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To:

Professor Al-Mahasway  
President

Al-Azhar University

Cairo, Egypt, Fax: 202 22611418

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Ref. Sultana N. Nahar and Alburuj R. Rahman Prizes for the faculty members and students in Departments of Physics and in Department of Astronomy and Meteorology of Al-Azhar University, Cairo (boys and girls) and Assiut campuses

Dear President Professor Al-Mahasway,

Assalamu alaikum and greetings from the Ohio State University, USA.

I have been visiting Al Azhar University since 2012 in regard to various educational and research agenda, including initiation of a recognition program for 16 prizes for faculty members and students in Physics (boys and girls campuses in Cairo, Assiut) and Astronomy (Cairo) for which I contributed a total endowment fund about \$34000. All relevant documents with signatures of members of Physics and Astronomy Departments and Dean's office are available. Prizes were given only for 2 years, 2013 and 2015.

You are probably aware that there were issues which prohibited continuation of the program. However, the members of Assiut campus and many of Cairo campus expressed high support for program. I wrote to couple of past Presidents, and met one President, and also past Vice President of Research, Prof. Ashraf Atia about re-establishing the recognition program, but no progress was made.

I wrote to the Grand Imam who responded back and showed willingness to help. Vice President of Research Prof. Tarek Salman was informed about the recognition program and issues. I met him along with Prof. Fatma Azmy in Mathematics of Al Azhar University on April 1, in 2018. Prof. Salman already had already written a memo proposing ideas of using up the endowment fund for various other purposes, not for the recognition program. Such suggestions were against the officially agreed objectives since initiation of the program in 2012. I submitted the response (attached here) where I addressed you. He also argued that the amount of money going with each prize was not high enough and the prizes should be reduced. I agreed to reduce the number of prizes from 16 to 8 in the revised the MOA for prizes. However, in the meeting a few days later, Prof. Salman sent two representatives to talk with me who did not agree to recognition program but agreed to return my about \$34000 in dollar and 500 Euros I gave. But they did not take any action in returning the money.

My purpose is to institute the recognition program instead of taking the money back. It took considerable effort to bring fund to Egypt. I would like to have the recognition because it inspires ones endeavor. Al Azhar University is the second oldest degree awarding university known in the world and it should continue to have strong presence in the academic world.

I am approaching to you for your support and cooperation in re-establishing the recognition program. I am attaching the current version of the MOA for the 8, instead of 16, prizes. I have already written to current Dean of Faculty of Science, Prof. Mohammed Al-Sharbiny, who is supportive of the original objectives and is willing to work with you for the re-establishment. I believe that the program has very positive impact on uplifting the motivation in teaching, research, academic excellence at Al Azhar University.

Your help in continuation of the recognition program will be highly appreciated. I look forward to hearing a positive response from you.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sultana N. Nahar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sultana" being more prominent and the last name "Nahar" following in a similar style.

Professor Sultana N. Nahar

**Suggestions in Prof. Salman's memo and response by Prof. Sultana:**

Prof. Fatma Azmy of Al Azhar University Mathematics translated the memo of Prof. Tarek Salman. I writing below Prof. Salman's suggestions in the memo and my response to them.

**Note:** The endowment for the above prizes is for a continuous process and is expected to exist with the university. It will introduce positive competition and the amount of honorarium for each prize should increase with time. Only the profit earned from the endowment will be used for the prizes.

**1. Responses to suggestions of Prof. Tarek Salman on his memo**

**Prof. Salman:**

First. Withdrew the money from the conference account and deposit it in a new account which is related to the university finance.

**Prof. Sultana Nahar:**

- I agree completely. I am not authorized to the account created by the Dean Prof. Mahmoud Wahab and Prof. Mamdouh of Physics Department in 2013. I have the signed documents of the acceptance of the fund by two Deans. These documents should be in Dean's office, but I can provide them if needed.

**Prof. Salman**

Second. Prof. Sultana should make a request to the President of Al-Azhar University to put the prizes under the name of Al-Azhar University and select a committee to manage the prizes.

**Prof. Sultana Nahar**

- I agree completely. I am requesting the President of Al-Azhar University to put the money for the prizes under the name of Al-Azhar University and select a committee to manage the prizes. To meet the objectives of the prizes, Al Azhar University will respect the guidelines for selection outlined by the sponsor.

**Prof. Salman**

Third. I suggest, in case Prof. Sultana agrees, that we may use the prizes money in the following:

1-) Supporting and training the Master and PhD students (instructors and assistant teaching) at the Physics and Astronomy Departments at Al-Azhar University on using the newest laboratory technology.

