



אוניברסיטת חיפה  
University of Haifa  
جامعة حيفا

FALL 2019

# HEIGHTS

UNIVERSITY  
OF HAIFA MAGAZINE



**OH YES THEY  
CAN!**

**WOMEN SHINE AT UOFH**

**2** WELCOMING THE  
NEW ACADEMIC YEAR

**4** MESSAGE FROM OUR  
BOG CHAIRMAN

**6** INTRODUCING THE NEW  
DATA SCIENCE SCHOOL

Photo: Roy Hermoni

2019/20

## NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Our multiversity vision supports a collaborative and interdisciplinary research culture and is committed to the growth of new fields to tackle critical issues facing humanity in the 21st century.

MA  
in  
Educational  
Psychology



BSc  
in  
Data  
Sciences



MA  
in  
Legal Studies  
for Non-Lawyers

BSc  
in  
Digital  
Humanities



MSc  
in  
Marine  
Technology



BA  
in  
Cognitive  
Sciences



### HEIGHTS MAGAZINE

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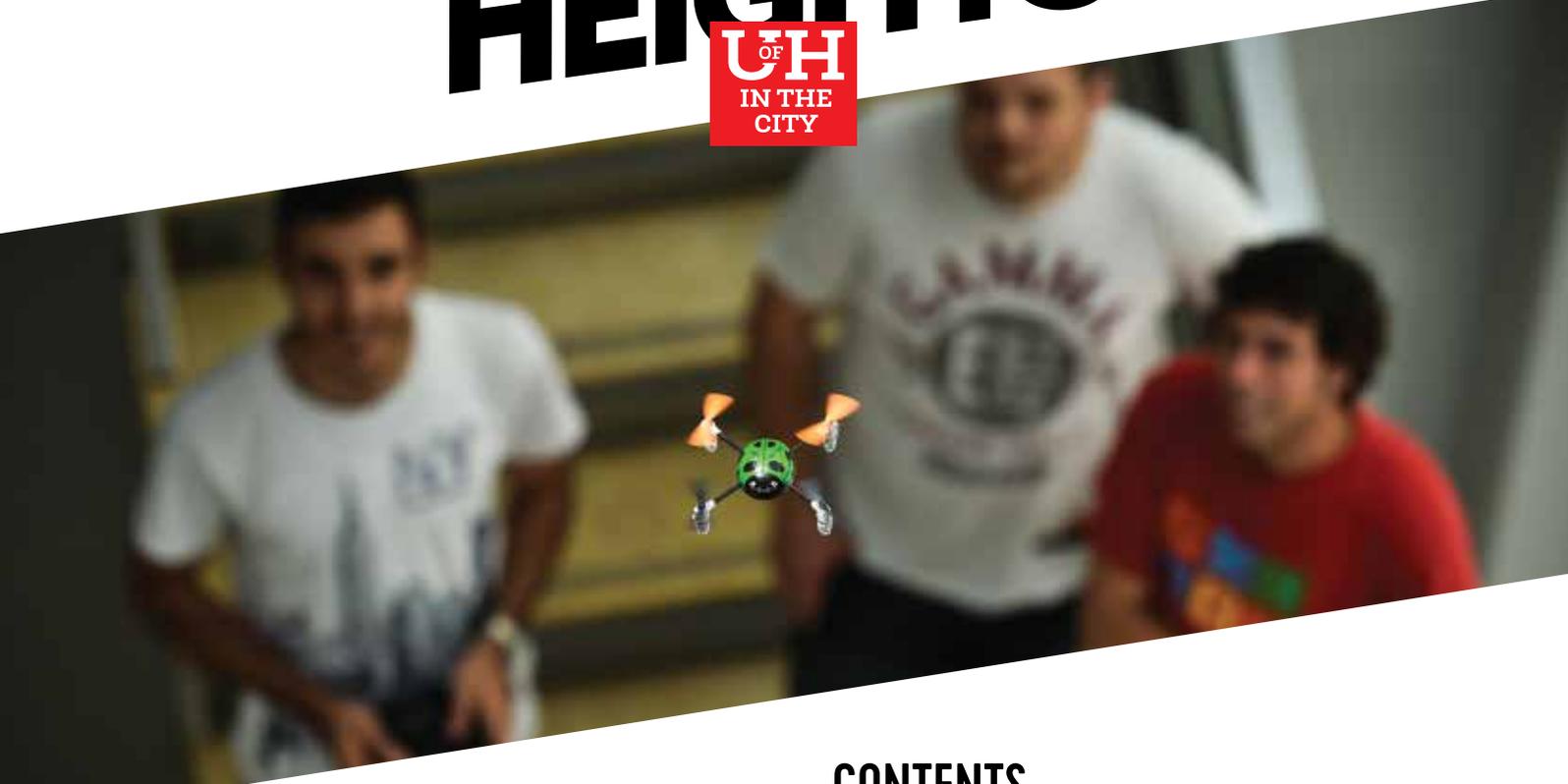
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# SAVE THE DATE

48<sup>th</sup>  
חבר הנאמנים  
Board of Governors  
مجلس المحافظين

March 31 - April 1, 2020

# HEIGHTS



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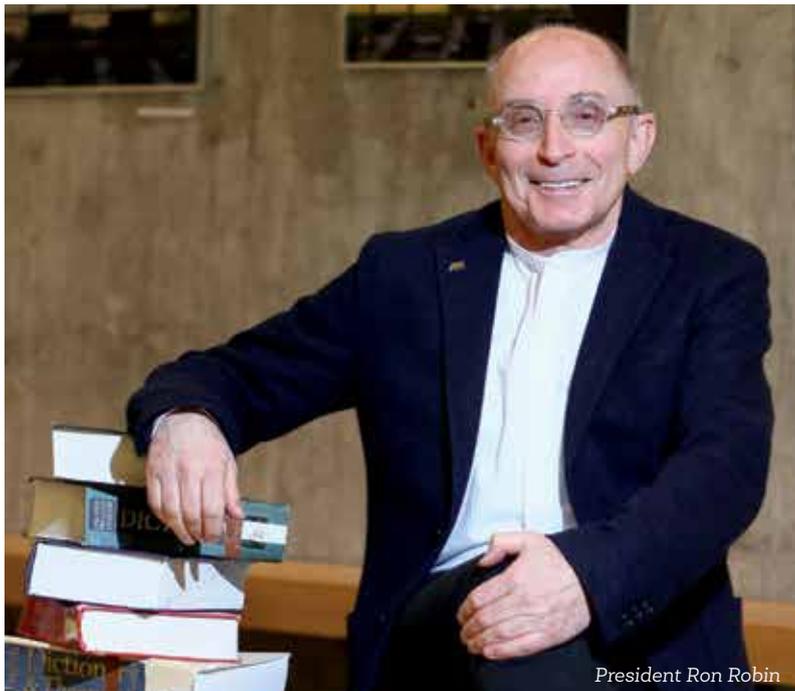
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# TO NEW BEGINNINGS: UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA 'IN' AND 'OF' THE CITY

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Welcome to a new academic year and an exciting new era for the University of Haifa. Thanks to the generosity of our friends and partners around the world, our vision is becoming a reality. We are indeed transforming into an urban university, both 'in' and 'of' the city.



President Ron Robin



Lorry I. Lokey City Campus located in Haifa's bustling downtown district.

