MEET PRESIDENT AMOS SHAPIRA

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NATURAL CONTINUITY

In 2007 my vision to enhance how Israel and the world capitalizes upon the natural resources in Israel’s Mediterranean Sea was realized through the establishment of the Leon H. Charney School of Marine Sciences at the University of Haifa. Sharing my vision, former University President Prof. Aaron Ben-Ze’ev secured a faculty of world leading scientists who are exploring the Mediterranean in areas vital to global development of marine resources. Now I am filled with excitement and pride as this very team has won the tender to lead Israel’s new Center for the Research of the Mediterranean Sea. I am confident that this center will serve as a catalyst for positive change in the geo-political reality of the Middle East.

At this opportunity, I warmly welcome our new President, Amos Shapira, and express my confidence that he will continue developing the University’s flagship research of the Mediterranean Sea as well as our many areas of outstanding study, research, and social commitment.

Mr. Leon H. Charney
Chairman of the Board of Governors

WELCOMING CHALLENGES AHEAD

The moment of transition, as we bid farewell to our former President and welcomed the new, has been a time to look back at what stands behind us and envision our future. Prof. Aaron Ben-Ze’ev completed eight years in office as our President, and from among his many contributions, I can confidently say that he imparted an outstanding legacy by securing the University’s role in leading the Israel Center for Mediterranean Sea Research. This center places our institution at the helm of academic research of the Eastern Mediterranean, steering a consortium that represents the majority of Israel’s academic community.

This achievement was made possible based on the existing infrastructure that was founded under this roof by Dr. Elisha Linder and Prof. Avner Raban, who shared and realized a dream along with the Recanati family and our Chairman of the Board of Governors, Leon H. Charney. Establishing the center is no small feat for the University. It is a challenge that our new President, Amos Shapira, will be able to take on with vision and proven executive competence.

The center serves to reinforce our standards of research excellence, interdisciplinary scholarship, proven achievements on an international level, and global collaboration in all fields of study. The University of Haifa is, after all, the Israeli University that gives expression to the new Israeli identity as an intellectual, cultural, and social mosaic.

Adm. (Ret.) Ami Ayalon
Chairman of the Executive Committee
I consider it a great privilege to be given the opportunity to lead such a large, worthy, and unique academic institution at this challenging time.

Thirty-five years ago, I had the privilege of studying in one of the first classes of the young University of Haifa. That small University has developed into an academic institution that considers excellent academic research and teaching its primary goal, allowing it to develop in unique and outstanding areas. Indeed, I am proud to be returning to the University.

Beyond striving for academic excellence and positioning its graduates with exceptional personal and interpersonal skills, the University of Haifa has two other strategic goals that are critical for Israel’s existence and growth. First, as the largest comprehensive research university in Israel’s northern region, we have the task of strengthening and conserving the north to ensure that Israel’s narrative and growth does not only revolve around its central region. Second, the University is committed to the ongoing coexistence of Israel’s different populations - Jews and Arabs, veteran Israelis and new immigrants, secular and religious, of all ethnic origins and religions - and to creating a shared social experience. This need does not stem from any sort of political opinion. It comes from an understanding that coexistence is a basic precondition for the viability of a democratic society and most certainly for the existence of a state as unique in character as Israel.

We face great challenges that we must overcome together. The ever-growing competition with other research universities in Israel and abroad makes it harder to enlist outstanding students, researchers, and research funds. Competition with colleges demands that we take the lead by strengthening our advantages as a research university, while by no means compromising our research and academic standards.

To place the University of Haifa on the map as a forerunner amongst multidisciplinary research universities around the world, we are required to strengthen those fields in which we already hold a relative advantage, while expanding in the natural and exact sciences. We must enhance our faculty of outstanding researchers and boost research infrastructure development, which require financial and managerial resources.

We will focus on maximizing the advantages of being a relatively small university in terms of professionalism, determination, and team spirit. In approaching prominent employers for our graduates, we will stress the unique qualities of academic education provided by the University of Haifa.

I wish to thank former University President Prof. Aaron Ben-Ze’ev, who went to great lengths to advance the University and continues to do so as an outstanding researcher. I would also like to thank the Board of Governors and its Chairman Leon H. Charney, and the Executive Committee headed by Ami Ayalon, for the trust they have placed in me.

The University of Haifa family has drawn me into our story with mutual enthusiasm. Now, with the help of our leading supporters and friends, we must transmit this enthusiasm to potential students, young and outstanding researchers, alumni, leading employers, government authorities, and potential donors.

I wish you and your families a year of success, advancement, and self-fulfillment.

