

Dr. Dechant Delivers Keynote Address at Female Entrepreneurship Program

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On May 5, **Dr. Kathleen Dechant**, Management Department, delivered a keynote address at the Female Entrepreneurship Program sponsored by the Emirates Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Dechant notes that “this program is a good opportunity... to collectively deliberate on how we believe the path of Arab Women Entrepreneurs should be shaped to take advantage of our global economy.” Approximately 150 women participated in the one-day event.

The purpose of the UAE University Female Entrepreneurship Program was to investigate the barriers created by the global crisis for new and existing entrepreneurs and to explore how female entrepreneurs can take advantage of opportunities and face the challenges of the global crisis.

Dr. Dechant's address, “Female Entrepreneurship in the GCC: Findings, Insights and Ideas”, focused on her research over the past six years describing the context for female entrepreneurship, the efforts of Arab women business owners to start and operate small and medium enterprises in the region. Dechant presented a cross-cultural comparison of age, employment, education, motivation and the gender gap affecting women entrepreneurs as well as discussion of the issues that confront them, including the work/family balance, financing and access to markets, for the GCC as compared with MENA and the global environment. She concluded that “in economic terms, investment in women’s entrepreneurship is an important way for countries to exponentially increase the impact of new venture creation.”

Dr. Dechant's participation in the program was the first initiative undertaken between the business schools of United Arab Emirates University and the University of Connecticut under its recently signed Memorandum of Understanding encouraging joint projects, research and teaching among faculty. The Emirates Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship is a partnership between United Arab Emirates University, The College of Business and Economics, and the Abu Dhabi Water Authority to encourage business start ups and to support Emiratisation programs in the UAE.