The renovation of the facilities in the Lorry I. Lokey City Campus in the city's vibrant port area is nearing completion. The campus buildings will feature modern classrooms for our students and faculty and state-of-the-art laboratories to ensure high standards of research. The campus will attract thousands of students who will be an integral part of the unique climate of downtown Haifa. With its focus on data sciences and digital technologies, the City Campus will utilize a problem-based research approach to promote synergies across academic fields and enable collaboration with diverse partners in industry and the medical community. As we gain expertise in this dynamic field, we are setting in motion the integration of new and specialized engineering areas that will

define tomorrow's professional, social and economic worlds.

We believe that this inspirational setting for research, teaching and learning will better prepare the next generation to solve emerging global challenges and help them integrate into the rapidly changing labor market.

As we usher in the new academic year, we are celebrating a number of milestones. The Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences opened the doors of its new home on the Mt. Carmel campus. The Faculty boasts world-class departments in Social Work, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Nursing and Community Mental Health. Recently, the American Council on Education for Public Health fully accredited the Faculty's International MA in Public Health Program, making it one of five such programs outside of the US to



Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences Building.

receive this prestigious stamp of approval. In addition, the construction of the Helmsley Health Discovery Tower is progressing on schedule. Once fully completed, the Tower will pool the talented resources from Haifa's renowned institutes - University of Haifa, Rambam and the Technion - to improve health care, and lead to advances in patient care in Israel and around the world.

We are very proud that this year, our world academic ranking is at an all-time high with significant growth in research publications, research grants from competitive funds, and doctoral students. Furthermore, our share of the Council of Higher Education research model continues to rise. In addition, this academic year marks a continued increase in student enrollment.

We are delighted to welcome Mr. Bradley Bloom as our new Chairman of the Board of Governors, and Adv. Dov Weissglas as the new Chairman of the Executive Committee. Both are seasoned experts in navigating change and strategic planning at the national and international levels.

We are especially thankful to our dedicated friends and members of the Board of Governors and Executive Committee - for their trust in our vision and for their generous support. I look forward to the future with hope and a great deal of enthusiasm.

Sincerely,

**Prof. Ron Robin**  
President



Adv. Dov Weissglas

**NEW APPOINTMENTS**

**Adv. Dov Weissglas unanimously elected Chairman of the Executive Committee**



I am delighted to join the University of Haifa family, take an active role in its leadership and strengthen its position as an outstanding research university and institute of major social importance.

- Dov Weissglas

**The University of Haifa's Executive Committee voted unanimously to elect Adv. Dov Weissglas as the new Chairman of the Executive Committee. Mr. Weissglas is counted among Israel's most prominent attorneys. He served as Director-General of the Prime Minister's Office under Ariel Sharon and in a number of senior positions in the public sector.**

"I am delighted to join the University of Haifa family, take an active role in its leadership and strengthen its position as an outstanding research university and institute of major social importance," said Weissglas.

As Ariel Sharon's Chief of Staff, Weissglas was the point man in negotiations with the White House and one of the key architects of the Israeli disengagement from Gaza in 2005. He remained in this role under Prime Minister Ehud Olmert until June 2006, when Weissglas was appointed Chairman of the Board of Directors of Bezeq.

President Ron Robin congratulated him on the new appointment. "I am delighted and proud to have Dov Weissglas - a man of action and great vision involved in critical political decisions and in mediating Israel's diplomatic relations with its friends and neighbors - join the leadership of this university as we advance our multiversity mission and drive growth in the northern region."

Over the course of his legal career, Weissglas represented numerous Israeli public figures including Yitzhak Rabin, Ehud Olmert, Yisrael Meir Lau, and Avigdor Lieberman. Weissglas retired in 2015, and currently serves as a consultant on a wide range of issues pertaining to regulation and governance. He is married to Dr. Louise Weissglas, PhD. They have three daughters and ten grandchildren.





## Meet Our New Chairman Mr. Bradley M. Bloom



I believe that the University of Haifa – together with governmental, industrial, academic and community partners – can play a role in creating the next chapter of prosperity for Haifa, the North and its diverse population.

- Mr. Bradley M. Bloom,  
Chairman of the  
University of Haifa's  
Board of Governors

**INTERVIEW** Mr. Bradley M. Bloom is the co-founder and former Managing Director of Berkshire Partners LLC, a private equity firm. He is a highly respected leader in the Boston Jewish community, having served as Chairman of Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP), and co-founder of the Boston-Haifa Connection. In addition, Mr. Bloom is active in strategic and financial oversight committees at Harvard University and is the former President of the Board of Trustees of Milton Academy.

### *What motivated you to join the University of Haifa's Board of Governors as Chairman?*

My connection with Israel began in the summer of 1970, when I came to Israel for the first time as a teenager. I worked as a volunteer on Kibbutz Beit Oren, located on the Carmel Mountain range, and explored the northern region extensively, including Haifa. A few years later, I flew to Israel to volunteer during the Yom Kippur War. After staying in Israel for six months, I returned to complete my studies at Harvard and began my business career in an area that came to be known as the private equity industry.

When large numbers of Jews began leaving the former Soviet Union in the later 1980's, the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston (CJP) participated in an international campaign to help resettle the immigrants in Israel. Rather than just send financial support, CJP decided to allocate a portion of the funds to develop a partnership of equals with like-minded friends from a similar city in Israel. The idea was to work together to stimulate economic growth in the region and thereby create employment opportunities for the new immigrants. We chose to partner with Haifa – a decision that led to the establishment of the Boston-Haifa Connection in 1989, of which I was fortunate to be one of four co-founders.

Boston-Haifa recently celebrated its 30th anniversary and over the years has supported a wide range of social, educational and economic development projects. More importantly, these activities created a number of personal and institutional relationships that have grown through the years and continue to evolve and flourish.

Although I had never been directly involved with University of Haifa, I was very aware of its reputation. While much has been accomplished at the University within its short history, like any other institution in today's changing world, it must continue to evolve and address the strategic challenges of the future, both in Israel and more broadly.

I was encouraged to consider this new role by a number of friends in Haifa. I also felt that my business and philanthropic experience would be a good fit for some of the opportunities and challenges the University might face. Of course, on a personal level, the opportunity to work with old friends and new acquaintances in a place I enjoy visiting so much made the role very appealing.

### *As incoming Chairman, what are some of the issues and challenges you hope to address?*

The entire education sector in the US is being disrupted with challenges mirroring those facing academia in Europe, Asia and certainly Israel. It is increasingly difficult for liberal arts and social science programs to prosper in the US without the presence of vibrant science and engineering programs. Even Harvard has had to add stronger science and technology elements over the past two decades, despite MIT being literally "down the street" in Cambridge. Likewise, the addition of more science and engineering to the University of Haifa's core offerings has become an important priority.



Mr. Bradley Bloom,  
Haifa Mayor Dr. Einat  
Kalisch Rotem, and  
President Ron Robin.

Beyond the academic sphere, cultivating connections outside of Israel, building academic relationships and attracting board members and donors, are central for the University. As a first step, I am pleased to report that before I was elected to the Board, the University retained a well-regarded firm in New York to help us evaluate our long-term global fundraising strategy.

***What inspires you most about the University's multiversity strategy?***

To me, the multiversity vision represents an opening to the world in terms of perspective; a reconsideration of traditional academic boundaries in light of changes in the world, particularly in science and technology; and a framework to support faculty and students in cross-disciplinary activities. The University's expansion into the port area is a significant step. The Lorry I. Lokey City Campus is already home to many exciting new academic programs and more will be added in the coming years to provide the best opportunities for the future generations of students and faculty.