Amos Shapira
President
A New Day

As the University’s 40th-year celebrations wind to a close, it heralds a new era of growth, new ideas, new energies — and a new President.

Following an industrious career in the corporate sector, Amos Shapira felt that he has much to contribute to Israel’s higher education and made an admirable shift to take office as President of our University. Shapira served as CEO of the leading cellular company Cellcom, and prior to that was CEO of EL Al Israel Airlines. Shapira was President of the Friends Association of Tel-Aviv University, where he spearheaded the “Employers’ Pact for Humanities and Natural Sciences”, signed by 300 leading firms and promoting the employment of humanities and exact sciences graduates in the business sector. He has been active in increasing awareness of Israel’s academic “brain drain” amongst public opinion makers; and was an executive board member of “Kav Mashve”, advancing equal employment opportunities for Israel’s minority populations. Born in the Galilee, he is a sixth-generation Israeli. Shapira graduated from the University of Haifa with a degree in Economics, and, as he put it, coming back to Haifa is “like coming home.”

Confident in the promise that he brings to the University, well-wishers for President Shapira have included representatives of Israel’s higher education leadership.
I wish to congratulate you on your appointment as President of the University of Haifa.

Promoting excellence in higher education in Israel, providing equal education opportunities for all citizens of Israel, and strengthening intercultural dialogue are values that we share and which I am confident you will be able to maintain and enhance at the University of Haifa.

As our northern university, the research and learning conducted at the University of Haifa is critical for the State of Israel. They ensure the vitality of the northern region and integrate the periphery in the mainstream of Israel’s ever-advancing education system.

I wish you every success in your new duties,

Yona Yahav
Mayor of the City of Haifa

It gives me great pleasure to extend my warmest congratulations to you on your appointment as President of the University of Haifa.

Promoting excellence in higher education in Israel, providing equal education opportunities for all citizens of Israel, and strengthening intercultural dialogue are values that we share and which I am confident you will be able to maintain and enhance at the University of Haifa.

Gideon Sa’ar
Minister of Education

It is my great pleasure to congratulate Mr. Amos Shapira, as he takes upon himself the presidency of Haifa University. This institution holds a very significant role in the higher education system in Israel, and in Israeli society at large: in high-level research and teaching, in its fruitful relationship with the surrounding community, in providing access to minorities.

Great challenges await the new president: defining a clear and overriding identity for the university, bringing in further resources and deploying them wisely in directions that have comparative advantage potential for Haifa University, a difficult task in an era of increased global competition, expanding the reach of the university in terms of fields, students, faculty, and supporters, and so on. These challenges will take great courage, leadership and team work to tackle.

I am certain that Amos brings with him the necessary ingredients to succeed, in terms of his wide range of skills and experience, his dedication, and his sensitivity towards the complex web of stakeholders that form the university community. In the name of the Planning and Budgeting Committee of the Council of Higher Education, I offer my full support to Amos in this extraordinary endeavor that he is about to undertake, and our best wishes for success.

Prof. Manuel Trajtenberg, Chairman, The Planning and Budgeting Committee of the Council for Higher Education

As Chairwoman of the Israeli Association of University Heads, I am delighted to congratulate Mr. Amos Shapira on the occasion of his appointment to the position of President of Haifa University.

Amos Shapira will take up his new role after many years of experience at the senior executive level in Israeli industry, where he demonstrated excellent business skills with the capacity to see the ‘big picture’.

I am sure that these capabilities will significantly serve his new challenging role.

Together with my colleagues at the Association of University Heads I wish him much success.

Prof. Rivka Carmi
Chairwoman of the Israeli Association of University Heads

I wish to congratulate you on your appointment as President of the University of Haifa.

I have no doubt in my mind that the extensive experience you bring with you from other senior management positions you have held over the years will contribute to the University’s development and leveraging it in Israel and throughout the world.

Haifa has in recent years undergone a genuine revolution, beyond the momentum felt in the areas of tourism and high-tech, and has succeeded in positioning itself as a university city. Indeed, the percentage of academicians and faculty members among the city’s residents is the highest of all cities in Israel. We are very proud of these facts, and are certain that they represent the main factors behind the human web of the city and the life of peace and coexistence that prevails within it.

I can only hope that during your term of office, ties will be strengthened further between the University of Haifa, the City of Haifa, and the local community. I am convinced that this will not only contribute to the city’s residents but also to academia in general.

Welcome to Haifa!

Yona Yahav
Mayor of the City of Haifa
The sea’s future is our own.

Natural gas exploitation, the extraction of medicinal organisms from the sea, forecasting climate change, and countless other sea-related topics directly impact our everyday lives and how they will look tomorrow.

