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## Young GU-Q Scholars Shine at World Congress of Bioethics 2024

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The recent 17th World Congress of Bioethics (WCB) in Doha saw Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) take part in panels that captivated attendees. The WCB, organized biennially by the International Association of Bioethics (IAB), is the largest gathering of bioethics experts worldwide, providing a unique platform for interdisciplinary dialogue on religion, culture, and ethics in healthcare. This year, it was held in Doha from June 3-6, marking the first time the event

has taken place in the Middle East.

The GU-Q delegation, which included Associate Professor Ayman Shabana and students Fatma Al-Emadi (SFS'26), Rafal Sarout (SFS'25), and Maya Saqr (SFS'25), participated in a panel focused on the nuances of teaching and learning of bioethics. This field, fraught with complex moral dilemmas in health and life sciences, demands exceptional pedagogical skill. "Our panel shared insights from a course on Islam and Bioethics that I have been teaching since 2015. It was rewarding to see these discussions, reframed by today's youth, resonate with a global audience," Professor Shabana said.

The students highlighted the importance of discussing bioethics from multiple perspectives. Fatma's talk on Preimplantation Genetic Testing (PGT), a technique used to screen embryos for genetic issues, drew much interest. "Islamic bioethics is crucial for guiding us on contemporary issues like organ transplantation and genetic engineering," she said.

Rafal examined the extent to which Islamic bioethics integrates a psychological perspective on mental health, noting, "We need to incorporate Islamic values into decision-making, especially in multicultural contexts." Maya delved into the Islamic view on organ donation, leading to a thought-provoking discussion with the audience. She also offered her perspective on the importance of the learning environment, saying, "Our discussions are so engaging because of the

diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of my classmates.”

The WCB also affirmed the importance of interdisciplinary dialogue in advancing global bioethical standards. Professor Shabana, who also participated in a panel on whether Muslim bioethicists should be jurists, said, “Intercultural deliberations such as these are vital for effective bioethics governance. This conference allowed researchers to reconnect, especially after the isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The insights from the 2024 conference are set to shape the future academic and professional paths of the participating GU-Q students. Professor Shabana emphasized the lasting impact of such experiences, stating, “Engaging bioethical issues on such a global platform not only enhances our students’ understanding but also enables them to contribute meaningfully to the field.” For Fatma, Rafal, and Maya, the experience was transformative. “This will significantly influence my future as a lawyer and policy-maker,” Rafal concluded.

Professor Ayman Shabana has been at the forefront of Islamic bioethics research in Qatar for over a decade. His work has been supported by several grants from the Qatar National Research Fund.

## **About Georgetown University in Qatar**

Established in 1789 in Washington, DC, Georgetown University is one of the world's leading academic and research institutions. Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q), founded in 2005 in partnership with the Qatar Foundation, builds upon the world-class reputation of the university through education, research, and service. Inspired by the university's mission of promoting intellectual, ethical, and spiritual understanding, GU-Q aims to advance knowledge and provide students and the community with a holistic educational experience that produces global citizens committed to the service of humanity.

Georgetown's unique, interdisciplinary program prepares students to tackle the most important and pressing global issues by helping them develop critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills within an international context. GU-Q alumni work in leading local and international organizations across industries ranging from finance to energy, education, and media. The Qatar campus also hosts the Executive Master in Diplomacy and International Affairs along with the Executive Master's in Leadership graduate degree programs.

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