***How can universities impact a city's economy?***

As a native Bostonian, I directly experienced the decline of Boston's industrial base. Subsequently, I witnessed the urban renewal led by the engineering, technology, financial services and now life sciences industries, stimulated in part by Boston's many colleges and universities.

Although Massachusetts is similar to Israel in geographic size and population, there are approximately 80 colleges and universities in eastern Massachusetts alone. In the State of Massachusetts, education is essentially an "export industry," attracting students from the US and around the world, many of whom remain after graduating.

The resulting growth has created a virtual cycle that has led to the creation of new companies and industries, and produced the resources for our universities to expand. Over the past four decades, Boston and the surrounding areas have experienced a wonderful rebirth, evolving from a city with a shrinking industrial economic base into a vibrant metropolis. Today the city enjoys advanced industries, and access to capital that has benefited all segments of its population. While not perfect, the long-term transformation is visible and continues to build momentum.

This reflection brings me back to my personal history with Haifa and northern Israel. Although Haifa and the North have certainly prospered greatly in absolute terms since I first visited in 1970, their achievements have not matched those of Tel Aviv, Jerusalem or the South in relative terms. I believe that the University of Haifa – together with governmental, industrial, academic and community partners – can play a role in creating the next chapter of prosperity for Haifa, the North and their diverse population.

Having witnessed Boston's transformation over the decades, I look forward to participating in a small way at the University of Haifa in support of Haifa's urban renewal and future successes.



## ZEROING IN ON DATA SCIENCE

**BSC IN DATA SCIENCE  
OPENING FALL 2019**

**The 2019\20 academic year is ushering in a new era of research and education for UofH with the opening of a BSc Program in Data Science and a Research Center in Data Science, the main pillars of the new Data Science School under establishment at The Lorry I. Lokey City Campus.**

“Data analysis is moving from a highly specialized field to a daily business tool,” explains Prof. Mor Peleg, Head of the new BSc Program in Data Science and Research Center in Data Science. With a background in health informatics, digital health and clinical decision support systems, Prof. Peleg emphasizes the importance of harnessing the entire data science (DS) lifecycle. “The DS lifecycle combines information systems, statistics and computer science methods,” says Mor. “It starts with the identification of a need. We then collect and analyze data sets which are used to discover hidden patterns and generate user-friendly solutions, like apps, that help solve the complex issues facing our data-driven society.”

Precisely for this reason, the Data Science School will house under one roof the Departments of Computer Science, Information Systems and Statistics. The University of Haifa is the first in Israel to offer this integrative undergraduate data sciences curriculum, which leverages broad theoretical methods, tools and practical experience from each of these fields. “Our goal is to prepare the next generation of students for technologically advanced 21st century jobs. At the same time, we are building an ecosystem to support the emerging industries of cybersecurity, data management, cloud computing and artificial intelligence,” explains Peleg.

The University’s administration is investing in data science to accelerate the transformation of

UofH to the ‘Digital Era’. “Our strong data science orientation coupled with the close proximity to the city’s budding high-tech industry will inspire students and researchers to develop new methods and tools that can lead to important breakthroughs in technology, science, and medicine, and increase economic growth in northern Israel,” notes Rector Gustavo Mesch.

The establishment of the Research Center in Data Science aims to strengthen DS research across multiple disciplines within the University and with industry and community partners. “Currently, over 35 faculty members have joined the Center. Their research ranges from digital health and bioinformatics to underwater microscopy and big data analytics, with applications in autonomous cars, robots and drones,” adds Peleg. “We are also hosting cyber-related events, hackathons and recently the EU’s Researchers’ Night, in order to raise visibility and share our knowledge with the community.”

The University’s prestigious Edmond de Rothschild Foundation Institute for Interdisciplinary Applications of Computer Sciences recently announced its decision to relocate to The Lorry I. Lokey City Campus. “We continue to grow in ways that serve the needs of our students and the local Haifa community,” notes President Ron Robin. “The Lorry I. Lokey City Campus represents the academic pillar of Haifa’s urban renewal project and a cornerstone of its revitalized high-tech center.”



We are building an ecosystem to support the emerging industries of cybersecurity, data management, cloud computing and artificial intelligence.

-Prof. Mor Peleg



Computer science students gather in the Dylan Tauber building at the Lorry I. Lokey City Campus.



*Prof. Ofer Arazy, of the Department of Information Systems, is head of the new Innovation and Entrepreneurship Program. Prof. Arazy has held various positions in Israel's private sector, including Operations Manager for the software house Jacada.*

## CULTIVATING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET AT **UOFH**

**T**hrough engaging discussions and hands-on projects, aspiring student entrepreneurs will gain valuable, real-world experiences in product and service innovation.

Starting this semester, UofH is launching a new program that will teach students to think and act like entrepreneurs. The **Haifa Innovation Labs (HIL)** Program will combine academic coursework and hands-on practical experiences with exposure

to Israeli's successful start-up ecosystem. "What sets our program apart is our commitment to multidisciplinary education. By working in multidisciplinary teams, with different academic and cultural backgrounds, students will be better equipped to develop comprehensive solutions that address critical healthcare, social and environmental challenges," explains Professor Ofer Arazy, head of HIL.

### HAIFA INNOVATION LABS

## Innovating Solutions for Societal Challenges

### Start-up Haifa

The new program is designed to tap into the University's centers of excellence in the humanities, natural sciences, social sciences and our new academic emphasis on data sciences. "The problems facing humanity today – environmental sustainability, climate change, poverty, food and water, disease and human suffering – are best solved using a multidisciplinary approach," notes Rector Gustavo Mesch.

According to Professor Ofer Arazy, "The entrepreneurial program will bring theory in practice by learning and doing. We anticipate that each cohort will produce up to ten projects, with a uniquely Haifa flavor, that make a difference in society. A further goal of the program is to prepare students for lifelong learning and career management in the 21st century."