The Mediterranean Sea presents a treasure trove of information to study such phenomena, and the Israeli government has now placed the University of Haifa at the helm of a new national consortium of research organizations to create the academic and scientific backdrop to national policymaking and conduct with regards to the rich reserves of gas and other resources off the coast of Israel.

Acting on the recommendation of a special Israel Academy of Sciences committee, Israel’s Council for Higher Education awarded the tender to establish and operate the Israel Center for Mediterranean Sea Research to the University of Haifa and its consortium of eight research organizations — six of which are major Israeli universities.

“We are all set to approach the challenge,” assures Prof. Zvi Ben-Avraham, the new Center’s academic director and founding Director of the University of Haifa’s Leon H. Charney School of Marine Sciences, which was established at the University five years ago based on a vision shared by Chairman of the Board of Governors Leon H. Charney and former University President Prof. Aaron Ben-Ze’ev. Together they recognized the Mediterranean’s potential, and the fact that future research must be sea-focused.

Integrating local industry and engaged in global collaborations, the new Center will be a knowledge base for all sea-related matters. The Center will focus on researching the diverse implications (environmental, economic, security, industrial, legal) of gas extraction, marine infrastructure, desalination, rising sea levels, coastal extension, artificial island construction, and more. It will oversee scientific marine research and its contribution to medical developments, food production, climate change, and even culture. It joins the national effort to fight Israel’s brain drain by recruiting exceptional returning scientists in these fields. It will bring Mediterranean Sea research to new levels and expand the scope of exploration.

“We have already started implementing academic projects based on existing infrastructures at the University of Haifa and at our partner institutions. Discussions are underway with international leaders in the field to foster collaborative endeavors and support. And of

“Among the most pressing challenges of the 21st century is the enhancement of academic sea research that can be applied to conserve it, while harnessing its power for humanity.”

Photo: Amir Yurman

Among the most pressing challenges of the 21st century is the enhancement of academic sea research that can be applied to conserve it, while harnessing its power for humanity.”
Tools for Tomorrow

The practical needs of a prestigious national research center

What does it take to successfully explore the outer reaches of space or the body’s inner mysteries? The most efficient, specific, and sophisticated tools, for one. And the same goes for Mediterranean Sea research. Deep-sea robots, dedicated vessels, high-resolution sonar systems, underwater observation networks: the new Israel Center for Mediterranean Sea Research will be needing these, and numerous other facilities, to perform its all-important task.

“Research infrastructure is based on state-of-the-art equipment and on professional scientific, technical, and human resources to operate it wisely,” explains Dr. Yizhaq Makovsky of the Leon H. Charney School of Marine Sciences, who is representing the University of Haifa on the scientific committee for the Israel Center for Mediterranean Sea Research. “The most advanced ‘hardware’ will enable the Center to gather great quantities of data, and to analyze, process, and integrate them,” he says. “The latest in marine research technology will enable our teams to achieve research breakthroughs that Israel is waiting for.”

Government and academic organizations are providing funds toward outfitting the Center for its far-reaching mission. The University of Haifa itself has received a generous grant from the Wolfson Foundation to purchase scientific equipment for marine research, is dedicating resources to enhance existing units involved in the Center’s projects, and hopes to be joined by private sponsors who wish to be part of its monumental research.

course, our team of experts from the University’s Leon H. Charney School of Marine Sciences alongside scientists from many other disciplines, are excited to be contributing their expertise to the Center,” says Ben-Avraham.

Responsibility for the Center has tremendous implications for the University. “Beyond the resounding statement from Israel’s government and academia acknowledging the University’s level of research and investment in areas of marine sciences, this is a springboard to the creation of a new generation of scientists, engineers, and managers who can approach Mediterranean Sea-related issues from the vantage point of different disciplines,” says University President Amos Shapira. “With the necessary research infrastructure at their fingertips, these experts will work to leverage the sea’s treasures efficiently and responsibly.”

“The sea is one of our most precious resources,” adds Chairman of the University’s Executive Committee, Ami Ayalon, former Commander of the Israeli Navy. “Among the most pressing challenges of the 21st century is the enhancement of academic sea research that can be applied to conserve it, while harnessing its power for humanity,” he says. The University and its new consortium are shifting into high gear to ensure just that.
Meet Our Experts

Inspiring in-depth Mediterranean Sea research

In researching the Mediterranean Sea, pooling the resources and knowledge of multiple academic and professional disciplines is the name of the game. Dozens of our University’s top scientists and scholars - from such fields as marine sciences, political sciences, management, and law - are already merging their expertise to achieve the most comprehensive approach for the new Israel Center for Mediterranean Sea Research. Allow us to introduce four leading members of the founding team.

