

## The launch of Caledonian Women Engineers Forum

29 March, 2017

### Assembly Hall, Caledonian College of Engineering, Al Hail Campus

Caledonian College of Engineering launched the **Caledonian Women Engineers Forum** under the patronage of the HE Dr Suad Mohamed Ali Sulaiman Al Lawati, Vice President of State Council, Oman. The event saw an august gathering of influential Omani women drawn from government, industries and entrepreneurs and was attended by 195 women engineering students. Some of the eminent guests included Ms Khulood Al Aرامي, Vice Chair - Board of Directors, Caledonian College of Engineering, Ms Faadwa Al Aرامي Board of Directors, Dr Sharifa Al Balushi- Director Quality Assurance at the Ministry of Higher Education, Oman, Ms Nadhira Al Hinai Head –HSE ROH Muscat, Ms Khaltoum al Zadjali –The Times of Oman, Ms Saba Al Busiadi CEO Viral –Oman and other eminent personalities.



Dr Ahmed Hassan Al Bulushi, Dean, Caledonian College of Engineering, in his welcome address highlighted the increasing trend of women taking up tertiary education and Engineering education but not all return to work or take up career in engineering. He emphasised on the need for a supportive environment that encourages women to utilize their education by joining the nation building process.

Her Excellency, Dr Suad Mohamed Ali Sulaiman, Vice President, State Council stressed that one of the key challenge is striking a work life balance. She through her own example highlighted that there is no limit to one's ambition and once there is a determination to succeed, everything else fades away.

Ms Nadira Al Hinai, Chairperson of Women Engineers Council, Oman Society of Engineers gave an overview of the Women Engineering Council and its objectives. She highlighted the various events and opportunities coming up this year that aims to connect women engineering graduates from Oman with Middle East and beyond. She stressed upon the need to have more supportive families and industries that recognises the women engineers' competencies rather than the gender bias.

The inspiring panelists shared the experiences from their journey and how they overcame them. Ms Rasha Al Raisi, Medical Engineer, Free-lance Trainer, Writer and Author of 'The World According To Bahja' moderated the panel discussion. The panelists comprising of Dr Sharifa Al Balushi- Director Quality Assurance at the Ministry of Higher Education, Oman, Ms Nadhira Al Hinai Head –HSE ROH Muscat, Ms Saba Al Busiadi, CEO Viral –Oman and Ms Wafa Al Al Sumri from PDO discussed the challenges of women engineers and how they overcame them. One message all panelist had for the women engineers was not to lose sight of their goal and promise to contribute to the national building process. They all stressed upon the need to provide women engineers with workshops on competency enhancement, work-life balance, Exposure to women engineers from other cultures and countries, opportunities for capacity building and most importantly recognition for their role and contribution in the engineering fields.



His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said has consistently stressed upon the role of women in society and in supporting the economy. This motivation is clearly evident in rising number of female students going for Higher Education. Caledonian College of Engineering has 52% female students enrolled in various engineering programmes in 2017. These students are future contributors to the society and to the economic growth of the nation. Caledonian College recognises that it is our

responsibility to prepare our women students, to develop in them the skills needed to integrate in a male dominant and machine heavy professions. It is with this objective in mind Caledonian has constituted Caledonian Women Engineers Forum which aims to inspire, engage and empower young and budding women engineers to take challenges in their stride. The need of the hour is to find women leaders who can become motivators, change agents and thereby inspire young women to become all rounded balanced professionals with an ability to balance work and life.

The objective of this forum is to establish and active women engineers forum at Caledonian College of Engineering; create awareness of the role of women in taking up career and their contribution to the economy; inspire women engineering students through successful Omani role models from industries and organisations; equip women engineers with skills and competencies needed to succeed in male dominant industries; empower them through workshops and local and international networking opportunities; support the women engineering students with the ecosystem to balance their professional career and home.

Professor Vallavaraj, Associate Dean - Undergraduate studies called the Caledonian Women Engineers Forum as the first of its kind in the Higher Education Institutions in Oman and a day to be proud of.

Ms Prekerthi Panikar, Head – Educational & Professional Development and the Chairperson of Caledonian Women Engineers Forum closed the session thanking the invited guest for gracing the occasion with their presence and joining hands for a noble cause. She said that the forum was bound by its motto to **Inspire, Engage** and **Empower** women engineers to join the nation's workforce and drive Oman forward. This motto will continue to reflect in the range of activities that will follow with skills needed to excel and contribute to the nation building process.