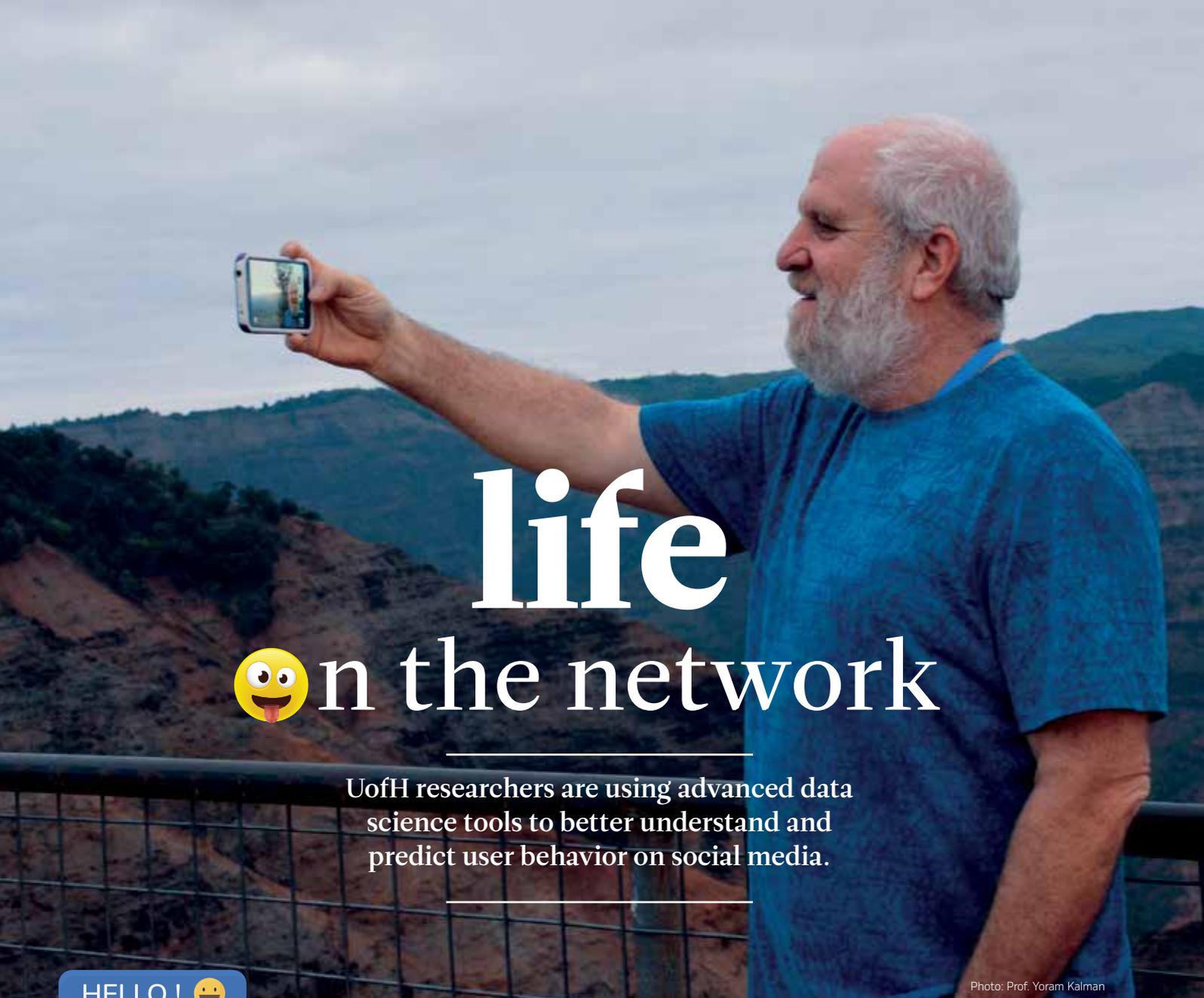
The Program's Steering Committee will include key faculty members from data sciences, health sciences and management.

### Teaching Innovation and Entrepreneurship: From concept to launch

The Program is currently open to undergraduate students with an entrepreneurial spirit. The curriculum includes courses and workshops on innovation and entrepreneurship led by experienced industry professionals. Students will hone their creative thinking and learn to take their ideas from concept to launch. In the next phase, a select number of third-year undergraduate students with "high potential" projects will participate in the incubator stage, working directly with experienced professionals and industry experts to test and implement their product or service.

We are currently seeking support for various HIL activities, including scholarships and prizes for innovation competitions. For more information, please contact the Office of the President.





# life 👋 n the network

UofH researchers are using advanced data science tools to better understand and predict user behavior on social media.

Photo: Prof. Yoram Kalman

HELLO! 👋

“As more of our time is spent online – learning, working and communicating – important parts of our lives are being lived on the network,” notes Prof. Sheizaf Rafaeli, a leading international scholar of computer-mediated communication. These online transactions leave digital ‘breadcrumbs’, providing a treasure-trove of information about individual and group behavior that was barely conceivable just two decades ago. “Data science tools are helping us analyze digital breadcrumbs to better understand and predict human behavior on social media,” explains Rafaeli. “We are applying and improving ‘sentiment analysis’, a new type of text analytics, to help us detect and assess emotions, attitudes and intentions. This approach could lead to a breakthrough in the automated detection of online hate speech,

“““

We like to think of ourselves as archaeologists of the future – studying human activities through the recovery and analysis of the ‘digital artifacts’ that we leave behind.

-Prof. Sheizaf Rafaeli

and prevent criminal activities. Other forms of data analytics are enabling us to learn more about the activities and preferences of people from specific communities, such as the ultra-Orthodox and Bedouins, who are just beginning to use the Internet. We are exploring how this new openness will impact their social structures, which networks they use for information on health and social issues, and obstacles they face along the way.”

Rafaeli founded the Center for Internet Research at the University of Haifa in 1999. The Center has grown into a vibrant hub of multidisciplinary research, pooling scholars from the departments of computer science, history, communications, business, education, law, psychology and sociology. Together they study the social interactions and the technologies driving this communication.



**Prof. Sheizaf Rafaeli** (PhD, Stanford University) is the Founding Director of the Center for Internet Research and former Head of the Graduate School of Management (2005-2012). He is also the founding editor of the Journal of Computer Mediated Communication, a member of the Wikimedia Foundation Board of Governors, a member of the academic management of the Learning In a Networked Society Israeli Center of Research Excellence, and a Senior Research Associate at the Samuel Neaman Institute for Policy Research. His work, articles and books have been cited over 10,000 times in scientific literature, and hundreds of his columns are published in popular Israeli news sites.

Current research efforts at the Center are focused on measuring ‘digital gaps’ in Israeli society. Digital gaps describe inequalities in access to and usage of information and communication technology. Their research found significant gaps between female and male users, between Israel’s Jewish and Arab, Orthodox and secular, urban and peripheral, and wealthy and poor populations. The researchers also found that young, low-income males with limited education are the most ardent users of gambling sites and that older low-income men and women with limited education use the resource of the internet least.

The Center is also studying theoretic and ethical issues emerging from increased growth and expansion of virtual communities, like Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), free courses with thousands of participants. “The MOOCs phenomenon raises questions about the roles and responsibil-

ities of learning and teaching – how do we know if a student is participating or even attending courses? How does virtual learning, as opposed to classroom settings, affect the learning experience?” Rafaeli and his team are currently developing software that addresses questions related to learning in networked environments. “The future of learning – how the Internet is impacting memory and knowledge retention – is what’s keeping me up most nights,” shares Rafaeli. “And although there are many who warn that technological change can be threatening, I believe that it can create tremendous opportunities.”



For more information about supporting research activities at the Center for Internet Research, please contact the Office of the President.



# DRIVEN TO SUCCEED

## Female Students Shine @ UofH

>> MEET OUR INSPIRING STUDENTS

### New Beginnings

**“I am doing what I love best, studying molecular biology in an exciting lab setting.”**

**Kristina Tarsis**  
*MSc, Leon H. Charney  
School of Marine Sciences*

Kristina first came to Israel on the Birthright trip when she was 18. Born in Kiev, she moved to London to live with her grandmother as a teen, and later earned a BSc degree in Biomedical Sciences from the Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge. “I met my future husband on Birthright. He decided to stay in Israel and volunteer in the IDF. After graduating, I joined him in Haifa where we are both university students. Sebastian is in the Department of Music and a member of the Arab-Jewish Orchestra, and I am doing what I love best, studying molecular biology in an exciting lab setting.”

