University of Haifa President Amos Shapira participated in the annual Haifa Lottery Forum for Academia and Technology on a panel discussing Academic Capital as a Technological Engine. An op-ed piece of his on technological learning was published on YNET before the conference in which he said: "There has been great hope in recent years with all the technological advancements that distance learning will make higher education accessible to different segments of society, but studies show that on-line learning is still far away from bringing students closer to great achievements. So how can one harness the technological knowledge to achieve real change in the map of academic learning?"

Dr. Roman Shusterman from the Sagol Department of Neurobiology was chosen as one of the 40 promising young people in Israel by Globes' G magazine in light of his breakthrough research on the sense of smell. "For many people this is a minor sense, but that's really not true, because the sense of smell is the first sense to go when neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's start appearing. We don't know why this happens or even how the sense of smell really works, so that right now I am trying to understand how this sense functions in a healthy person. The minute we know this, we will be in a position to make early diagnoses," he said.

A delegation of about 10 different university professors and presidents from Africa was a guest at the University of Haifa campus last week and met with the management representative, Yariv Sultan, Vice President for Development and External Relations. The representatives also met with Tsameret Zohar, Managing Director of the University of Haifa International School, heads of international programs at the University, students from the different programs and a group of international students, who all discussed the various international programs that the University has to offer.

Last week a new book by Dr. Ido Zelkovitz of the Ezri Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies and from the Department of Middle Eastern History was published; Dr. Zelkovitz is currently a guest lecturer in the US at the University of Minnesota. The book Students and Resistance in Palestine: Books, Guns and Politics, published by Routledge, deals with the role of the Palestinian students in the national struggle against Israel and the role of the Palestinian higher education system as an agent of national identity.
About a week ago, we were informed by the media that the Haifa Educational Zoo was about to absorb two unique "immigrants" – a couple of panda bears from the zoo in Chengdu, China. It turns out that the person who assisted in making the connection between the zoo in China and the Municipality is Prof. Tzion Fahima, Director of the Institute of Evolution. Prof. Fahima visited the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding several weeks ago, at the head of which sits a former doctoral student of his from the Institute of Evolution. Even today the Institute boasts a number of Chinese research students.

The EBSCO Discovery Service discovery tool will now be appearing in the search option on the Younes and Soraya Nazarian Library website for a trial period of several months. The tool shows up by default on the English Articles tab in the Library website's search option. By using this tool, you can bring up individual articles from periodicals and books, mostly in English but also in a number of other languages; the materials are available to the University of Haifa population as long as the Library subscribes to them. The system has many capabilities such as revealing articles from one point without the need to search specific data bases, finding quotation indexes for articles and periodicals, receiving suggestions for search terminology from the Medical Subject Headings, etc.

Last week the student dorms held the first ever Researchers' Club encounter as part of a unique venture in the dorms initiated and organized by Moran Zega (a doctoral student) with the support of the dorms management and out of a need that arose from among the research students for social encounters. About 60 students will meet in the Club; all dorms residents studying for their doctoral and post-doctoral degrees, all coming to study at the University of Haifa from Israel and abroad from various faculties; for lectures, shows and events, joint dinners, trips throughout Israel and additional cultural events.

Dr. Anat Gesser-Edelsburg from the School of Public Health presented a new framework model for epidemic outbreak risk communication in the Tell Me conference that took place last week in Venice with representatives from the World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the US and in Europe, and a representative from the Israeli Ministry of Health. "Real progress has been made since the idea was first voiced to inundate the public with messages. But this attitude still remains somewhat on a local level. The aim of the model is to avoid the media chaos we experience during disease outbreaks and to improve media preparedness," said Dr. Gesser-Edelsburg. The Tell Me project is funded by the European Union and has among its partners Dr. Anat Gesser-Edelsburg and Prof. Manfred Green from the School of Public Health; Prof. Green is the Scientific Coordinator of the project and was the Conference Chair.
In the Community Ecology Lab, headed by Prof. Leon Blaustein, researchers have found a salamander tadpole which has two heads. Researchers at the lab, Dr. Ori Segev and Antonina Plavikov, noted that while they had observed an incidence of deformity, especially among the limbs of salamanders, in the past such cases of two heads were rarer. The reason for this deformity is unknown, but the chief theories are pollution of water sources, changes in radiation and the influence of a small population. The item was published in several local media including the Jerusalem Post.

According to a study conducted at the University, it is possible to identify when we are providing false medical information through analysis of our handwriting. Last week, the Jerusalem Post also published the important findings arising from the study.

The study conducted at the University which examined the connection between sleeping habits and habits of media consumption among young adolescents continues to make headlines. "The media consumption habits of young adolescents disrupt their sleep patterns. They go to sleep very late because they stay up to watch television, they do not sleep enough and they get tired quickly, which negatively affects their daily functioning," said Dr. Ofra Flint-Bretler who conducted the study from within the Cheryl Spencer Department of Nursing.

"The boycott against universities in Israel is being promoted around the world by persons motivated by an eternal hatred towards our country and the Jewish people and towards Jews in general, and not out of a concern for individual and human rights," wrote Prof. Eli Avraham from the Department of Communications and Head of the Comper Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism and Racism to Israel Today.

Following the report aired on Channel 10 News several weeks ago, with the participation of the Kadas Green Roofs Ecology Research Center, the Jerusalem Post also presented the main advantages of this innovative technology.