Students in ‘race’ to design car

If successful, this feat will be a first for students from the Middle East.

SARAH MACDONALD

MUSCAT: A group of students at Caledonian College of Engineering are designing and building a formula race car for an international competition, a first for students from the Middle East.

The Formula SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers International) student competition started in 1979, but no Middle Eastern university or college has ever sent a team. But CCE's ambitious and creative students, who call themselves Team Oxy of Caledonian, decided to change that and enter a car in the 2013 race, despite the obstacles they'll face. It's a challenge to see if we can or cannot build and run a racing car, said team leader Haitham Al Sagri, who is studying electrical engineering.

Most of the teams that compete in the competition come from universities with sports engineering or automotive engineering programmes and have all the proper facilities and equipment to make vehicles.

Caledonian College has no such programmes, so students from different engineering departments are collaborating to design the car in a workshop space given to them by the college. These students are creating their own sports engineering and bringing together the skills from different disciplines, said Jenny Walker, Associate Dean for Professional Development at Caledonian. It will take eight to nine months to build and perfect the car.

CCE launches development calendar

The Caledonian College of Engineering (CCE) recently launched a Student Development Calendar. This series of workshops and presentations on subjects ranging from leadership to poetry, exam techniques to flower arrangements, is run twice a week throughout the semester, a press release said.

The Student Development Calendar comprises workshops, presentations and events conducted by students, alumni, members of staff, guests and motivational speakers. The release said that CCE is committed not just to developing the technical skill and knowledge of engineering students but also to developing their soft skills and their ability to communicate.

The calendar, modelled closely on CCE's highly successful Staff Development Calendar, includes in-house training that harnesses the expertise not just of Caledonian staff members but also of talented students. The inaugural session of the Student Development Calendar was titled 'Exploring Leadership through Formula Racing' and was led by Haitham Al Sagri, a Level 2 student, Haitham's Team Oxy, comprised of Caledonian students, is building a racing car from scratch to participate in the prestigious international Formula SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers) competition.

The second session on the calendar, 'Fun with Photography', was facilitated by international award-winning CCE student photographers, Mahamad Al Armi and Ali al Gafari who dwelled upon the nuances of still photography. Jenny Walker, associate dean for professional development, said that the sessions on the calendar were not just about contributing to the dynamic student experience on campus but also about responding to the needs of industry, the release said.