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Launch of New Multi-year University Linkage Program Between the U.S. and Iraq

The U.S. Embassy-sponsored university linkages program between the U.S. and Iraq was launched at an educational conference at the Al-Rasheed Hotel in Baghdad June 26-29.

This multi-million dollar and multi-year project, planned in consultation with the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, will fund linkages between five Iraqi universities and five U.S. universities. These formal linkages will focus on curriculum review, provide online courses and real-time digital video conference instruction, create career development centers and will include highly selective faculty and student exchanges.

Christopher Hill, the Ambassador of the U.S. in Iraq, and his Excellency Abid Thiab Al-Ojaily, the Iraqi Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, spoke at the opening of the conference on June 27 in support of this program. They noted that this is the first multi-million dollar and multi-year formal university linkages program between the U.S. and Iraq since 2003, stressing the importance of bilateral collaboration in the field of higher education and the valuable contribution this program is making towards the cultural and educational components of the U.S.-Iraq Strategic Framework Agreement.

Participating partner universities include the University of Basra with Oklahoma State University; the University of Kufa in Najaf with the University of Kentucky; the University of Salahdin in Erbil with the University of Cincinnati; the University of Tikrit with Ball State University; and the University of Baghdad with Cleveland State University. Their linkages will focus on petroleum sciences, English, education, engineering, computer sciences, and business (among other fields).

The Academy for Educational Development (AED), a U.S. NGO with a rich experience in higher education and in Iraq, is the implementer of this program.

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