Education in Arab Countries" The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus #71, June 2007.

Appendix II

New Universities and Their Affiliations

Name and Country	Date Founded	Type of Alliance	Partner	Other Details
Gulf Centre for University Education Kuwait	1992	Symbolic Association	Madurai Kamaraj University, Tamil Nadu Annamalal University , Tamil Nadu Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi	
University of Wollongong in Dubai	1993	Branch Campus/Formal Supervision	University of Wollongong	
American University of Dubai	1995	Branch Campus	American Intercontinental University	Headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia
Majan College Oman	1995	Formal Supervision	University of Bedfordshire University of Leeds	Associated with Oman Chamber of Commerce
Caledonian College of Engineering	1996	Formal Supervision	Glasgow Caledonian University	
Modern College of Business and	1996	Symbolic Association	University of Missouri, St.	

Science			Louis University of Bond, Australia University of Exeter	
Muscat College	1996	Formal Supervision	University of Sterling Scottish Qualifications Authority	
Dubai Polytechnic UAE	1997	Formal Supervision	University of Hull	Founded by Dubai Chamber of Commerce
University of Sharjah UAE	1997	Symbolic Association	University of California – San Diego University of Jordan University of Arizona American University of Beirut University of Exeter International Islamic University, Malaysia Monash University: Victorian College of Pharmacy University of Adelaide	Importance of links probably varies from program to program
American University of Sharjah UAE	1997	Sub-Contracting Partnership Formal Endorsement	American University Texas A&M Accrediting by Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and	American University provides major administrative staff

			Universities	
Zayed University UAE	1998	Formal Endorsement	Accepted for candidacy by leading accrediting association	Founded to provide education for national women
Mazoon College Oman	1999	Symbolic Association	University of Missouri, Rolla Banasthali Vidyapiyh , Jaipur, India	Mazoon College Oman
Al Zahra College for Women	1999	Symbolic Association	Al Ahlia University, Jordan	
Birla Institute of Science and Technology Pilani	2000	Branch Campus	Birla Institute of Science and Technology Pilani, India	Undergraduate Engineering Programs
Sohar University	2000	Symbolic Association	University of Queensland (Australia) Mutah University (Jordan)	
Oman Medical College	2001	Formal Supervision	West Virginia University	Initiated by Dr. Mohammed Ali, Managing Director of Galfar Group
Gulf University, Bahrain	2001	Symbolic Association	University of London University of Leicester Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada American University in Cairo	
Preston University, Ajman, UAE	2001	Branch Campus	Preston University	Privately owned, for profit

				corporation incorporated in Alabama
Sur University College	2001	Symbolic Association	Bond University (Australia)	
Waljat College of Applied Science	2001	Symbolic Association	Birla Institute of Technology (India)	
Arab Open University	2002	Formal Supervision	United Kingdom Open University	Founded by HRH Prince Talal Bin Adulaziz Branch offices in Lebanon, Jordan, Bahrain, Egypt, Oman, and Saudi Arabia
Middle East College of Technology Oman	2002	Formal Supervision	Coventry University	
Weston Reserve University Kuwait	2003	Branch Campus		Education Arm of University Consortium International, Ltd. Registered in Republic of Seychelles
Carnegie Mellon Qatar Campus		Branch Campus	Carnegie Mellon University	Computer Science and Business Administration
Al Buraimi College	2003			
Dhofar University Oman	2004	Formal Supervision	American University of Beirut	
Nizwa University	2004	Symbolic Association	Sultan Qaboos University The Jordanian University Oregon State University Leipzig University	

			University of Exeter University of Reading University of Al Garve University of Porto	
Royal University for Women Bahrain	2004			
American University of Kuwait	2004	Formal Supervision	Dartmouth College	For profit institution. Head of Board of Trustees is Shaikha Dana Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah
British University in Dubai UAE	2004	Formal Supervision	University of Edinburgh University of Manchester University of Birmingham Cardiff University Cass Business School of City University, London	Offers Masters Programs Not for profit university Founding donors are Al Maktoum Foundation, Dubai Development and Investment Authority, the National Bank of Dubai, the British Group and Rolls Royce
Scientific College of Design Oman	2004			
Oman College of Management and Technology Oman	2004			

Gulf College Oman	2004			
Middlesex University, Dubai Campus	2005	Branch Campus	Middlesex University	Various undergraduate degrees in Business, Computing, Communication. Offers short professional programs
Georgetown University Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Qatar	2006	Branch Campus	Georgetown University	International Affairs
Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar	2006	Branch Campus	Cornell University	Two year pre-med program and four year medical program
Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar	2006	Branch Campus	Virginia Commonwealth University	?
Bayan College Oman	2006			
Oman Dental College Oman	2006			
Box Hill College Kuwait	2007			
Texas A&M at Qatar	2007	Branch Campus	Texas A&M	Engineering
Middlesex University, Dubai	2007			
Herriot-Watt University Dubai	2007			
American College of the Emirates Dubai	2007			

George Mason University Ras al Khaimah	2007	Branch Campus	George Mason University	
Hult International Business School	Dubai	Branch Campus		MBA
CHN University – Qatar		Formal Endorsement	CHN University of Higher Professional Education Netherlands London Metropolitan University	Hotel Management London Metropolitan University has accredited four MA programs
Medical University of Bahrain		Branch Campus	Constituent University of Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	
New York Institute of Technology		Sub-Contracting		Offers graduate and undergraduate programs through institutional affiliations in Bahrain, Jordan and Abu Dhabi
University College of Bahrain		Symbolic Association	American University of Beirut	Member of AACSB, “the highest accreditation body in the USA”
European University College, Brussels, Dubai		Branch Campus	European University College, Brussels	International MBA and Bachelor Degrees in Business Administration
Islamic Azad University, Dubai		Branch Campus	Islamic Azad University, Iran	Oldest private university in Iran

Mahatma Gandhi University, Off Campus Center, Dubai		Branch Campus	Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala, India	Established as an offshoot of Kerala University in 1985
Manchester Business School, Worldwide Dubai		Branch Campus	Manchester Business School	Executive MBA, Executive Centers in Hong Kong, Singapore and Dubai
St. Petersburg University of Engineering and Economics, Dubai		Branch Campus	St. Petersburg University of Engineering and Economics	Degree programs in Russian language only
Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Science and Technology, Dubai		Branch Campus	Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology, Karachi, Pakistan	Has four campuses. Dubai is the only one outside Pakistan. Offers business degrees in Dubai