**Sultana Nahar**

- These suggestions are different from the objectives of the current MOA for the recognition program. The suggestion will require substantial fund which can not come from the profit earned of the endowment I provided. However, there are opportunities available under the Egypt-US fund. I would encourage Al Azhar University explore these opportunities along with the Ohio State University (OSU)

**Prof. Salman**

2-) Supporting the Masters and PhD students (instructors and assistant teaching) at the Physics and Astronomy Departments at Al-Azhar University for traveling to the Ohio State University to do the practical part of their Master or PhD work.

**Prof Sultana Nahar**

- These suggestions are very good and are feasible with substantial fund from i) USAID, ii) exchange program of US Department of State or iii) the Egypt-US fund. Al Azhar University should explore these opportunities along with collaborators at the Ohio State University. The profit from the endowment is not enough to carry out the suggested plan.

**Prof. Salman**

3-Supporting the laboratories at the Physics and Astronomy Departments with some newest scientific equipment.

**Prof. Sultana Nahar**

- The suggestive state-of-the-art equipment build-up in a scientific lab is under the objectives of Education Ministry and Egypt-US fund. Al Azhar University may like to apply for these funds.

**Prof. Salman**

4- Suggesting research projects which can be done jointly by OSU and Al-Azhar University and it will be supported by the money of the prizes.

**Prof. Sultana Nahar**

- The suggestions are welcoming and these activities are the objectives of research grants from government agencies. Both the Ohio State University and Al Azhar University can jointly apply for grants for these. Members of both universities can initiate research projects and then apply together for the fund. Profit from the recognition fund can not support it.

**Prof. Salman**

5- Supporting the Master and PhD students at Physics and Astronomy Departments at Al-Azhar University for attending international conferences or workshops related to their field of studies.

**Sultana Nahar**

- Funding for conferences and workshops for students are available through the conference committee, Egyptian Government, and Egypt-US fund. American Physical Society (APS) gives fund to students for its conferences. Money can be collected from a few available sources for the complete international trips. Our students go through such process. As Prof. Salman stated Al Azhar University is well known outside which indicates that it students should not have problem receiving travel grants from outside.

**Prof. Salman**

6- Open a scientific channel between the Physics and Astronomy Departments at Al-Azhar University and the Physics and Astronomy Departments at OSU in order to exchange the scientific experience between them.

**Sultana Nahar**

- This is a very good suggestion. Faculty members of Al Azhar University and OSU can collaborate on projects which can help to create a Memorandum of Agreement and apply for the financial support available through sources, such as, Fulbright scholarship, Exchange program of US government, etc

## 2. On reducing the number of prizes:

### Sultana Nahar:

It was the President of Al Azhar University serving in 2013 who wanted to have the prizes in all four Departments - Physics (male - Cairo), Physics (female, Cairo), Astronomy (Cairo) and Physics (Assiut) every year. I found it very logical and agreed. After discussions on fair amount of honorarium for each prize with professors of Physics and Astronomy on Cairo campus during 2012-2014, I provided the needed amount for the endowment, a total of \$34000 for the 16 prizes, 4 for each Department. While the value of \$34000 has remained the same today, the value Egyptian pound has gone down by 3 times. Prof. Tarek Salman has suggested to reduce the number of prizes to increase the honorarium.

I believe that lower value of Egyptian pounds should not change the prizes as the purpose of these prizes is only for motivation for excellence through annual internal competition in the 4 individual departments of the same university. They are not of high prestige and honor that come through competitions among many institutions. However, I am willing to reduce the number of prizes. Followings are my suggestions.

### Number of prizes:

- **Total 8 prizes in the two fields:** Al Azhar University has two separate fields of study, (i) Astronomy and Meteorology and (ii) Physics. They can not be compared directly as they are evaluated differently. Hence there will be 4 prizes for Astronomy and Meteorology, and 4 prizes for combined Physics, Physics (male - Cairo), Physics (female - Cairo), and Physics (Assiut) of Al Azhar University.

- **Faculty prizes, one in Physics and one in Astronomy:** The existing MOA has two faculty prizes, one for the best research and one the best teaching. These two prizes can be combined in to one prize.

- **Student prizes, three in Physics and three in Astronomy:** One for the best Ph.D. student, one for the best Master student, and one for the best Bachelor student.

Based on these, I am modifying the MOA of guidelines of the prizes.