Kristina joined the Gene Regulation in Development and Evolution Laboratory in the Leon H. Charney School of Marine Sciences, headed by Dr. Smadar Ben Tabou de Leon. “A recent breakthrough at the lab revealed similarities between the formation of blood vessels in humans and the building of skeletons in sea urchins. This discovery inspired the study of other genes involved in sea urchin skeletogenesis, such as the PITX gene. Defects in human PITX are associated with various birth defects and cancer progression. Understanding PITX’s role in a simpler model system could lead to innovative cancer treatments.”

Kristina is pursuing an MSc thesis track at the Department of Marine Biology. She is a recipient of a University merit scholarship.

**Women who  
STEM @ UofH**

» **48%** of STEM students  
are women

» **65%** of the student body  
are women, in all degree  
categories (bachelor’s,  
master’s and  
doctoral degrees)

Source: Office of the Rector  
Data from 2014 - 18

\*STEM fields include natural sciences,  
mathematics, computer science,  
information systems and marine sciences.

## The Magic of Dialogue

### Haneen Ganam

MA, Department of English  
Language & Literature

Haneen Ganam has an enviable gift for languages. At a young age, she showed a proficiency for English, her third language, and taught herself to become fluent. Last year, Haneen graduated from the Department of English Literature and Communications with honors and is already on her way to an MA in English Language and Literature. “Exploring the wonderful worlds of literary giants like James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf and Jane Austen inspires me,” confides Haneen.

As part of her volunteer work, Haneen tutors English online. “Thanks to technology, I can help pupils all over Israel from my home in Fureidis, a village south of Haifa.” Haneen is also extending her literary talents to the world of diplomacy. In

**“I embrace new challenges as opportunities for growth.”**

her junior year, she joined the Haifa Model UN Society (Haifa MUN) Program, where she received the Outstanding Delegate Award during a MUN event in Munster, Germany. “Joining the program was one of the best things I ever did,” shares Haneen. “I learned about the world and met people from different cultures. I discovered a love for debate and improvisation, and experienced first-hand the power of dialogue in mediating long-standing differences.” In recognition of her dedication and achievements, Haneen was appointed President of Haifa MUN.

*\*The Haifa Model UN Program is supported by the German Friends Association of the University of Haifa.*



## Strictly Business

### Chen Rosenbaum

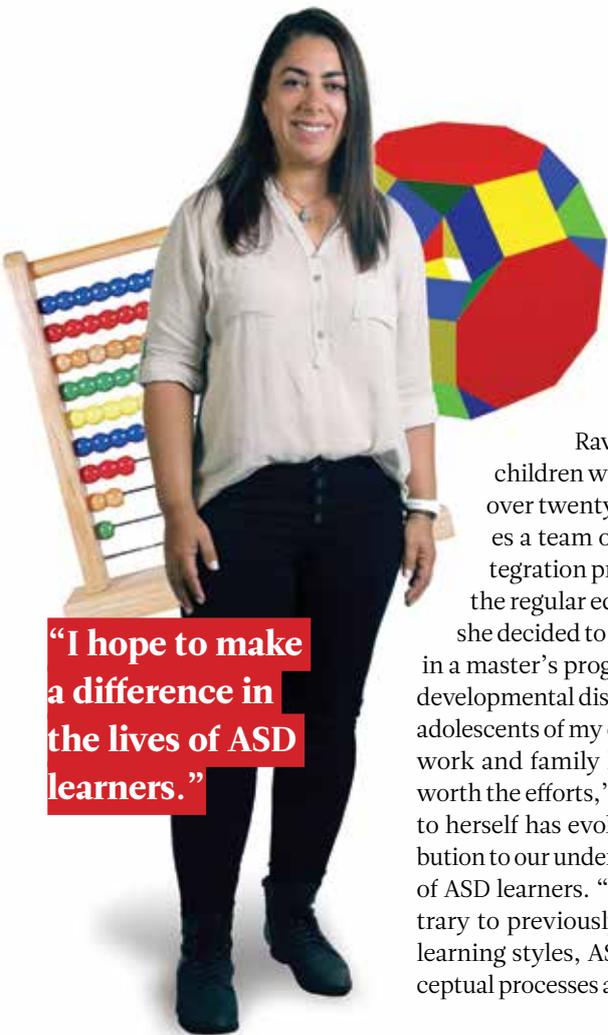
MBA, School of Management

Meet Chen Rosenbaum. At 25, she is the youngest MBA student at UofH. Recipient of the 2019 Rector’s Award for Undergraduate Students, she graduated at the top of her class with a degree in economics and business. In her sophomore year, she began to work in the field of finance. “My older brother, an economist, piqued my curiosity in pursuing a career in finance,” admits Chen, who moved to Haifa with her family from Safed. “I really love working in a business setting and have my sights set on management. I plan to specialize in human resources.”

**“I hope to make a significant impact within my organization and the rapidly-evolving world of business.”**

During her undergraduate studies, Chen was awarded an Academic Excellence Scholarship. She volunteered for the Student Union, running a variety of social programs and student events. “By continuing my schooling I hope to make a significant impact within my organization and the rapidly-evolving world of business.”





**“I hope to make a difference in the lives of ASD learners.”**

## Understanding the Unique Strengths of ASD Learners

**Ravit Avram**

*M.Ed, Department of Special Education*

Ravit Avram has been working with children with autism spectrum disorder for over twenty years. She currently supervises a team of Special Ed teachers in the integration process of students with ASD into the regular education system. Two years ago, she decided to “give herself a gift” and enrolled in a master’s program specializing in Autism and developmental disabilities in children. “With three adolescents of my own, balancing my studies with work and family life was a challenge – but well worth the efforts,” she noted. What began as a gift to herself has evolved into a long-lasting contribution to our understanding of the unique strengths of ASD learners. “Our findings showed that contrary to previously held assumptions about ASD learning styles, ASD learners exhibit similar perceptual processes as normative learners of the same

age in sensitivity to optical illusions and in the grouping of shapes or objects that are close to one another (grouping by proximity),” explains Ravit. “These important insights will help Special Ed teachers expand their teaching and assessment ‘toolkit’, improve their abilities to meet their students’ diverse learning needs, and assist their students to enter into the workforce as independent adults.” Ravit’s graduate thesis, under the direction of Dr. Batsheba Hadad, was published in the scientific journal *Autism Research*. She also received the Dean of Graduate Studies Prize for Outstanding Thesis.

Ravit has already been accepted to a PhD program in the Department and has a new thesis in mind. “I feel very fortunate to have had an opportunity to make my dreams become a reality.”

## Combining Medical Research and Student Advocacy

**Dorin (Theodora) Asis**

*MSc, Department of Human Biology*

With a natural talent for dance and a degree in broadcast journalism, Dorin Asis could have pursued any number of career paths. “I have always felt a strong pull towards helping people and contributing to a healthier world. I realized that medicine is my calling.” Dorin completed her BSc in Medical Sciences with honors at the University of Haifa, and is now a master’s student in the accelerated track in biology and medical sciences. “One of the reasons I chose UofH was the possibility of studying with Prof. Sarit Larisch,” confides Dorin. “Today, I work in her laboratory where we are investigating the molecular mechanisms of programmed cell death in novel protein. The work is exciting and the research shows real promise for targeted cancer therapy.”

**“I realized that medicine is my calling.”**

In addition to her rigorous academic course load, Dorin has taken on a number of student advocacy roles at the University. As a first year student, she joined the Student Association and served as a student representative. She is currently a member of the University Senate, Board of Governors, and Executive Committee. Dorin also co-heads the Committee for Laboratory Science Scholarships.



