

New

# HEIGHTS

UNIVERSITY OF  
HAIFA MAGAZINE  
SPRING 2017

FEATURE

FROM THE WORLD  
OF HIGH-TECH TO  
HIGHER EDUCATION:

MEET MOOLY EDEN  
NEW CHAIRMAN OF THE  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

p10

*on the*  
**FRONT LINE**  
*of* **HUMAN CARE**

FUTURE FACULTY OF  
SOCIAL WELFARE  
AND HEALTH  
SCIENCES BUILDING

p4





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#### HEIGHTS MAGAZINE

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# New HEIGHTS

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# A “turning point” year for the University

**We are pleased to report on a number of exciting developments that will shape the University’s academic and physical landscape for years to come.**

**P**Plans for a major multi-campus expansion, the addition of new academic disciplines, and new global developments will chart a new course for the University’s future.



President Ron Robin

Academic merger agreements with highly respected institutes ORT Braude College (OBC) and the NB Haifa School of Design (WIZO) are underway. The merger plans will transform the University into a local and regional powerhouse, further deepening our engagement in the civic and cultural life of the city of Haifa and the Galilee. Not only will our current student body of 18,000 grow by 3,000, our academic offerings will extend into new important fields – engineering, architecture and design. Under the agreements, both institutes will become Uni-

versity faculties while continuing to operate from their current locations. Tapping into OBC’s engineering talent pool and WIZO’s expertise in diverse design disciplines and cutting-edge

teacher training programs will usher in a new era of education, research and innovation at the University.

In addition, discussions are underway with the renowned Rambam Health Care Campus, the largest medical center in Israel’s north, to build a joint 20-story building in Haifa for translational research in health sciences and public health. This partnership promises to propel a quantum leap for the University in the fields of biotechnology and healthcare.

Along with strengthening academic ties in Israel, the University continues to foster strategic global partnerships. In November, Professor Gustavo Mesch signed academic agreements with three Indian universities in a range of fields including marine, computer and life sciences, during a special academic mission to India led by President Reuven Rivlin. The University is also developing academic and commercial research agreements with Zhejiang Ocean University and Mr. Zong Qing Hou, Chairman of the Hangzhou Wahaha Group Co. – a leading Chinese entrepreneur who seeks to spur high-tech initiatives in his province.

We are pleased to report on the addition of 38 new full-time faculty from leading universities and research institutions. The infusion of new talent has significantly increased the number of





Plans for a major multi-campus expansion, the addition of new academic disciplines, and new global developments will chart a new future for the University.

research grant applications submitted by our faculty members, as well as the University's share of public funding received through the government's Planning and Budgeting Committee research model. It has also led to the establishment of new multidisciplinary graduate programs.

Investing in research, teaching and training infrastructure remains integral to our agenda. In the past year, we completed the construction of marine laboratories at the Israel Oceanographic and Limnological Research Institute (IOLR), set the foundations for the new Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences building and moved ahead with the 4-floor expansion of the Herta and Paul Amir Faculty of Social Sciences. Plans are also being finalized for the new Faculty of Law building. All of these initiatives are made possible thanks to the generosity and support of our friends in Israel and around the world.

On this occasion, I am happy to introduce Mooly (Shmuel) Eden, our new Chairman of the Executive Committee. Mooly is an extraordinary self-starter who brings with him a spirit of creativity and innovation. In addition, we welcome a new academic leadership team. Each of our newly appointed deans has made outstanding contributions to their respective fields and to the advancement of the University. Please join me in welcoming and congratulating them all.

With the start of the Spring semester, I am energized by the exciting challenges that lie ahead. I hope to see you at our upcoming 45th Annual Board of Governors Meeting in June where details of our future expansion plans will be presented.

Sincerely,

Ron Robin

## Meet the DEANS



(l-r) **\*Prof. Gad Barzilai**, Vice Rector and Head of the International School, **Prof. Yitzhak Samuel**, Dean of the Faculty of Management, **\*Prof. Eran Vigoda-Gadot**, Dean of the Herta and Paul Amir Faculty of Social Sciences, **\*Prof. Onn Winckler**, Assistant Rector, **\*Prof. Oren Gazal-Ayal**, Dean of the Faculty of Law, **\*Prof. Gur Alroey**, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, **Prof. Edi Barkai**, Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, **\*Prof. Hanan Alexander**, Dean of the Faculty of Education, **\*Prof. Ido Izhaki**, Vice-President and Dean of Research, **\*Prof. Faisal Azaiza**, Dean of the Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences, **\*Prof. Jenny Kurman**, Dean of Students



**\*Prof. Lily Orland-Barak**, Dean of Graduate Studies

**\*New appointment**



Together, this outstanding group will lead our University to new heights of excellence in teaching, research, and civic engagement.

**Prof. Gustavo Mesch**  
Rector



# 8 WAYS

the University of Haifa's  
Faculty of Social Welfare &  
Health Sciences is Improving  
Quality of Life in Israel and Beyond



## 1

**CLINICAL OUTREACH:**  
Providing interdisciplinary healthcare  
services for Israel's northern region

**The Interdisciplinary Clinical Center (ICC) is a unique healthcare facility that integrates innovative research, teaching, training and clinical services to address Israel's increasingly acute social and healthcare challenges.**

Under the direction of Prof. Rivka Yahav, the ICC offers diverse therapeutic and diagnostic services under one roof addressing the health, developmental, emotional and social needs of vulnerable and at-risk populations with limited access to high-quality healthcare. Services are offered in Hebrew, English, Russian, and Arabic by a diverse professional staff comprised of communication clinicians, occupational therapists, clinical and educational psychologists, psychotherapists and group therapists, social workers,

art and movement therapists, physiotherapists, and experts in health and nutrition. Workshops for new and expecting parents are also offered, as well as early childhood development programs and community intervention projects. The ICC is home to four innovative research institutes specializing in areas related to emotional stress, communication disorders, hearing impairments and developmental delays and disorders, and offers a wide-range of community-oriented projects to address needs not being met by existing services. Among them is the Developmental Identification and Accompaniment Project, a first of a kind program in Israel, which aims to identify preschool children with language, sensory-motor, emotional, and social difficulties in need of therapeutic intervention.



