1. The Chief Rabbi of Haifa and Honorary Member of the Board of Governors, Rabbi She‘ar Yashuv Cohen z”l passed away recently. Rabbi Cohen was a longtime friend of the University and was known for his interfaith work and received the Sovlanut (Tolerance) Award in 1991 for his work on interfaith dialogue. In his capacity as Chief Rabbi of Haifa he contributed greatly to creating a bridge between the different populations of Haifa of all religions and beliefs. There were many tributes in the Israeli press including the Jerusalem Post. May his memory be a blessing.

2. The Haifa Research Center for Maritime Strategy, headed by Rear Admiral (Ret.) Dr. Shaul Horev, has just issued a unique joint report through a consortium with US think tank the Hudson Institute to reexamine Israeli and US regional interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. The consortium of former senior military personnel, academics and government officials is looking at laying the foundations for Israeli maritime strategy, and assessing priorities in the coming years. With the US looking to reduce its military forces in the area, and the entrance of Russia and China into the region, as well as the discovery of Israeli energy resources, the issue is increasingly relevant. Participants included Co-Chair Dr. Horev, Chairman of the Executive Committee and former Israeli Navy Admiral, Ami Ayalon, Economist and Israeli government adviser Prof. Eytan Sheshinski, and on the US side former US Senator and Co-Chair Mary Landrieu, former US Navy Admiral and former adviser to the US Defense Secretary Gary Roughead, and Prof. Douglas Feith, former under-Secretary for Defense, as well as many other senior figures. An article on the consortium and its bold report is featured in the Times of Israel, as well as a range of US media outlets.

3. Prof. Ofra Maysel, of the Department of Psychology and former Dean of the Faculty of Education, spoke, in Hebrew, at an Israel Cultural Connection event Palo Alto in the USA, at the initiation of the American Society of the University of Haifa. Prof. Maysel presented findings from her latest book, The Caring Motivation: An Integrated Approach published by Oxford University Press, with evidence around how humans care, and how human nature is innately caring. There was a lively question and answer from the more than 75 people in attendance, including a number of University of Haifa alumni.
There are times when we just do not know whether to laugh or cry. But ultimately our brain somehow decides. A new study by Dr. Hadas Okon-Singer of the Department of Psychology tackles the issue. Dr. Okon-Singer was the 2016 winner of the Dusty and Ettie Miller Prize for Outstanding Young Researcher generously sponsored by the Miller family in the UK. Along with Dr. Christiane Rohr of the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences in Leipzig conducted a study where researchers showed test subjects "emotionally conflicting movies" like Quentin Tarantino's reservoir dogs while lying in an MRI scanner. They found two different neural networks that are both responsible for our positive or negative responses to stimuli, but also their control, deciding which is 'closed' or 'open' as a reaction. "The study shows that these areas can influence the value - positive or negative - that will gain predominance in instances of emotional ambiguity, by using other areas of the brain control" said Dr. Okon-Singer, who was recently interviewed on the issue for Haaretz Hebrew edition. You can see more details of this research on this link.