Fifty years ago, the city of Dubai was a desert trading port along the Persian Gulf. Today, it’s a thriving metropolis within the United Arab Emirates and home to a diverse range of nationalities. Indeed, half a century has brought vast change and progress to this radiant city—with Dubai Women’s College High School, a K12 Flex School Partnership, at the leading edge of its education transformation.

Opening in the fall of 2012, DWC High School has been created to address unique challenges faced by local families who want a better education for their daughters. According to Dr. Howard Reed, director of the college and its new high school, UAE institutions of higher learning spend over a third of their budget on remedial education, in order to bring entering students up to college-level abilities. Even though more than 50 percent of Emirati parents send their children to private high schools, the problem persists. Currently at DWC, for example, over 90 percent of freshman undergraduates follow a foundations program that lasts up to four semesters.

To help resolve this issue, Dr. Reed says, “We’ve been talking about starting our own high school for years. But nothing much happened until we met with K12 to discuss the possibility of forming a hybrid school. We’re really into the notion that computers play a big role in the quality of learning that students can receive. However, we weren’t able to put all the puzzle pieces together until this new venture with K12.”

Blazing a Trail to the Future with the Help of K12

DWC’s high school offering is actually the first of its kind for any college in Dubai. And the flexible hybrid approach—which combines the best of online learning with onsite instruction—makes it even more distinctive. “Now we’re way out in front,” Dr. Reed says.

For its first year, the school will enroll ninth-grade students and perhaps some tenth graders, depending on their English skills. The Emirati and American curricula will be delivered during separate halves of the school day.

The Emirati courses—which include Islamic studies, Arabic, UAE social studies, and health/P.E.—will be taught by Arabic-speaking teachers in traditional classrooms. The American courses—which include English language and literature, history, and various levels of math and science—will be taught in English using the online curriculum from K12 International Academy, one of three online private schools operated by K12.

Students will log in to the online school from dedicated computer learning labs. Expertly trained and certified K12 teachers, largely based in the United States, will help guide students through the interactive online lessons and assessments via one-to-one chat, e-mail, and Skype video.

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DWC Director
Additionally, K¹² teachers will host weekly real-time, web-based classes attended by students from within the high school as well as others around the world. For extra support, Emirati instructors will act as proctors in the computer labs, which will also house K¹² hands-on materials such as literature and science equipment.

**Individualized Learning—Culminating in a Powerful Dual Diploma**

Ultimately, each student will follow her own path through the DWC program, one that can continually adapt to her unique learning requirements. Graduates will receive both an American high school diploma from the fully accredited K¹² International Academy, as well as a local equivalency diploma.

“We want to attract students of all capabilities, from wherever they are within Dubai,” Dr. Reed says. “At first, we anticipate that most of our applicants will be Emiratis, but our school will also be a great place for the daughters of Arab expats. Many of these parents will have attended a U.S. college or high school, so they’ll have respect for an American education. Our students will get a U.S. diploma along with a local one. This can open doors to universities all around the world.”

He continues: “All of our parents are looking to give their daughters a regular routine, where they can be part of a group. K¹² makes things flexible, still allowing for the basic model of sharing a learning experience. We’ve been showing parents the K¹² curriculum, and they like what they see.”

**Access to a Worldwide Community of Learners and Experiences**

Twenty years ago, Dr. Reed says, there were very few working Emirati women. But now DWC has over 4,600 working graduates. Opportunities for global exploration and networking are a key factor in this success.

“Connecting our students to other people and places in different parts of the world is something we do a lot at the college level,” he explains. “It’s part of our philosophy. K¹² will make this even simpler for our high school students. They’ll be well equipped for intercultural intelligence. K¹² offers a lot of great virtual experiences. We’re very excited about that, and we’re hoping to apply it in many different ways.”

Given all the possibilities, Dr. Reed is certain that other educators will be watching DWC’s new school with great interest. “We hope our approach will have an impact on other schools in Dubai,” he says. “We want them and the Ministry of Education to take notice, to show we’re getting results with a hybrid system.”

“With the current quality of incoming undergraduates, I tell area colleges that we can make the most direct impact by educating our own students in the earlier grades. We all want to do something about it, but DWC is the thought leader when it comes to technology. We set the stage, and our colleagues look to us to set a path to the future.”

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