“ “ “

Our Faculty brings together the complementary fields of the social sciences, health sciences and public health. Our multidisciplinary programming blends theoretical studies with intensive fieldwork emphasizing practical research to improve the wellbeing of patients and their families.

**-Prof. Faisal Azaiza**, Dean of the Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences  
Former Head of the School of Social Work and widely published scholar in education, citizenship and social justice.



## 2

### INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES: Rehabilitative technologies employ virtual reality to improve the quality of life

**The Laboratory for Innovations in Rehabilitative Technology, headed by Prof. Tamar Weiss of the Department of Occupational Therapy, develops and evaluates novel technologies to improve patient care and quality of life for people in need of short- and long-term rehabilitation. Shopping simulations for stroke patients, personalization of virtual games for children with cerebral palsy and video modeling for children with autism are a few examples of innovative assistive devices produced at the Lab.**

As part of the Israeli Center of Research Excellence on Learning In a NetworKed Society (LINKS I-CORE), Prof. Weiss and colleagues at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya developed an innovative data spoon to assess self-feeding difficulties of very young children. She is also part of a joint research program, involving scientists from the University of Haifa and the Bruno Kessler Foundation in Italy, exploring ways in which collaborative technologies can support shared interactions between people in conflict.

## 3

### TRAILBLAZING STUDIES

**A joint research study between the University of Haifa and Al-Quds Open University in Jerusalem is exploring perceptions and coping mechanisms of Arab women living with breast cancer in Israel and the West Bank.**

The study follows two groups of women whose way of life has been influenced differently by 'Western' culture, to compare traditional and modern cognitive-behavioral coping mechanisms in handling the disease. The researchers hope that these comparisons will lead to a better understanding of the psychosocial needs of cancer patients and their families. The study, led by Professors Faisal Azaiza and Miri Cohen, and Dr. Hadass Goldblatt of the School of Social Work, has recently completed its data collection phase. The Middle East Regional Cooperation Program (MERC) is providing funding for the project.

## 4

### LEADING NATIONAL HEALTH CAMPAIGNS

**Researchers from the University of Haifa have joined forces in international efforts aimed at promoting healthy eating and lifestyle among teens.**

The campaign, known as the "5-2-1-0 Numbers to Live By," endorses an easy to remember rule for healthy living: 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables, 2 hours or less of recreational screen time, 1 hour or more of physical activity and 0 sugar sweetened beverages a day. "Beyond raising awareness, we hope our research will point to innovative and effective ways that will motivate teens to adopt healthy lifestyle choices," explains Dr. Shira Zelber-Sagi, a nutrition researcher from the School of Public Health. Dr. Zelber-Sagi is collaborating with biomedical informatics researcher Prof. Mor Peleg from the Department of Information Systems and Prof. Doron Klinger of the Department of Economics, who specializes in finance and behavioral economics, on this national wellness project. The trio are developing a social app that will enable users to monitor their healthy eating practices and progress by providing feedback and incentives to motivate good choices. The app is based on insights gained from research into nutrition and behavioral economics.



#### ABOUT THE FACULTY

The Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences was established over two decades ago in response to the pressing need for professionalization of the allied health disciplines to serve the outlying communities of northern Israel. Today, it is renowned for its wide range of research in health and social welfare and innovative professional advancement programs that are setting the gold standard of practice in fields of physical and occupational therapy, psychotherapy, mental health, communication disorders and nutrition.

# 5

## NEW NATIONAL HUB For health and risk communication



**The University recently marked the launch of the Health and Risk Communication Research Center – the only center of its kind in Israel.**

Headed by Dr. Anat Gesser-Edelsburg from the School of Public Health, the Center advances interdisciplinary research, theory and practice in health and risk communication in order to improve communications of health risk information to diverse audiences. Scientists from diverse backgrounds and disciplines have joined the effort – ranging from experts in epidemiology, nutritional behavior, through environmental and occupational health, to emergency preparedness, and social marketing. The Center is participating in ASSET, a four-year international research project

funded by the European Commission to design and test integrated transdisciplinary strategies for communicating scientifically based messages to targeted audiences during crises such as disease outbreaks and epidemics. The project combines public health, vaccine and epidemiological research, social and political sciences, law and ethics, gender studies, science communication and media.



### ASSET

Action plan on Science in Society  
related issues in Epidemics and  
Total pandemics

# 6

## CUTTING-EDGE LABORATORIES: Developing a profound understanding of the multi-dimensional aspects of pain

**Researchers at the Human Experimental Pain Research Laboratory in The Cheryl Spencer Department of Nursing are advancing the understanding of the complex phenomena of pain by utilizing experimental models based on psychophysical techniques.**

Studies at the lab, headed by Prof. Dorit Pud, help bridge the gap between animal and clinical research to quantify and better understand the perception and modulation of pain and its underlying mechanisms. Scientists at the facility investigate topics such as individual differences in pain perception, personality traits and genetic factors affecting sensitivity to pain, variation in analgesic response (measuring effectiveness of painkillers), and paradoxical phenomena of opioid induced hyperalgesia, the condition of heightened pain sensitivity to analgesics.

### NEW BUILDING PROJECT

The new 57,000 square foot Social Welfare and Health Sciences building under construction will house under one roof state-of-the-art research and teaching facilities for the University's fastest growing Faculty, which has an enrollment of more than 4,500 students and is staffed by some 300 faculty members.

Seed funding for the construction of the new building has been made possible by generous gifts provided by Maurice Kanbar and Aaron Spencer.

Additional support is needed to help complete the building project. For more information please contact the Office of the Vice President for External Affairs and Resource Development.



