



International cross-cultural conference opens at American University of Sharjah

By A Staff Reporter

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SHARJAH: An international cross-cultural conference attended by distinguished academics and experts from universities and institutions all across the world opened on Wednesday at the American University of Sharjah (AUS).

Entitled *Storytelling, Travel Writing and Seafaring from Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, the event features a wide variety of panel sessions on

various topics, and will take place at AUS and at venues belonging to the Sharjah Museums Authority (SMA).

The four-day international conference is being held by the Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA) in collaboration with AUS and SMA.

The conference aims to explore the tradition of storytelling, travel accounts and seafaring stories in different cultures and communities, not only in the Arabian Gulf and other Arab regions, but also in the Indian and European cultures.

The Arabian Gulf, however, is one of the most important crossroads of the modern world and one of the foci of the conference. It has been a meeting place of multiple cultures throughout different historical periods, from antiquity to the 21st century.

It, therefore, offers excellent grounds for reflecting on storytelling, seafaring, descriptions of landscapes and travel writing from cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspectives. These different literary genres share many common aspects and, in many ways, they stand at the beginning of literature itself, with mentions in famous examples of ancient classics such as *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and the writings of Homer.

With Sharjah known throughout the Middle East as the hub of culture and art-related activities, it was natural for a conference of this nature and stature to be held in the emirate, with AUS, SMA and AGYA collaborating to make the event a reality. Addressing the delegates at the opening of the conference, Dr Mahmoud Anabtawi, Dean of the AUS College of Arts and Sciences, said:

"Sharjah stands at the crossroads for the modern world, and therefore is an excellent place for high-calibre researchers to discuss issues of breadth and depth. This is in line with the vision His Highness Dr Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council, Ruler of Sharjah and President of the American University of Sharjah, has for education and is in synch with the university's endeavour to become a leading research center in the region."

Separately AUS has invited prospective students to discover "the AUS experience" at Najah-the UAE's leading higher education event-which is being held from Oct.31 to Nov.2 at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC).

Celebrating the unique profile of AUS, including its position as one of the most internationally diverse universities in the world, this year's exhibit highlights the theme "There's no other university like AUS."

The exhibit has been designed to give visitors a taste of the AUS student experience, offering prospective AUS students a glimpse of what their future at the university might look like based on the experience of current students and graduates.

With up to 16,000 parents and students expected to visit Najah this year, AUS invites visitors to learn more about the innovative work of students from its College of Engineering by offering an exclusive viewing of a battery-powered drone designed by students to maintain heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) units.