A record 18,300 students have begun the 2014-15 academic year at the University of Haifa, with nearly 3,000 being new students making their way towards their bachelor's degrees. This year, the University is continuing the trend of research students (studying for master’s and doctorate degrees) constituting the majority of the University's students. 9,100 students are studying for bachelor's degrees, and about 9,200 are research students (7,900 towards their master's degrees and about 1,300 towards their doctorates).

"The University of Haifa continues to grow and flourish and mainly – it continues to create groundbreaking science and new knowledge for humanity, here in the North. All of this is made possible thanks to the cooperation among all members of the University community - researchers, managerial staff, and of course the students. We wish them all a fruitful and fascinating year," said University President Amos Shapira.

Three pieces by Prof. Eitan Steinberg, from the Music Department, were performed in Boston. One of them even had its world premiere – "Assembly of the Souls" accompanying Hebrew texts from the Talmud, and an Arabic text by the 9th century Sufi poet Al-Nuri. The pieces were commissioned and performed by the ensemble known for innovative music, Boston Musica Viva and conducted by Richard Pittman in the ensemble’s opening concert of the season, which was dedicated to the topic of Jewish music and in the presence of the Israeli Consul in Boston. The soloist Etty Ben Zaken, wife and musical work partner of Prof. Steinberg who also teaches in the Music Department and sang in both pieces. The moving performances attracted rave reviews in the local Boston Classical Review, The Boston Musical Intelligencer and The Arts Fuse.
After much hard work, the University's promotional video has finally gone online and can now be viewed on our YouTube page in the following languages: [Arabic, Spanish, German, French, English and Chinese].

University Rector Prof. David Faraggi has just concluded a most successful visit to Azerbaijan where he even met with President Ilham Aliyev. On his visit, Prof. Faraggi discussed cooperative academic ventures with various bodies in the country, including establishing a multi-disciplinary research center to deal with such issues as energy, culture, education and diplomacy.

Prof. Yael Latzer of the Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Studies was invited, along with former Knesset Member Dr Rachel Adato, to the American Congress. Dr Adato sponsored Israel’s ‘Models’ Law’, requiring publications to declare where photos of models are photoshopped, and the pair were invited to a Committee Workshop exploring the possibilities of passing a similar law in the US. The ‘models’ law’ is the first of its kind in the world and has set a precedent on the issue which is a role model to many countries, so the committee wanted to review the difficulties that had stood in the way, and how the process had been carried out. The meeting was organized by the non-profit, ‘The Eating Disorders Coalition’.

Congratulations to the two teams of students from the Department of Computer Sciences who were the first ever Israeli teams to take part in the eighth international Extreme 8.0 IEEE programming competition, in which 1600 teams of students from all over the world were required to solve 20 programming problems in the space of a 24 consecutive hours. Six students reached the final round which is a highly creditable achievement worthy of praise.
According to a joint study by University researchers and the National Institute for Testing and Evaluation, there are significant differences in the mother tongue reading competence between speakers of Arabic and Hebrew. The research states that the time taken to read by Arabic speakers is longer than that of speakers of Hebrew. The main explanation is the unique nature of the Arabic language. According to Prof. Rafiq Ibrahim from the Edmond. J Safra Brain Research Center "There is no doubt that the findings necessitate a readjustment to the structure of the psychometric test in Arabic, mainly in its literacy element. Reading in Arabic simply does not reach the required automatic level that a reader in Hebrew or English will have," the research was reported in the "Haaretz" newspaper and Ynet in Israel.