Rendering of the future Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences Building

#### SCHOOLS

/ School of Social Work  
/ School of Public Health  
/ Graduate School of  
Creative Art Therapies

#### DEPARTMENTS

/ The Cheryl Spencer  
Department of Nursing  
/ Gerontology  
/ Physical Therapy  
/ Occupational Therapy

/ Community Mental  
Health  
/ Communication  
Sciences and Disorders  
/ Human Services

#### INTERDISCIPLINARY CLINICAL CENTER

#### DEPARTMENT OF CONTINUING EDUCATION



# 7

## SPEARHEADING NATIONAL INITIATIVES: Evaluating psychiatric rehabilitation services across Israel



**Mental health is a growing global concern. According to the World Health Organization, mental illnesses account for over 15% of the international health burden. Developing and delivering effective services has become a renewed healthcare priority as governments increasingly recognize the need to help individuals and families affected by mental disorders.**

The Center for Community Mental Health Research is leading an ambitious project to assess the impact and effectiveness of psychiatric rehabilitation services in Israel. Launched in collaboration with the Laszlo N. Tauber Family Foundation and the Israeli Ministry of Health, the National Outcome Rehabilitation Monitoring Implementation and Research Project is providing decision-makers with data-informed policy recommendations for improved clinical care.

Prof. David Roe, founding director of the Center, is leading the groundbreaking project. “Our initial findings emphasize the significance of the individuals’ subjective experiences. Individuals who reported higher quality of life and better functioning were significantly less likely to be re-hospitalized up to one year later,” notes Prof. Roe. “We have also learned that the process of joint goal-setting between clients and practitioners play an important role in their successful recovery.”

Scientific publications based on the project’s findings have attracted international attention. Prof. Roe has presented the project’s model and findings at mental health conferences in Denmark and Norway, and recently at the OECD headquarters in Paris.

# 8

## GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH: Scientific evidence to demonstrate that “excessive daydreaming” is a distinct psychological phenomenon

**‘Maladaptive daydreaming’ (MD) is a unique condition first coined in 2002 by Dr. Eli Somer, a Professor of Clinical Psychology at the University of Haifa. A new series of studies showing that MD can be validly and reliably diagnosed suggest it can be established as a new and distinct mental disorder.**

Patients describe the psychological condition, characterized as intense daydreaming, as a painful addiction that impacts their ability to lead independent lives. Some describe difficulty in sustaining attention

and concentration, while others report hardships in leading stable relationships or holding down full-time employment. Findings from a recent series of studies by an international team of researchers led by Somer show that MD can be validly and reliably diagnosed. “With evidence-based research affirming it as a valid disorder, accurate diagnosis of MD is now possible,” explains Prof. Somer of the School of Social Work. To this end, Somer is currently conducting a study he hopes will lead to the development of a treatment to alleviate the dysfunction associated with this condition.

### EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF GLOBAL HEALTH EXPERTS

The International MPH in Health Systems Policy and Administration provides students with a strong foundation of the complex and rapidly changing global health landscape, preparing future practitioners and researchers for leadership roles in settings across the globe. According to the Directors of the MPH program, Prof. Manfred Green and Prof. Richard Schuster of the School of Public Health, this year the program opened its second cohort, which has attracted 16 students from Africa, North and South America, Europe and Israel.

[globalhealthleadership.haifa.ac.il](http://globalhealthleadership.haifa.ac.il)



(l-r) Co-Directors Prof. Manfred Green and Prof. Richard Schuster with graduating students at last year’s commencement ceremony.

# LIFE SCIENCE START-UPS *secure* IMPRESSIVE INVESTMENTS *totaling* > \$8 MILLION

ARTSaVIT and MemoFit, biotech companies of Carmel-Haifa and Carmel Innovations Fund, recently announced successful financing rounds with strategic business partners, bringing them one step closer to delivering their healthcare advances to the public.

## CANCER RESEARCH

ARTSaVIT Ltd., a portfolio company developing cancer drugs based on the research of Prof. Sarit Larisch, recently sealed a successful financing round totaling \$6.3 million. ARTSaVIT is developing a treatment for cancer that can selectively trigger self-destruction of cancer cells using an ARTS-based therapy. ARTS is an apoptosis-related protein that regulates the process of natural cell death. The financing was raised from leading strategic partners and biotech venture capital firms – Merck Ventures, Pontifax Venture Capital and Arkin Ventures.



**Prof. Sarit Larisch**  
Founder and CEO  
ARTSaVIT

Head - Laboratory  
of Cell Death and  
Cancer Research  
Department of  
Human Biology

## MEMORY ENHANCEMENT RESEARCH

In its first year of operation, MemoFit Ltd., a biotech company developing memory enhancement drugs, raised over \$2 million. MemoFit is developing a drug aimed at enhancing long-term memory consolidation by inhibiting kinase activity in the brain. Prof. Kobi Rosenblum and his team at the Sagol Department of Neurobiology believe that their research can play a role in treating dementia and, in particular, treating Alzheimer's disease. Investment partners included Johnson & Johnson, FutuRx Ltd, OrbiMed Israel and Takeda Ventures.



**Prof. Kobi Rosenblum**  
Founder and CEO  
MemoFit

Head - Laboratory  
for Research of  
Molecular and Cellular  
Mechanisms Underlying  
Learning and Memory

## CARMEL UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA ECONOMIC CORPORATION

### AN INVESTMENT FUND GEARED FOR CHARITABLE GIVING

Carmel-University of Haifa Economic Corporation (Carmel-Haifa) brings early-stage research out of the laboratory and into the marketplace. Two years ago, it launched the Carmel Innovations Fund,



**Elka Nir, CEO**

a micro-fund investing in innovative life science research. "The fund offers a unique model that facilitates the 'investment' of philanthropic gifts," explains CEO Elka Nir, who developed the idea with the Division for External Relations and Resource Development. "It offers donors an opportunity to make business-oriented investments that will serve as a vehicle for 'evergreen' charitable giving. Investors have the option of taking an active role in the selection of projects and assuming a board position."

The Carmel Innovations Fund enabled the establishment of six companies with an initial seed funding of \$500,000, and acts as an incubator providing financial, legal and business development support to advance research and attract global strategic partners.

Building on the success of the first Carmel Innovations Fund, Carmel-Haifa is primed to launch its second more diversified investment fund. "The new fund will invest in a range of industries – from information technologies and biotech, to marine and agricultural sciences," adds Nir.