**Memorandum of Agreement:****Sultana N. Nahar and Alburuj R. Rahman Prizes in Physics, and in Astronomy & Meteorology at Al-Azhar University****1. Purpose:**

To recognize and encourage Muslim teachers for the best teaching in the class and outstanding research publications and Muslim students to achieve academic and research excellence in their respective areas of physics, astronomy and meteorology. This recognition program will give annual prizes to teachers and students for the best performance.

Teachers play the most important role of raising the standard of the university by best teaching to the students of the entire class and doing high quality research and guiding students in research projects. There is always a limited number of students who achieve the topmost position in the class. Recognition will encourage them to continue their best effort for higher excellence.

A teacher can uplift the standard of the whole class by excellent teaching skill, help and giving positive attitude. The students should nominate the teachers from whom they benefited the most in gaining knowledge.

Research is crucial for advances. Without research publications an institution is not known outside. Teachers play the important role in guiding and training students in research as well as leading research projects. Best research publications will be recognized annually.

**2. Funding:**

The prizes are sponsored by the personal income of Professor Sultana N. Nahar of the Ohio State University in the USA. She provided a total fund of US\$33,300 and Euro.500 for the endowment of the prizes during 2013-2015. The Deans of Faculty of Science serving during the time had the money converted as Egyptian pounds and deposited in a bank account.

Of the total profit earned from the endowment fund, 90% will be used for the annual prizes, and the rest 10% will be added to the endowment fund for sustenance and future increase of the honorarium of the prizes.

Per discussions with faculty members of the Physics Departments of boys and girls branches, and Astronomy & Meteorology of Cairo campus, the honorarium of each prize was decided in 2015. For the prizes in 2015, the profit from the endowment was not used. Sponsor Prof. Sultana Nahar provided the fund for the 12 prizes distributed in 2015.

**3. Prizes:**

There will be in total 8 annual prizes, (i) 4 prizes for Physics, combined Departments for Boys-Cairo, Girls-Cairo, Assiut, (ii) 4 for Astronomy & Meteorology.

Each field will have 1 faculty prize and 3 student prizes as described below:

- i) "Sultana N. Nahar prize for Distinction in Research Publications and in teaching in Physics or in Astronomy & Meteorology" for a faculty member,
- ii) "Alburuj R. Rahman prize for the best Ph.D. student in Physics or in Astronomy & Meteorology" for a graduate who received Ph.D. degree in the past one year.
- iii) "Alburuj R. Rahman prize for the best M.Sc. Student" for the thesis and academic excellence for a M.Sc. student who graduated in the past one year.

iv) "Alburuj R. Rahman prize for the best B.Sc. Student" for academic excellence for a B.Sc. student who graduated in the past one year.

Each prize consists of i) a Certificate of Excellence and ii) an honorarium. The certificates will be signed by the President of the university or by the Vice President of Graduate Studies and Research or by the Dean of Faculty of Science and the Chair of the respective Department.

Of the total fund available for the prizes, each faculty member will receive 20%, each Ph.D. student 15%, each M.Sc. student 10% and each B.Sc. student 5%

The prize distribution has some disparity that while one Astronomy Department competes, three Physics Departments compete for the same recognition. If this is acceptable to Physics Departments, there should not be any issue. Otherwise, one suggestion could be that each Physics Department compete in every three years. It also means that each candidate is evaluated by the past 3 years of research and teaching. The sponsor is open suggestions.

#### **4. Terms and Conditions for the 4 types of prizes:**

##### **A. "Sultana N. Nahar prize for Distinction in Research Publications and in teaching in Physics or in Astronomy & Meteorology" for faculty members:**

There are 2 of this annual prize, 1 in Physics combined for Boys-Cairo, Girls-Cairo, Assiut campus, and 1 in Astronomy & Meteorology.

##### **i) Selection Criteria for a Faculty:**

Nomination of this prize for a faculty member will be based on teaching and research publications and with whom at least one student has carried out his/her Ph.D. or Masters thesis research or authored in one publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Nomination points are divided as:

60% weight will come from research publications,

30% weight will come from students assessment of their teachers from whom they learned most knowledge in class

5% weight will come from conference presentations, participating in organizing a conference or some other of achievement that makes Al Azhar University known for research.

5% weight will come from the recommendation of the sponsor, Dr. Sultana N. Nahar or her representative. In absence of the sponsor or her representative, the 5% will be added to the points for research publications.