## Helping Those Who Lost Their Words

### Tammar Truzmont

PhD, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

Tammar Truzmont is only 29 and already knows a thing or two about starting over.

Tammar graduated with honors from the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders and began working as a speech therapist in a geriatric facility. Soon thereafter, she was caught by surprise when her younger sister suffered a debilitating stroke. Wanting to ensure that she received the best rehabilitative care, Tammar turned to the world of research to find answers.

She enrolled in the University's PhD degree program, and took part in a research study on the efficacy of rehabilitative treatment in patients with post-stroke aphasia - an acquired language disorder following brain damage. The study, conducted under the direction of Prof. Tali Bitan from the Psychology Department and Dr. Michal Biran from the Department of Com-



munication Sciences and Disorders, uses MRI and fMRI methods to measure brain changes in patients during word retrieval and restful states. It is a first of its kind to be conducted with Hebrew speakers. "The exciting results from our pilot study are generating interest among language pathologists. I have had the privilege of presenting our findings in a number of national and international conferences," notes Tammar, who was recently honored with the University's prestigious Presidential Scholarship.

Tammar was raised in an ultra-Orthodox family in Jerusalem with 15 siblings. As a young adult, she chose to leave the religious community and received little support from her family. She was determined to get her degree in speech therapy, but faced financial hardships and huge gaps in her secular education. "The University of Haifa helped me land on my feet and pursue a career that I love," recalls Tammar. Today she is a volunteer advocate for 'Out for Change', an organization offering emotional support, legal advice and assistance in bridging educational gaps to former *Haredim*.

"My goal is to pass on to others the knowledge and goodwill I was so fortunate to receive."

**"I will always be grateful to the University of Haifa - I never could have gotten this far without financial assistance and the University's support system."**

**UofH Scholarships is an investment in Israel's Future**  
**Join us in fulfilling dreams and launching promising careers.**



For more information about scholarship giving, please contact the Office of the President.



# RUDERMAN PROGRAM FOR AMERICAN JEWISH STUDIES IS BRIDGING GAPS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND AMERICAN JEWS



**T**he Ruderman MA Program for American Jewish Studies was founded with a fervent mission to bridge the gap between Israeli and American Jewish communities and strengthen ties between Israel and U.S. Jewry. “As we move into a new political era, it is more important than ever for Israelis and American Jews to try to better understand each other and treat each other with mutual respect,” notes Jay Ruderman, President of the Ruderman Family Foundation. “Despite the differences between American Jews and Israelis, the two communities are intimately connected as the two largest Jewish communities in the world, which mutually benefit each other.”

Several years ago, while reading about the Knesset Caucus for US-Israel Relations, an initiative of the Ruderman Foundation, Prof. Gur Alroey realized that Americans knew much more about Israel than Israelis knew about American Jewry. He envisioned an academic program that could be an agent for change in improving understanding between the world’s largest Jewish communities. “I believe that the Israel-American Jewish relationship is paramount to the building of a strong and prosperous Israel and this link is largely dependent on a well-informed Israeli public,” asserts Prof. Gur Alroey, currently Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Founder and Director of the Ruderman Program for American Jewish Studies.

The Ruderman Program is now enrolling its seventh cohort and is one of the fastest growing master’s programs at the university. It attracts civic leaders, professionals from philanthropic and non-profit organizations, journalists and highly qualified graduate students from all over Israel. The Program’s notable alumni include Rabbi Doron Peretz, Head of the Mizrahi World Movement, Vered Israely, Director of the Boston-Haifa Partnership of Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP) in Israel, and Savion Medaleion, Chief of Staff for the World Chairman of Keren Hayesod.



**The “Star, Stripes and Magen David” exhibit takes a fascinating look into the lesser-known pre-State history of Israel and the vital contribution of US Jewry to the early Jewish settlement. The exhibit, made possible by the generosity of the Ruderman Foundation, opened at the Knesset Building in May 2016 with a host of dignitaries in attendance, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, MK Yuli-Yoel Edelstein, and former US Ambassador Daniel Shapiro. The exhibit was also on display at the University campus gallery.**



American Jews are the most important players in the battle for Israel's security. Yet their support for (Israel) isn't as assured as it was in the past... This is one of the greatest threats facing Israel's security.

- Jay Ruderman, President of the Ruderman Family Foundation

The MA Program, the only such program in Israel, combines multidisciplinary studies on American Jewish history, Jewish life, American Jewish identity and American attitudes towards Israel with an educational tour to New York. During the 10-day trip to the US, what Prof. Alroey affectionately calls a “reverse Birthright” trip, Israeli participants have opportunities to meet and talk openly with American Jewish students and Jewish community leaders. Alroey explains that the study tour is having a demonstrable impact on the program participants and elevating Israeli public discourse.

“Armed with first-hand experiences and in-depth knowledge about American Jewish history, our students – tomorrow’s leaders and decision makers – are better equipped to strengthen and promote long-lasting bonds between the two communities,” says Alroey.

In addition, the Ruderman Program promotes academic research on American Jewry, creating a knowledge base for decision makers, opinion leaders, policy makers, professionals and for all those who take part in the public discourse in Israel. The program partners with Prof. Pamela Nadell, Director of the Jewish Studies Program at American University (AU) in Washington DC, on a variety of academic projects including the 10-day study tour to the US.

The Ruderman Foundation is a family run philanthropic organization. With operations in Boston and Israel, the foundation focuses on two main areas: disabilities advocacy and bridging the Israel-Diaspora gap with a focus on American and Israeli Jews.

“Part of my philosophy in philanthropy is always looking for a void,” explains Jay Ruderman. “I believe in the road ‘less traveled by’.” Shira Ruderman, Executive Director of the Foundation, adds, “We recognize today that our Jewish communities and the State of Israel are in a complex situation and it calls for action, and I think we need brave action.” The charitable efforts led by the Rudermans have gained international recognition, with *The Jerusalem Post* tapping Jay Ruderman among its 50 most influential Jews in 2016. The couple received honorary doctorates from the University of Haifa in 2015 for their visionary and philanthropic leadership and were recently awarded the Jacob Rader Marcus Award from the American Jewish Archives organization.

Future plans for the Ruderman Program for Jewish American Studies include opening a PhD Program and building a virtual library. A postdoctoral fellowship is also being sponsored.

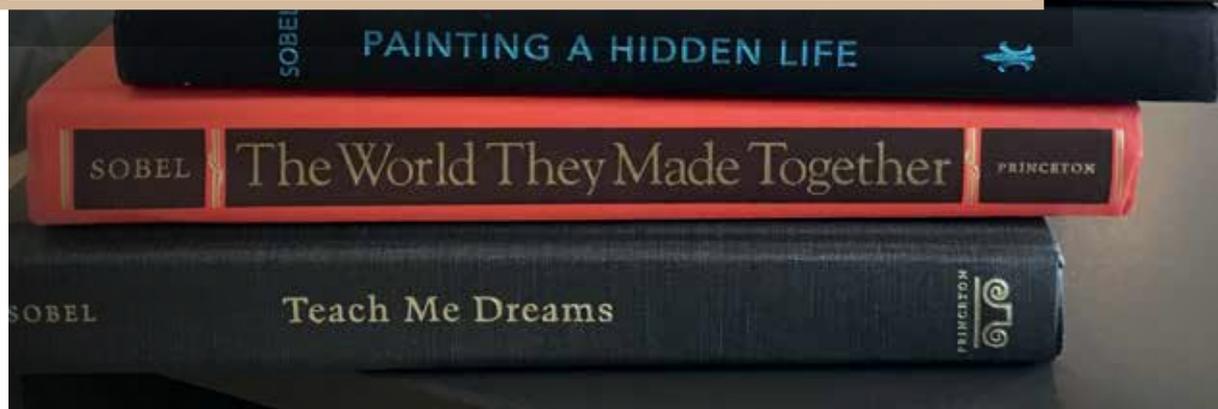
“What started out as an academic partnership has bloomed into a unique relationship between philanthropy and academia,” adds Alroey.