### PORTFOLIO COMPANIES IN CARMEL INNOVATIONS FUND I

**ARTSaVIT:** cancer treatment activating a controlled cell-killing mechanism

**CanCure:** anti-tumor potential of mushroom-based treatments for pancreatic cancer

**MemoBoost:** cognitive enhancement drugs

**MemoDero:** drug for fear and anxiety disorders

**MemoFit:** improving memory functioning in Alzheimer's patients

**ResCure:** curing breast cancer recurrence



# DESIGNING THE LEARNING SPACES OF TOMORROW

Future Learning Spaces facilitate the shift of learning responsibility to the learner, placing the technologies in the hands of the students instead of the teachers

Digital technology is transforming not only the way we learn, but the learning environment itself. A national initiative investigating how to best prepare students for lifelong learning in today's information-based, networked society is being led by the Faculty of Education.

Young students today have access to a world of information in the palm of their hands. From breaking news to expert opinions, they can publish their ideas and connect with peers, wherever and whenever. As a result, educational researchers are rethinking the structure and design of schools to support learning in a way that extends beyond the walls of the classroom.

The University of Haifa is playing an important role in determining how the classrooms of the future will look. "Planning learning spaces is both a theoretical and practical challenge," explains Prof. Yael Kali, an international expert in educational technology (EdTech) and head of the Israeli Center of Research Excellence on Learning In a Networked Society (LINKS I-CORE). "Until now, many educational reforms have taken a technologically-focused approach, with a lot of hype over the incorporation of computers and mobile telephones in schools. Despite the introduction of technology, traditional teaching and learning

approaches have remained the same. Our approach to future learning spaces integrates pedagogy, technology and space as inseparable elements in the design of learning environments that facilitate student learning and growth."

As part of the LINKS initiative, LINKS I-CORE has recently inaugurated a state-of-the-art facility at the University called "Future Learning Spaces" (FLSs). The FLSs are fitted with modern technologies and mobile furniture that enables students to interact in small and large groups, while working seamlessly between on and offline spaces. EdTech researchers, Prof. Dani Ben-Zvi and Dr. Yotam Hod of the Faculty of Education, are using this model to study the way students engage in the complex thinking and meaningful learning necessary for the 21st century. In addition, the FLSs serve as a laboratory for teachers – fostering changes that have ripple effects in the schools and communities where they teach.

"While we see our research benefiting all students," notes Prof. Tamar Weiss, a leading Israeli researcher of virtual reality technology and member of the LINKS board, "we are allocating resources to community outreach that will directly impact youth in both periphery communities and in different populations, from those in underserved settings to individuals with learning disabilities." Prof. Weiss heads the Laboratory for Innovations in Rehabilitation Technology at the University of Haifa.


Mobile classroom infrastructure allows students to seamlessly move between online and virtual spaces, promoting collaborative learning, and breaking traditional classroom norms.



A partnership between the University of Haifa and Jewish educational NGO, World ORT, is underway to scale up 200 Future Learning Spaces in schools across northern Israel and the Negev as part of ORT's Science Journey program.





A portrait of Mooly Eden, an older man with glasses, wearing a black beret with a small logo and a dark jacket. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting.

# FROM THE WORLD OF HIGH-TECH — TO — HIGHER EDUCATION

INTERVIEW

## : MOOLY EDEN

*Former Intel Israel President Shmuel (Mooly) Eden joins the University of Haifa as the new Chairman of the Executive Committee. Eden is one of the most prominent figures in the Israeli technology sector in recent decades. After a remarkable 33-year career in high-tech, he has set his sights on advancing higher education in Israel.*

***What motivated you to join the University of Haifa after a long career in high-tech?***

**M.E.** - When I think about the immense challenges facing our nation in the coming years – safeguarding our security through technology, maintaining economic competitiveness abroad and at home, closing socio-economic gaps and improving tolerance in Israeli society – I see education as the only factor that addresses all of these issues, and as the catalyst for strengthening the State of Israel. After returning from the US (where I spent 9 years in Silicon Valley), I became actively involved in a national education campaign to boost the number of high-school students graduating with five units of math, which had deteriorated substantially in previous years. So, when I was first approached by the President of the University, Prof. Ron Robin and the Chairman of the Executive Committee Ami Ayalon, it seemed to me a natural progression to join the University.

After spending time with Prof. Robin and the University Rector Prof. Gustavo Mesch, I sensed that we would make a good team. Higher education in general, and the University of Haifa in particular, will be facing significant challenges in the coming years, and I hope to contribute to its progress and success.

***What are your views on the role of education and how can we improve it for future generations?***

**M.E.** - Education is the future of our nation. Without education, Israel as a nation will not be able to safeguard its economic competitiveness and security. Moreover, social gaps and income inequality will continue to grow. So first, we need to internalize that education is a national priority – and priority #1. Next, we need to adopt what we do in the high-tech industry, set clear goals, and come up with an action plan that is both achievable and measurable.



“ ”

Advances in computing power, big data, artificial intelligence and machine learning are going to lead to a ‘tsunami’ of even more dramatic changes. Therefore, it is up to today’s leaders, from managers and executives to professors and chairpersons, to provide the optimal environment and knowledge while creating the necessary chaos that will drive innovation.

***But, massive action plans of the sort you are proposing can be risky.***

**M.E.** - The biggest risk in the high-tech industry, and I believe in all other sectors including academia, is not taking risks because of fear of failure. We must understand that the world is changing exponentially and this means that we need to be able to change exponentially as well. Simply continuing to do what we did yesterday is no longer good enough. The new environment leaves us no other choice but to take necessary risks for innovation and create tolerance for failure while continually striving to deliver better outcomes.

***What are the challenges facing the University and higher education today?***

**M.E.** - While I leave the task of developing academic curricula up to the experts, what I can say is that much of the materials we teach students today may not be relevant 20 years from now. Universities are facing a formidable task. They must prepare students for jobs that don’t exist yet, to solve problems that haven’t been defined yet, using technologies that haven’t been invented yet! How will higher education accomplish such a seemingly impossible feat? The answer is not as simple as it sounds. Universities will need to focus on cultivating a generation of lifelong learners. As futurist and philosopher Alvin Toffler once put it, “The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.”



