Message from KAUST Global Research Partnership Managing Director, July 11, 2008

To: Participants in the KAUST Global Research Partnership

As many of you know, the Global Research Partnership hosted a major meeting in Jeddah in late May. By all accounts the meeting was a great success in introducing the 2007-2008 Center and Investigator awardees and their research to KAUST and a broad group from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the world. It is worth spending a few minutes with KAUST web site for photos and a general description (http://www.kaust.edu.sa/research/tech-symposium.aspx).

I am also attaching a PDF file of a front page article from The Arab News which describes the event and quotes the three speakers on the first day: His Excellency Minister Ali I Al-Naimi; founding KAUST president Choon Fong Shih; and Mark Yudof, the new president of the University of California. The full text of the three speeches, as well as the second day presentations by awardees, are available on the KAUST web site (same link as above) by clicking on the photo of the speaker on the right side of the Event page.

Again, as many of you know, the final competition of 2007-2008 was completed in mid-May when 19 KAUST Fellows (postdoctoral fellows) were selected and informed. The list of 2007-2008 KAUST Fellows is also on the KAUST website, but at a different location (http://www.kaust.edu.sa/research/fellows.aspx).

At the KAUST GRP offices in Washington, DC we are now fully engaged in several major activities:

1. Working with 2007-2008 awardees to support the initiation of the proposed and funded research
2. Opening a significant second office in London (operated as fully integrated with KAUST GRP in Washington, DC)
3. Revising and upgrading our web- and email-based communications systems
4. Hiring and training new award management and program personnel in DC, London, and Saudi Arabia
5. Planning for migration of systems and personnel of the central KAUST GRP operation to the KAUST campus during a 12 month period following the opening of the university in the fall of 2009.
6. Working through lessons learned from the first funding cycle and developing the logic, focus, documents and systems for the next cycle of research grants; and
7. Developing and starting to implement activities which support opening KAUST as a functioning research university a short 14 months from today.

With regard to the timing of the next cycle - a question we are often asked - the GRP staff and Technical Advisory Committee are moving forward aggressively to propose the strategy and detailed plans for a next cycle to the KAUST leadership.
during September-October 2008. While this is a priority for the GRP staff and KAUST as a whole, the organizational challenges of developing meaningful research and academic collaboration between and among KAUST and its partners, and particularly the tremendous challenges in opening KAUST in the fall of 2009, take precedence.

The Global Research Partnership, along with the other partnerships and collaborative activities of KAUST, have generated an almost overwhelming number of offers to help/support the development of KAUST with everything from lab fit out advice to recruiting students, covering the initial teaching load, and launching joint research activities. The GRP staff - as well as many others at KAUST - are already working on collaborative activities that are developmental in nature, but we recognize that many of the offered research and academic collaborations can only be initiated once the permanent faculty and leadership of KAUST join, set up shop, and take responsibility for the research and educational enterprise at KAUST—a process that is taking place rapidly.

Finally, we are redesigning the GRP web presence. The first step in this is reorganizing the existing GRP site (http://grp.kaust.edu.sa) to include updated information and a few new functionalities. We will be providing new login and password information in the next couple of weeks to access the updated version of this site. These changes are simply an intermediary step toward the launch of a full GRP online portal and community, which will "go live" later this year. In addition to streamlining the proposal submission, review and management processes, this portal will also enable efficient interactions between all members of the GRP community (including participants, reviewers, awardees, staff and interested parties), as well as the growing KAUST campus-based community (including students, faculty, and researchers).

With all best wishes,

Bruce

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Managing Director
KAUST Global Research Partnership