Shira and Jay Ruderman (center) with the first cohort of Ruderman scholars in 2012.



# Reframing the Past: African American Influence on American Society



Books by Prof. Mechal Sobel on display in The Younes and Soraya Nazarian Library.

## UofH Researcher Honored with EMET Prize

**P**rof. Emeritus Mechal Sobel received the 2019 EMET Prize in Humanities for her pioneering research and bold interdisciplinary approach to the evolution of American society.



“Mechal Sobel is a rare academic scholar and one of the leading researchers of American history in Israel and worldwide,” noted Dr. Sharon Halevi, Chair of the Department of Multidisciplinary Studies. “Her groundbreaking approach to the study of African-American culture, and its influence on early American society is among the most insightful and influential in the field.”

Using a variety of disciplines to support her theories, including anthropology, sociology, history of religion and psychoanalysis, Sobel traces the cultural traits brought over by black slaves from their African homelands and its impact on white American values, religion and political views in

the post-slavery era. “In each of her five major works, Prof. Sobel blends research methods from different fields of study with historical materials to address the social construction of race relations in the US,” adds Dr. Halevi. “Her novel and powerful theories challenge the historical as-

sumption that only white traditions influenced black culture. In *Trabelin' On*, for example, she demonstrates how the emergence of the Afro-Baptist faith – under the tremendous pressures and hardships of slavery – is a fusion of African beliefs in the spirit world, such as the notion of ‘soul-travels’, with Christian understandings of Jesus and individual salvation. In one of her other major works, *The World They Made Together*, she persuasively establishes how thoroughly whites and blacks intermixed within the system of slavery and how the resulting cultural interaction gave rise to what is known as ‘Southern culture’ in the United States.”

**Prof. Sobel**, who was born in the US, has lived in Israel for most of her adult life. She conducted her entire academic career at the University of Haifa, where she founded and headed The Center for the Study of the United States (2001-2006) as well as the Graduate Program in American Studies. In 2011, she became the first honorary foreign member of the American Historical Association (AHA). In addition to her research activities, she was active in promoting international conferences bringing together scholars from around the world. Over the years, she has mentored and inspired generations of historians.

# Rewriting the economic history of the modern Middle East

**P**rof. Emeritus Gad Gilbar, among Israel's foremost economic historians, received an honorary award (*Yakir*) from the Middle East and Islamic Studies Association of Israel (MEISAI) for his innovative research into economic and social forces that were reshaping Muslim societies at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



tion and supported the publication of local journals in several urban centers.

Today, more than ever before, policy-makers understand that economic history is integral to shaping global economic governance, and they are turning to academics for historical perspectives.

“The underlying connections between economic developments and political change can provide us with deeper insights into the evolution of events,” explains Prof. Gilbar whose scholarly works integrate interdisciplinary concepts and methods from the social sciences and humanities. “Our challenge as historians is to uncover the hidden undertones and the interrelationships between socio-economic and political events.”

In announcing the award, the Judges Committee highlighted the aspects of Prof. Gilbar's works that changed perceptions about the economic development of Muslim societies in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. “His distinct research approach examining connections between economic processes and their political outcome is an important distinguishing factor of his scholarship. Additional fields covered through his extensive studies shed light on the connection between demographic changes and economic, social and political conditions.”

*Author of several books and dozens of articles, Prof. Gilbar is a widely recognized economic historian of the Middle East. His research covers the economic and the demographic history of Iran, Egypt and Palestine during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. During his distinguished career at the University of Haifa – spanning over four decades – he served as head of the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, chairperson of the executive board of the Ezri Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies, Rector of the University, and was a member of Israel's Council of Higher Education.*

“The period when Muslim big merchant-entrepreneurs flourished, between the mid-19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, was characterized by unprecedented economic, social and political changes in the Middle East,” notes Prof. Gilbar. “As these big merchants – known as *tujjār* – emerged as a new social group, they contributed significantly to economic growth and modernization in the regions where they operated, namely Iran, the Persian Gulf, the Fertile Crescent and northern Anatolia. They played an important role in connecting Middle Eastern markets to the global economy, supported reform movements in Iran and the Ottoman Arab provinces, and had a hand in the establishment of the first parliament (*majles*) in Iran and the adoption of the first Iranian Constitution of 1906.” Prof. Gilbar also emphasizes that the *tujjār* were influential in encouraging both modern and traditional forms of educa-



Food for the bastis (strikers) in Tehran in 1906 financed by Muslim big merchants. This major grassroots protest brought about the establishment of the first Iranian *majles* (parliament).

# Saving Lives and Winning Hearts

ALUMNUS SPOTLIGHT

Colonel (Res.) Dr. Salman Zarka, MD, MPH and MA



Dr. Salman Zarka, Director of Ziv Medical Center in Safed, speaks with a Syrian girl receiving medical treatment in Israel.

According to Dr. Salman Zarka, “Medicine could be a key to peace in the region.” Dr. Salman Zarka, an internationally renowned expert in public and military medicine, has the proven track record and initiative to turn this vision into reality.

When refugees from the Syrian Civil War began arriving on Israel’s northern border seeking medical assistance, Dr. Zarka founded and commanded a field hospital for the treatment of wounded victims. The activities of the secret hospital in the Golan Heights, later dubbed ‘Operation Good Neighbor’, treated hundreds of people, young and old, civilian and military, with serious war injuries. In recognition of his outstanding efforts and commitment to the basic values of human dignity and the sanctity of life, Dr. Zarka was honored as one of the 14 torchbearers at Israel’s 71st Independence Day ceremony in Jerusalem.

Following a distinguished 25-year career as an IDF medical officer, Dr. Zarka accepted a position as the Director of Ziv Medical Center\* in Safed. In addition, he serves as a senior lecturer at the School of Public Health at the University of Haifa and the Department of Military Medicine at



IDF field hospital in the Golan Heights.

Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He holds an MA degree in political science and national security studies from UofH.

## **What are some of the challenges you faced as the commander of the field hospital on the Syrian border?**

Medical humanitarian aid is typically administered on the territory of the disaster-stricken country. In our case, we were providing Syrian nationals with humanitarian aid in Israel, which raised complex ethical dilemmas regarding standards for patient care and the treatment of wounded enemy soldiers. The core humanitarian standard of aid seeks to save lives, using limited resources. For example, at a field hospital, cases of severe

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Medicine could be a key to peace in the region.

- Colonel (Res.) Dr. Salman Zarka, MD, MPH and MA

\*Ziv Medical Center is a public hospital providing medical care to residents of northern Israel, IDF soldiers and UN peacekeepers serving in the region.

limb injury could end with amputation. In Israel, however, where the medical system is committed to providing the highest quality of care and maximizing quality of life, our standard practice uses all available resources and makes every effort to save the wounded limb. We decided to treat Syrian casualties with the same level of care afforded to Israelis.