***You are considered one of leaders of the mobile PC revolution and “Forbes” magazine named you among the world’s top ten most brilliant minds in technology and innovation. What are the key drivers of change and innovation?***

**M.E.** - Innovation thrives on chaos; it is not driven by set processes and procedures. Today, the speed of innovation and the pace of change and growth is so fast that in every aspect we must react swiftly. Advances in computing power, big data, artificial intelligence and machine learning are going to lead to a ‘tsunami’ of even more dramatic changes. Therefore, it is up to today’s leaders, from managers and executives to professors and chairpersons, to provide the optimal environment and knowledge while creating the necessary chaos that will drive innovation. Moreover, as these technologies begin to affect every aspect of our lives, from the way we live to the way we think, I imagine that it will also lead to changes in academic research in the humanities and social sciences. The University of Haifa is strongly positioned to lead this paradigm shift.

## The University of Haifa Bids Farewell to Adm. (Ret.) Ami Ayalon, longtime Chairman of the Executive Committee



Admiral (Ret.) Ami Ayalon recently completed his second three-year term at the University of Haifa as Chairman of the Executive Committee. “Ami’s visionary contributions to the University of Haifa will be felt for generations to come,” notes Prof. Ron Robin. “Since joining the University in 2011, he worked tirelessly to develop and promote the campus as a model of coexistence and inclusion,” adds Prof. Robin, “advocating that social and cultural diversity enhances research excellence and the academic experience. In addition, he was instrumental in advancing fields of marine

science research and national security, with a particular emphasis on developing a national maritime strategy.”

Ami Ayalon is a former head of the Israeli Secret Service Agency, decorated commander of the Israeli Navy, government minister and member of Knesset. He is currently serving as the Head of the Center for Democracy and National Security at the Israel Democracy Institute and Chairman of Akim, Israel’s National Association for the Rehabilitation of the Intellectually Disabled.



# Ambassadors.online

**Empowering students to become digital advocates for Israel**

**The University of Haifa is stepping up its academic efforts to foster civic participation by equipping students with the knowledge and skills to respond to harmful and deliberately misleading information about Israel being spread by groups and organizations in cyberspace.**

**A**mbassadors Online is Israel's only accredited academic program in the field of Israel advocacy. Now in its sixth year, the program draws Israeli students from diverse national, religious and ethnic backgrounds.

"We signed up for *Ambassadors Online* to gain a more nuanced perspective on the conflict and promote the Israeli voice in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which often gets the short end of the stick in global media coverage and online forums" explained Mariana Herrera and Eli Hohozia. The two students could not be more different. Mariana is a doctoral student in education and a new immigrant from Chile, and Eli is a Haifa native majoring in political science and philosophy. Still, they share a common goal – to gain a better understanding of the complexity of the conflict and learn how to share their perspectives about Israel through words, ideas and images.



"Many Israelis don't know how to respond when confronted with anti-Israel coverage and commentary," explains Prof. Eli Avraham, who heads the Elizabeth and Tony Comper Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism and Racism, and serves as the Director of the Ambassadors Online Program. "In recent years, anti-Israel campaigns led primarily by the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement have employed popular social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and blogging to attack Israel. In many ways, the latest round in the Israeli conflict is being waged not only on the ground, but also in cyberspace."

Prof. Eli Avraham (front row fifth from left) and Adi Levy (sixth from left) with Ambassadors Online's sixth cohort.



““““

The BDS movement seeks to hinder academic exchange and inquiry, which should be anathema to any institution of higher learning. Confronting and challenging these trends requires new, innovative approaches. I therefore want to congratulate the University of Haifa on the sixth year of its Ambassadors Online program and wish this dynamic group of students the best of luck in their worthy endeavor.

-Prof. Mark Yudof



Recipients of the “Ambassadors Online Award for Israel Advocacy” for 2016, with dignitaries from the Druze community including Deputy Minister for Regional Cooperation, MK Ayoob Kara (center bottom row), and Dr. Reda Mansour, formerly Israeli Ambassador to Brazil (center top row).

“We are proud that year after year program participants fully reflect the diversity of our student body and Israeli society,” notes Adi Levy, a PhD student in International Relations who manages the Ambassadors Online program. “This year the program had a record number of applicants, among them Jews, Druze, new immigrants and Muslims,” adds Levy.

“As an Israeli Arab I felt obliged to sound this other voice – a voice that is generally erased from the conversation – and to present Israel in a more positive light,” explains Rayan Saleh, an undergraduate student of law and communications.

Each year Ambassadors Online honors individuals for their outstanding work in Israel advocacy. In January, the program awarded five influential members of the Druze community with the “Ambassadors Online Israel Advocacy Award.” Recipients included members of the Israeli Druze Alliance, an organization that is promoting Israel through the eyes of non-Jewish citizens.

“*Ambassadors Online* takes in highly articulate students who are fluent in English, team players and willing to dedicate their time and energies to respond to misinformation and improve Israel’s global image online,” adds Prof. Avraham. “As part of the curriculum they study the historical roots of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict from a number of perspectives.

The Comper Center and Ambassadors Online recently published a ‘handbook’ designed for students and academics who are traveling abroad, providing fact-based answers to common allegations voiced against Israel in the international arena. The advocacy handbook was distributed to universities in Israel, and shared with partner organizations in England, Spain, Germany and France.

*Ambassadors Online* works closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other government agencies. The program is championed by friends of the University including Prof. Mark Yudof, former President of the University of California, Berkeley and a member of the University of Haifa’s Board of Governors, and Honorary Doctorate recipients Irwin Cotler, international human rights activist, celebrated filmmaker Robert Lantos, and Prof. Charles Milgrom, a prominent physician and supporter of research at the University of Haifa.

For information about how you can support *Ambassadors Online*, please contact the Office of the Vice President for External Affairs and Resource Development.

 [facebook.com/shagririmhaifa](https://facebook.com/shagririmhaifa)

# ISEF and the University of Haifa:

## Celebrating 40 Years of Partnership

**Our missions are intrinsically linked:** to bridge social gaps in Israeli society by developing Israel's young people through academic excellence

**T**his year marks the 40th anniversary of the ISEF Foundation, whose mission is to narrow socio-economic gaps in Israeli society through higher education. ISEF was the first scholarship foundation in Israel to develop an academic leadership program for gifted Israeli students from outlying communities.