Prof. Zvi Ben-Avraham
Scientific Director, Israel Center for Mediterranean Sea Research

Prof. Zvi Ben-Avraham is one of the initiators of marine geophysics in Israel and over the past 40 years has led numerous geophysical marine studies in Israel’s waters. He is the founding director of the University’s Leon H. Charney School of Marine Sciences, established five years ago, accurately anticipating that marine-related subjects and particularly gas extraction will become primary fields of research in Israel.

Ben-Avraham earned his PhD in geophysics from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in 1973. He is head of the Minerva Dead Sea Research Center at Tel-Aviv University, and held professional positions as an associate and visiting professor worldwide and on the editorial board of several scientific journals of geosciences. He was honored as a member of several academies of science (Academia Europaea, Heidelberg Academy of Sciences, Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences), and holds the Max Sonnenberg Chair of Marine Geoscience at the University of Cape Town. He was awarded the Israel Prize in Science in 2003.

Photos: Institute for Exploration (IFE), Ocean Exploration Trust (OET), and University of Haifa Leon H. Charney School of Marine Sciences (NAD19, Exploration of the Israel Continental Margin)
Dr. Yizhaq Makovsky
Dr. Moses Strauss Department of Marine Geosciences

Dr. Yizhaq Makovsky is a geophysicist specializing in active seafloor processes. He is a faculty member of the University’s Strauss Department of Marine Geosciences; a committee member of the Israeli Academy of Science and Humanities, aimed at promoting the academic infrastructure related with gas and oil development; and a member of the core management team for the new Israel Mediterranean Sea Research Center.

Makovsky earned a PhD in 1997 from the Department of Geophysics at Stanford University. After post-doctoral studies, he worked from 1998 to 2007 as a senior consulting geophysicist with Paradigm (a leading software company in the global oil and gas industry), serving as an on-site global technology transfer, service, and support expert in geophysical imaging and reservoir analysis. In 2007, Makovsky joined Prof. Zvi Ben-Avraham in establishing the Leon H. Charney School of Marine Sciences at the University of Haifa, and was the founding head of the Department of Marine Geosciences. Subsequently, he established and heads the Applied Marine Exploration Laboratory (AME) at the School.

Prof. Barak Herut
Director General, Israel Oceanographic and Limnological Research

Prof. Barak Herut’s main interests concern the levels, distribution, and sources of trace elements and nutrients in the southeastern Mediterranean (especially along the Israeli coastline) and in atmospheric precipitates. He received his PhD in 1992 from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and was promoted to Senior Scientist and full professor in 2003. Between 1996-1998 and 2000-2005, he served as Head of the Marine Chemistry Department. Herut was then appointed Director General of Israel Oceanographic and Limnological Research.

He has been a visiting professor at the College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences, Oregon State University (USA), and since 2008 has been affiliated as a full professor at the University of Haifa. Herut has published extensively in refereed journals, book chapters, conference proceedings, abstracts, and reports. He has worked on several geochemical studies in the southeastern Mediterranean, the Dead Sea, and the Red Sea. He also coordinates Israel’s National Monitoring Program along the Mediterranean Sea coast.

Adv. Nadia Mogilevsky
Head of the Maritime Resources, Law and Policy Clinic

Nadia Mogilevsky is a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Law at the University of Haifa. Her research is focused on Israeli petroleum market regulation. She received her Master of Law (LLM) from Harvard Law School after earning an LLB and BA in Economics at the University of Haifa.

After completing her studies at Harvard, Mogilevsky took a position at the World Bank as a consultant for the Doing Business Project, which provides objective measures of business regulations across 183 economies. In this role, she was responsible for evaluating electricity market regulations in the former Soviet Union countries. Mogilevsky has also worked as an attorney with the Association for Distributive Justice and was highly involved in major reforms of the Israeli land regime. In October 2011 she helped found the Maritime Resources, Law and Policy Clinic at the University of Haifa and as its director is driving the legal and policy issues of marine exploration in Israel into its new era.