Based on these actual cases, I have published several papers and have co-authored a book devoted to the ethics of humanitarian aid and field hospital administration during mass casualty events. My experiences at the field hospital have strengthened my mission as a physician to alleviate suffering, protect life and health, and restore respect for fundamental human rights.

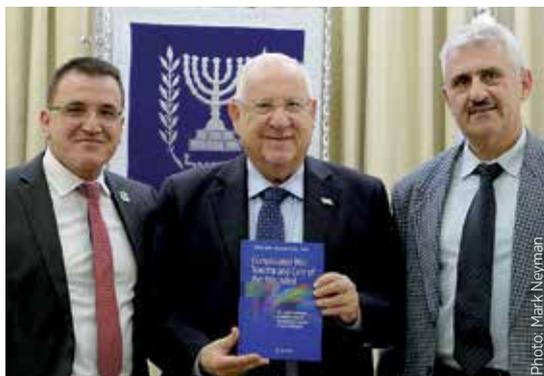
***Tell us about the course you teach at the School of Public Health.***

I have been teaching at the University since 2006. I teach an elective course in the Master of Public Health (MPH) Program on health issues of vulnerable populations, including ethnic minorities (Arabs) and army populations, which shed light on disease prevention, promotion of patient care, intelligent decision-making and high-quality administration. We also explore environmental factors such as over-exposure to dangerous materials and military vaccinations, alongside relevant cultural and socioeconomic factors that may impact each case.

The best part of teaching is meeting motivated students, and witnessing those ‘eureka’ moments igniting a sparkle in their eyes. I especially enjoy being part of a distinguished faculty, among them Prof. Shai Linn and Prof. Manfred Green, who have been my guiding lights in this field.

***What inspired you to complete a thesis track MA in political science and national security at the University of Haifa?***

Policy and governance has a direct impact on public health and medical treatment, so it is of great interest for me. I chose to write my thesis paper on issues that are close to my heart. With the supervision of Prof. Gabriel Ben Dor, head of the National Security Studies Program, my thesis



Israeli President Reuven Rivlin (center) receives a copy of *Complicated War Trauma and Care of the Wounded*, from Dr. Salman Zarka and co-author Prof. Alexander Lerner (left), Director of the Orthopedic Department at Ziv Medical Center.

studied the military service over a 15-year period of young Druze men from remote villages in the Galilee with their peers from the Carmel mountain region (in closer proximity to large urban centers). We found

that volunteering levels for combat units were highest among Druze soldiers from villages in the Galilee, compared to soldiers from the Carmel region. In fact, we found that across Israel, young men from community settlements and kibbutzim volunteer in higher numbers for combat units in comparison with those from major cities. A related study found overall higher conscription levels of Druze men to combat units in comparison with their Jewish peers.

***What was it like to be a torchbearer at the Independence Day ceremony?***

I come from a large Druze family, and it was a great honor for me to light the torch on behalf of my community. This torch is also a tribute to all civilian and military medical teams delivering advanced quality patient care to all Israelis. In honoring me, the State also honored the nurses and doctors who displayed high ethical standards and provided life-saving medical treatment to Syrians in the military hospital on the border and in the medical centers in the north.

***What vision or motto has guided you throughout your career?***

I believe in the power of positive thinking and continual self-improvement. Throughout my career, I have been very motivated by the belief that with hard work positive change is possible. I guess this motto runs in the family. My wife Rawda, who is also a University of Haifa alum, is a social worker and couples therapist who works with bereaved families of IDF soldiers.

Working with incredibly devoted medical teams at Ziv Medical Center, my goal is to raise the level of healthcare for residents of the Galilee.



**We were providing Syrian nationals with humanitarian aid in Israel, which raised complex ethical dilemmas regarding standards for patient care and the treatment of wounded enemy soldiers.**

**- Colonel (Res.) Dr. Salman Zarka, MD, MPH and MA**

## SHARING HER IMPORTANT LEGACY:



**A fascinating feature documentary film pays tribute to the life of Salomon (“Sally”) Noach, an unsung Holocaust hero.**

**F***orgotten Soldier* tells the extraordinary story of Salomon (“Sally”) Noach, a Dutch Jew who risked his life in Vichy, France to save hundreds from deportation to Auschwitz.

“We are extremely proud to take part in this important tribute and pay honor to Lady Irene Hatter, longstanding friend of the University and Co-Chair of University of Haifa UK,” noted President Robin, who attended the recent New York premiere of the film. In *Forgotten Soldier*, Lady Hatter and her brother Jacques Noach set out on a journey to document the life of their late father,

Mr. Sally Noach and uncover the true story of his indomitable spirit and heroic efforts. The film was the Audience Choice Award of the 2018 UK Jewish Film Festival and official selection of the 2019 Toronto and Washington Jewish Film Festivals.

“There were always rumors that my father had been a spy and was interrogated by MI5; others suggested he once ran the black market in Lyon,” confides Lady Hatter. “And as for my father’s penchant for jokes and storytelling, he never spoke about the war, in which his parents and many other family members were killed at Auschwitz. Now, almost 40 years after his death I set out with my brother Jacques to put the record straight – to find out how many people he had saved, where they ended up, and how he was able to pull it off.”



**Lady Irene Hatter**

Sally Noach was born in the Dutch city of Zutphen. In 1940, he escaped to Lyon, France, under the Vichy regime. A fluent French speaker, he volunteered to work as an interpreter for the Dutch Consul while secretly working undercover with the Resistance forging fake identity papers for imprisoned Jewish refugees. Armed with forged papers, and a daring ‘chutzpah’, he entered prisons and holding centers where they were detained before deportation to the death camps and secured their release. Thanks to his efforts, more than 600 souls were saved.

The film premiered in the UK, Canada and the US, with University of Haifa board members, supporters and alumni in attendance. The American Society of the University of Haifa held a VIP Reception in advance of the film’s New York premiere, attended by Lady Hatter, Jacques Noach, and survivor Herman Veder, who was featured in the documentary.

“My goal was to find out more about my father’s story but in the process I found other people’s stories too,” summarizes Lady Hatter. “I hope to make the film available as a teaching resource for Holocaust studies in Israel and around the world.”



# WOMEN IN SCIENCE

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**“At Haifa I am doing what I love best, studying molecular biology in an exciting lab setting.”**

- Kristina Tarsis  
MSc, Leon H. Charney  
School of Marine Sciences

Read her story on p10

## FRIENDS AROUND THE WORLD





**Meitar Ben-Abu, LLB**  
Faculty of Law

**M**eitar Ben-Abu is a third-year law student and already has a knack for settling disputes. As part of her legal practicum, Meitar joined the Charney Clinic for Conflict Resolution. The Clinic provides free legal aid to vulnerable and underserved populations, with an emphasis on human rights cases and social justice issues. “Working on a real legal case and heading the mediation team was a formative experience,” recalls Meitar Ben-Abu. “I helped settle a case between a large construction

company and one of its clients. Finding a creative solution was tough, but I discovered that I loved the challenge.” This year, Meitar is taking on a number of new positions: research assistant and TA, junior editor for the Faculty Journal *Law and Governance*, and an instructor for *Access for All*, a program for adult learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. “After graduation, I plan to pursue an LLM.”

*Meitar is an ISEF Foundation scholarship recipient.*

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