In 1977 philanthropists Edmond J. (z"l) and Lily Safra joined Nina Weiner in founding ISEF. Together they dreamed of eradicating poverty in Israel through higher education. They found a partner in the University of Haifa, at the time Israel's youngest university, with a mission to cultivate academic excellence in research and education in a culturally diverse environment, while strengthening Israel's northern peripheral communities.

Working in partnership with the University, ISEF established a

unique scholarship program promoting academic leadership and social responsibility. "We needed to find a creative solution that could leverage scholarship funding," explains Gabriel Malka, the current Director of the Israel School of Tourism at the University of Haifa who served as the first Director of ISEF in Israel. "It resulted in a scholarship program developing leadership and civic involvement for promising students from disadvantaged backgrounds." Activities ranged from mentoring at-risk youth to help them finish high school, to projects teaching inmates in prison how to read and write. "These important skills helped propel many ISEF graduates to become agents of social change in Israeli society," added Malka.

This social vision is part of a broad agenda pursued by President Ron Robin to integrate student activi-

ties with community outreach and leadership programs.

Since its inception, ISEF has granted more than 1,000 scholarships to University of Haifa students. According to Tomer Samarkandi, Executive Director of ISEF Israel, the Foundation has always enjoyed a special relationship with the University. "Our missions are intrinsically linked: to bridge social gaps in Israeli society by developing Israel's human capital through academic excellence," he explains. "The Office of the Dean of Students is very supportive of our scholars and ISEF projects on campus. Together we are committed to making higher education widely accessible to talented students and creating a more pluralistic society in Israel."

### ABOUT THE ISEF FOUNDATION

Initially founded to narrow economic gaps through higher education for gifted Sephardic Jews, ISEF now supports all cultural and ethnic groups, including new immigrants from Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union, and the Druze population. Today, more than four decades later, ISEF boasts an alumni community with over 11,000 leaders in key positions, from public figures and CEOs to surgeons, authors, filmmakers, cancer researchers, architects, professors, scientists, judges, and entrepreneurs.

More information on the ISEF Foundation can be found at: [www.isef.org](http://www.isef.org)



(l-r) Nina Weiner with Gabriel Malka and Tomer Samarkandi



# Giving Back



During my first year in the Nesher project, I had an opportunity to mentor two amazing 10th grade students. We made great strides together, and I watched them flourish academically and socially. They are now in 12th grade and have remained actively involved in the project. This has filled me with immense pride.

- Tania, BA student of law and psychology, University of Haifa

The University is extremely proud of its ISEF alumni and their accomplishments. ISEF alumnus, Prof. Eli Avraham, is currently head of the University of Haifa's Elizabeth and Tony Comper Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism and Racism and Director of the Ambassadors Online Program. He also served as Chairman of the ISEF Executive Committee for the past three years. "Many of our graduates who came from challenging socio-economic backgrounds now hold senior positions in Israel's private and public sectors," notes Prof. Avraham. "It is heartwarming to hear that our graduates credit the Foundation with helping them realize their potential, advance their careers, and improve the quality of their communities."

ISEF's Bridge to College Program, led by ISEF scholars, is a University tradition. Currently run at the Nesher Community Center, the intervention program is geared to assist at-risk high school teens. As part of the program, ISEF scholars, who come from similar socioeconomic backgrounds, tutor, offer moral support, and inspire participants to take charge of their future by encouraging them to earn a full high school diploma, so they may

qualify for higher education. At a recent workshop held in January, Nesher's Mayor Avi Binamo, an ISEF graduate and University alumnus, shared his ISEF experience with students at the Center. The project in Nesher doubled in size and impact this year, thanks to the generosity and visionary leadership of ISEF supporters and friends Luna and Selim Benardete.



ISEF Haifa scholars with high school students in the Bridge to College Program at the Nesher Community Center.

ISEF fellow Maayan Krispil, a third-year doctoral student at the Sagol Department of Neurobiology, is very grateful to ISEF for the opportunity to 'give back' - both in and

outside the laboratory. Under the direction of Prof. Gal Richter-Levin, Maayan is investigating mechanisms of stress-induced metaplasticity. Her research, conducted in collaboration with scientists from Northwestern University, may lead to the prevention and novel treatments of stress-related affective disorders. In addition, Maayan is establishing a new social initiative called The Mentoring Project, a program that aims to build long-term mentoring relationships between ISEF scholars and faculty members. "As an ISEF scholar I have a chance to contribute to the field of neurobiology, as well as an opportunity to take part in something that will benefit others for years to come," relates Maayan.

## ISEF FOUNDERS

Nina Weiner, ISEF President and Co-Founder, known fondly as a godmother to thousands of students, was awarded the University of Haifa's prestigious 2013 Carmel Award of Merit for her tireless work to make higher education accessible to thousands of deserving Israelis. She has also given generously to the University's pioneering Ambassadors Online Program. (more details on pages 12-13)

Lily Safra and her late husband Edmond J. Safra (z"l) are long-standing supporters of the University of Haifa and have given generously to research in the biological sciences. They helped establish the internationally renowned Edmond J. Safra Brain Research Center for the Study of Learning Disabilities at the University. In 2009, Lily Safra received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Haifa for her philanthropic activity fostering educational, health, cultural and welfare institutions in Israel and abroad.



Nina Weiner (3rd from left) and Lily Safra (6th from left) at the 2007 ISEF Gala at the Mandarin Oriental honoring Yvonne and Barry (z"l) Cohen, and featuring a performance by Marvin Hamlisch (z"l). Around them are ISEF International Fellows who have since embarked on important careers at prestigious Israeli universities and in Israeli courts. They include Dr. Karin Carmit Yefet (7th from left), today an Assistant Professor at the University of Haifa's Faculty of Law.



Expedition of *Breaking the Ice* on the way to the summit of Europe's highest mountain.