##### **ii) Evaluation of research publications:**

For journals, proceedings, Book, Book Chapters:

1. SCI Journals: 10 points
2. Non-SCI journals but known with good readers (peer-reviewed): 6 points
3. Non-SCI average journals (peer-reviewed): 4 points
4. Conference proceedings: 3 points

Exceptional journal in the field: 10 additional point

1. Author of a textbook: 25 points
2. Author of a general book: 15 points

3. Book chapters: 10 points

Authorship multiplication factor:

1. Single author paper: 1
2. 1st authoring a 2-authors paper: 0.9
3. 2nd author in a 2-authors paper: 0.8
4. Any author in an N-authors paper (alphabetical order):  $1/N$
5. 1st author in an N-authors paper (non-alphabetical order): 0.7
6. 2nd author in an N-authors paper (non-alphabetical order): 0.6
7. 3rd author in an N-authors paper (non-alphabetical order): 0.5
8. Any other author in an N-authors paper (non-alphabetical order): 0.4

**iii) Citation:** "In recognition of outstanding research publications and teaching"

However, the citation can be changed with research topics that are related to the winner.

**B. "Alburuj R. Rahman prize for the best Ph.D. student in Physics or Astronomy & Meteorology"**

There are 2 annual prizes, 1 for Physics combined from Boys-Cairo, Girls-Cairo, Assiut campuses, and 1 in Astronomy & Meteorology, for graduates who have received their Ph.D. degree during the past 1 year.

**i) Selection Criteria:**

Nomination of this prize are divided as:

65% weight - from research publications

35% weight - from the academic record

**ii) Evaluation of research papers can be followed as mentioned above**

**iii) Citation:** "For the best research publications from the Ph.D. thesis and academic record in Physics or in Astronomy & Meteorology"

**C. "Alburuj R. Rahman prize for the best M.Sc. Student":**

There are 2 annual 1 in Physics combined from Boys-Cairo, Girls-Cairo, Assiut campuses, and 1 in Astronomy & Meteorology, who have received their degree during the last 1 year.

**i) Selection Criteria:**

Nomination of this prize are divided as:

50% weight - from research publications

50% weight - from the academic record

**ii) Evaluation of research papers can be followed as mentioned above**

**iii) Citation:** "In recognition of securing the highest combined points/grade in M.Sc.courses and research thesis at graduation in Physics or Astronomy & Meteorology"

**D. "Alburuj R. Rahman prize for the best B.Sc. Student":**



There are 2 annual 1 in Physics combined from Boys-Cairo, Girls-Cairo, Assiut campuses, and 1 in Astronomy & Meteorology, who have received their B.Sc. degree during the last 1 year.

**i) Selection Criteria:**

Nomination of this prize is based on the highest score at graduation of the bachelor degree. However, a student can have addition 5% with research experience.

**ii) Citation:** "In recognition of securing the highest points/grade in B.Sc.course at graduation in Physics or Astronomy & Meteorology"

**5. Recognition process:**

About two months before the end of the academic year the committee formed by the President will ask the Head of the Departments to circulate a notice requesting all faculty members and students. who have completed their Ph.D., Master, and B.Sc. degrees in the past year, to submit their CV and printout of their research papers in journals (1 year for the faculty members and all for Ph.D. and Master students). The academic committee of the Department will form a prize committee of three to five faculty members to collect the materials and evaluate them. All faculty members in the committee are also eligible to be nominated. Undergraduate students may not need to apply since university is aware of the best student.

For the teaching evaluation, the prize committee will collect students assessment of the faculty members on papers. They will be asked to put down the name of the faculty member from whom they learned most in the class. The voting for the best teaching can also be done by using googledoc. The committee will make selection of faculty members with maximum points, one or two (in case of close points). The Chairperson and the prize committee will approve one winner for the prize and send the names to the Prize Board headed by the University personnel who will have them approved. In case of two nominees with almost equal points, the prize money can be divided into two, where each winner will get the certificate and half of the honorarium. The Board will inform the winners and present formally the certificate and honorarium to each of them.

**6. The Prize Board:**

The Board will consist of the President of Al-Azhar University, the Vice President of Postgraduate Studies and Research, the Dean of Faculty of Science and the Chairs of the respective Departments for the respective candidates and the sponsor, Dr. Sultana N. Nahar.

For the best of motivation or encouragement, the academic committee of the Departments may suggest modifications or adjustment of the process. Any decision on the modification of the terms and conditions or relevant issues on the prizes can be made by three members of the Board with consent from the sponsor.

**7. Prize Ceremony:**

To honor the winners and inspire others to make the best effort, it is suggested to hold the prize ceremony in combination with other events or in an event where the largest university audience will be present and publish the news of the winners in the university news media.



Professor Sultana N. Nahar