# Breaking the Ice:

## A journey of self-discovery and empowerment for Jewish and Arab students

**Sometimes you have to go very far to find out how similar we are.**

This summer, in a setting far removed from local political tensions, 12 Jewish and Arab students from the University of Haifa will set out together to climb the Swiss Alps. After reaching the Swiss summit, what they will have achieved will extend far beyond their physical endurance.

“Our students share with us that the experience changed their stereotypes about race, nationality and religion,” explains Ulfat Haider, Head of the *Breaking the Ice* coexistence program. Before heading out for the trek, students take part in rigorous alpine training and team-building workshops. “To reach the summit, climbers need to rely on everyone in the group. Essentially, it’s the teamwork that ‘breaks the ice,’ establishes trust and creates lasting bonds of friendship.”

The unique program is sponsored by the Office of the Dean of Students and Student Union of the University, in collaboration with the Swiss association Coexistences and Beit Hagefen Arab-Jewish Center in Haifa. *Breaking the Ice* enlists physical and mental strengths to facilitate open-

ness and acceptance of others, expands interpersonal relationships, and generates a respectful dialogue.

After returning from the summer climb, students visit Jewish and Arab schools to discuss their experience and organize coexistence programs. “Each year our students come up with new ideas on how to bridge between their two communities,” adds Haider. “Following last year’s expedition, for example, the students organized an olive harvest festival, an event that brought together family members and friends. It was a great success.”

Described by participants as a ‘deeply intense experience,’ many have related that they emerged from the program with a different mindset than they had going in. “This project actually changed my political opinion,” acknowledges Tomer Ketter, an Israeli postgraduate student of geophysics. “I think it opens an entire other world to me.”

*Breaking the Ice* was initiated by Doron Erel, the first Israeli to climb Mount McKinley and Mount Everest, and Ulfat Haider, an Arab-Israeli alumnus of the University of Haifa and certified Outward Bound instructor, currently serving as a Program Director at Beit-Hagefen.

The upcoming climb in August will mark the program’s 8th expedition.

For information about how you can support *Breaking the Ice*, please contact the Office of the Vice President for External Affairs and Resource Development.



# HIGHEST HONORS

The University of Haifa celebrates the academic successes of faculty and students for outstanding achievements in their respective fields.



**Prof. (Emeritus)  
Avraham B. Yehoshua**  
2016 Emet Prize Laureate

Celebrated Israeli author **AVRAHAM B. YEHOSHUA** is a professor of literature at the Department of Hebrew and Comparative Literature. He received the 2016 Emet Prize for Hebrew Literature and Poetry in recognition of “...his stories, plays and essays, which deal with Jewish existential meaning throughout the generations, and which serve as a unique, lucid and complex voice for all segments of Israeli society.”

A. B. Yehoshua has received numerous prestigious Israeli and international awards, including the 1995 Israel Prize for Literature, and has been conferred with honorary doctorates from universities in Israel and worldwide. His books have been translated into scores of languages and have been adapted for film, stage and opera. “A great part of my most famous works were written here at the University,” notes Yehoshua, who also served as the University of Haifa’s first Dean of Students.

**PROF. RONIT MATALON**, who heads the MA Creative Writing Program at the Department of Hebrew and Comparative Literature, is one of Israel’s foremost authors. She was awarded the 2016 Emet Prize for Hebrew Literature and Poetry in recognition of “...her literary achievements and for her unique and innovative contribution to the field of Hebrew writing and reading over the last decades.”

Prof. Matalon, an important *Mizrachi* feminist voice in contemporary Hebrew literature, has published numerous novels and several short stories. She has earned national and international recognition for her work and was a Hebrew University of Jerusalem honorary doctorate recipient in 2010.



**Prof. Ronit Matalon**  
2016 Emet Prize Laureate



**Liran Markin**  
Bronze Medalist  
2016 International  
Olympiad in Informatics

**LIRAN MARKIN** is a Computer Science student enrolled in the University of Haifa’s prestigious computer science program for outstanding high school students named *Etgar* (Hebrew for ‘challenge’). Last summer, he won a bronze medal in the 2016 International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI) held in Russia. This is the second medal Liran has brought home from the Olympiad, after earning the first award at the 2015 competition.

IOI is an annual international computer programming competition for secondary school students. The University of Haifa applauds Liran for his impressive achievements and wishes him continued success in his future endeavors.



# Dr. Sharon Nazarian

## A Lifetime of Commitment to Israel



The Younes and Soraya Nazarian Library is a fitting legacy of the family's vision to provide students and researchers with intellectual resources they need to excel.



The 'Legacy' marble statue, designed and created by Soraya Sarah Nazarian.

**D**r. Sharon Nazarian recalls her first visit to the University of Haifa very clearly. “I came to the University as part of a family trip to Haifa and I fell in love with the campus. I knew then that I wanted to return as a student. I was fascinated by the social dynamic on campus and the diverse makeup of the student body. As an international student living in the dormitories, I was very immersed in campus life. It was a very important experience for me and left a strong impression.”

“As a gutsy American student majoring in journalism and political science, I sought out connections with fellow Arab students on campus. I saw how invested they were in the University, despite political tensions outside the campus. The University made great efforts to

ensure a pluralistic and tolerant environment. I realized that a win-win situation was possible, and the University could offer a successful model of coexistence throughout Israel.”

### **The University's Compelling Narrative**

Today, Dr. Nazarian serves as adjunct professor at UCLA's Department of Political Science and is the Board Vice Chair of the American Society of the University of Haifa. “I believe that education is the most important catalyst for societal change and the vehicle to narrow Israel's social and economic gaps.” She is confident that the University of Haifa's narrative can be a very compelling and powerful one for donors in the United States. “American Jewish millennials are interested in healing the world and in pursuing social justice. The University of Haifa engages Israel's minorities through its commitment to academic excellence

and social and leadership programs that promote coexistence.”

### **Planting Seeds**

Dr. Nazarian has worked tirelessly to bring this message to a wider audience. “Our biggest challenge on the West Coast is raising the University's profile. There is a real hunger for American Jews to connect to Israel and have an impact – but not through traditional channels. The University of Haifa is strongly positioned to engage the younger generation. We have to tell our story so that more people will hear. We need to bring them to the campus and let them see for themselves what coexistence looks like.”

### **The “Piazza” of the University**

The Younes and Soraya Nazarian Library is a shining example of the University's commitment to academic excellence for a pluralistic society. Generously supported by the Younes and Soraya



Nazarian Family Foundation, this university treasure is the largest academic library in Israel. “We invested in the library because it impacts every student in the university. It is the place where students come together to read, study and exchange ideas. It is the crown jewel of our Foundation and we are most proud of it,” noted Dr. Nazarian.



“My parents have been my role models,” explains Dr. Nazarian. “They taught us to dream big, to keep looking forward and to give back to the community.” As President of the Y & S Nazarian Family Foundation, she devotes her time, talents and energies to a range of educational and artistic ini-

tiatives and has been honored by numerous Jewish and humanitarian organizations for her community leadership. Dr. Nazarian is proudly continuing her family’s legacy to further the Foundation’s mission: “May your seeds be plentiful and your hands open, ready to give.”



Dr. Nazarian is the President of the Y&S Nazarian Family Foundation and an adjunct professor at the University of California Los Angeles in the Department of Political Science. She is also the founder of the Younes & Soraya Nazarian Center for Israel Studies at UCLA and serves as Chair of its Advisory Board.

## HAIFA ALUMNI



The Israeli Friends of the University of Haifa invites you to visit its newly launched Hebrew website for University of Haifa alumni, featuring projects, events, alumni stories and special offers.

**[alumni.haifa.ac.il](http://alumni.haifa.ac.il)**

Tel +972 4 824 3314

[facebook.com/ifriends.haifa](https://facebook.com/ifriends.haifa)



Haifa's MUN student delegation at the 2016 Hamburg International Model UN Conference.

# Friends Associations

## Promote Real World Engagement

Our international friends associations have been instrumental in connecting students with diverse groups of stakeholders through public speaking engagements, round table discussions, and networking opportunities with University supporters and alumni.

"We enjoyed a very warm welcome from University supporters," noted participants. "They seem strongly connected to the University's core values and mission, and hold their partnership with the University in very high regard." The University of Haifa's MUN Society is generously sponsored by the German Friends.

### Public Speaking Engagements

Lian Najami, a recent political science graduate and recipient of the prestigious Lantos-Humanity in Action Congressional Fellowship, spoke on the topic of Israel and democracy at an event held by the American Society of the University of Haifa (ASUH) in Boston last November. Lian, an Arab-Israeli student and former participant of the Jewish-Arab Community Leadership Program, is also serving as a spokesperson for Israel on US campuses.

### Networking Opportunities with University Supporters

At the beginning of the fall semester, students welcomed eight founders of the Chicago Arab Student Scholarship Fund to the Mt. Carmel campus. Scholarship recipients shared personal and academic experiences at round table discussions, and expressed their appreciation. The visit was arranged in cooperation with ASUH.

### Round Table Discussions

While attending the HumMUN International Model UN Conference in Hamburg in November, the University of Haifa's MUN student delegation participated in a round table event with members of the general assembly hosted by the German Friends.

Graduate students in the Culture and Film Studies program had the privilege of attending a master class taught by distinguished film producer Robert Lantos, a University of Haifa Honorary Doctorate recipient. The Canadian Friends coordinated his Haifa visit.

### OCTOBER

#### Latin America

On a recent tour of Uruguay and Argentina, Rector Gustavo Mesch met with academic leaders, senior government officials, including Argentinian Minister of Education Esteban Bullrich, and local Jewish leaders to develop opportunities for new academic cooperation. Bullrich, expressed great interest in the work being done at the University in the field of education. The visit was coordinated by the Argentinian Friends.

#### Boston

Representatives of the Clinics for Law and Social Change discussed the work of law students in supporting the rights of diverse communities in northern Israel at the Suffolk University Law School in Boston. The event was organized by ASUH.

### DECEMBER

#### London

Prof. Sammy Smooha of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology gave a keynote speech at an exclusive event held by the British Friends in association with leading UK community organizations, the UK Task Force and New Israel Fund. Prof. Smooha, an Israel Prize laureate, is best known for his work on comparative ethnic relations exploring the internal divisions in Israeli society.

#### Haifa

Members of the University of Haifa Israeli Alumni Association recently participated in the first alumni networking session series, generously supported by the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation. Innovation and creativity speaker Dr. Gavin Suss was the keynote speaker at the event, hosted by the Israeli Friends.

### FEBRUARY

#### Los Angeles

Vice Rector and former Dean of the Faculty of Law, Prof. Gad Barzilai, met with University supporters to discuss the topic "Palestinian-Arabs and Jews in Israeli Law and Society." The event was graciously sponsored by longstanding University of Haifa benefactors Herta and Paul Amir, and organized by UCLA Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for Israel Studies and ASUH.

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## FRIENDS ASSOCIATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA

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# DISCOVER THE SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

## ARTS



## A vibrant cultural center atop Mount Carmel

**In our hallways filled with music, art and theater, students, staff and faculty all speak the same language – the language of art**

The School of the Arts offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in visual arts, theater and music. Studies explore and extend the natural interconnections found within these departments while recognizing the arts as a unifying social force. Home to a diverse student population and innovative programming, the School is inspiring a new generation of Israeli artists.

**Concerts, exhibitions, plays and conferences open to the public**



### HAIFA FINE ARTS

- › BFA Exhibitions
- › MFA Exhibitions
- › Rotating Faculty Collections



### HAIFA MUSIC

- › Over 40 concerts
- › ContComp Music Festival
- › Arab Jewish Orchestra



### HAIFA THEATER

- › Large-scale Theater Productions
- › Annual Theater Conference



### HAIFA OUTREACH IN MUSIC & THEATER

Students perform and lead workshops for special needs children, youth, adults and the elderly.

The School of the Arts, housed in the modern Dr. Hecht Arts Center, was built with the generosity of the Hecht Foundation and Herta and Paul Amir. More information about how you can support projects and innovative programs at the School of the Arts can be provided by the Vice President for External Affairs and Resource Development.