Eliana Dan
Assistant to the Head of the Israel Center for Mediterranean Sea Research

Eliana feels at home. She completed LLB and LLM degrees at the University’s Faculty of Law, and then assumed the position of Project Coordinator in the office of the President of the University. Among the projects she handled was the bid for the establishment of the national Center for Mediterranean Sea Research, for which she resourcefully coordinated a sea of paperwork, adapted the budget, academic, research, and collaboration data to the Council of Higher Education’s proposal requirements, and produced the final 166-page document that ultimately secured the bid. The project provided the perfect background to become assistant to the head of the new center, Prof. Zvi Ben-Avraham. “I am really proud to have this opportunity of being part of a venture that mirrors the University’s academic excellence and leads the way in Israel’s marine research,” Eliana says.
Honoring Unity and Dialogue

The University honors President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso

Upon receiving an honorary doctorate from the University in July, President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso noted that the EU and the University of Haifa share values of tolerance, mutual understanding, and pluralism. Following the moving ceremony, compered by returning scientist Dr. Genela Morris of the Sagol Department of Neurobiology and Ethology, President Barroso’s address also related to the EU’s position relating to Syria, Iran, and the Middle East.

Attending the event in honor of President Barroso were Chairman of the University’s Board of Governors Leon H. Charney, and Michael Itzhar Belachovsky, who is President of the Chamber of Commerce Israel-Portugal and Vice Chairman of the University’s Board of Governors; as well as distinguished members of the European Union, ambassadors, and eminent guests.

Barroso opened his address by saying that he feels honored to receive the honorary degree from the University of Haifa. “The University of Haifa shares José Manuel Barroso’s vision of unity in a diverse world and believes that bestowing the Honorary Doctorate, its highest accolade, is a fitting tribute to his tireless efforts to promote intercultural dialogue, his firm stance against antisemitism, and his commitment to advancing innovation through research, science, and technology,” noted University Vice President Amos Gaver.

Back Door Channels

Chairman of the University’s Board of Governors Mr. Leon H. Charney attended a special screening on campus of Back Door Channels: The Price of Peace. The film reveals the secret discussions between Israel and Egypt that led to the Camp David Accords, in which Charney played a key role as secret advisor to US President Carter and to Israel’s minister of defense.

A panel discussion and another film followed, in which Charney himself discussed the progress of events that led to the historic Israel-Egypt peace agreement. “I am proud that the University of Haifa has been chosen to lead the Israel Center for Mediterranean Sea Research. And who knows - perhaps through science and scientific collaborations we will bring about peace,” said Charney during the discussion.

Participating in the panel was Barry Nickelsberg of the Carter Center, Atlanta, alongside senior members of University management and faculty; and students from the Peace and Conflict Management Studies program. The panel was chaired by Prof. Benny Miller of the School of Political Sciences, who is heading the Peace and Conflict Management Studies program.
Students began the year with a fresh start and mindset in October 2012, following a summer of intensive activity overseen by Vice President and Director General Baruch Marzan to ensure that all campus facilities would be primed for the new year.

Enrollment continues to increase, with some 17,700 students now studying at the University, more than half in graduate programs. The University has also recruited close to 50 new researchers, most of them scientists returning from abroad - bringing the number of researchers at the University to about 600, an all-time high.

At 40 and looking ahead to a new era of research and academic development, the University is continuing, as in recent years, to design new MA programs, some taught in English, including Holocaust Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, Criminology, Film Culture, and many more.

President Amos Shapira took the opportunity to tour the campus on the first day of studies to meet with students and faculty. The walk-around even led to a chance encounter with his own lecturer from 30 years ago, Prof. Arie Melnik, for whom Shapira also became a teaching assistant.

The campus continues to reflect Israel’s human mosaic. Students from all ethnic and cultural backgrounds study side by side in an educational atmosphere that demonstrates the possibility of coexistence and cooperation. This year the University is continuing to provide the primary academic training for the senior officers of Israel’s security forces. “The University of Haifa values the responsibility of creating a shared experience and bridging social gaps,” President Shapira said.

A Jump Start

The Faculty of Law launched a unique, pioneering International Academy for Judges, which held its first course in the summer of 2012, with the generous support of the Berg Foundation. The course is designed to encourage presiding judges from around the world to exchange ideas and learn from each other, strengthening democratic values and the authority of the law throughout the world.

“There is no such program anywhere in the world in which judges from different countries can study together in such an intimate environment. We also try to export some of the values - liberal, democratic, and human rights - that we cherish here,” said Academic Director for the program, Prof. Eli Salzberger.
The Israeli Friends Association’s annual Business Leaders Forum Gala was held at the home of British Ambassador to Israel Matthew Gould and his wife Celia, attended by dozens of Israeli business leaders. This year’s guest of honor was Governor of the Bank of Israel Prof. Stanley Fischer. Forum awards were presented to key leaders in Israel’s business world Idan Ofer and Eytan Stibbe. The occasion prompted Ofer, a University of Haifa graduate, to announce plans to establish an entrepreneurship program at the University that will provide an opportunity for Jewish and Arab students to develop skills together, “and perhaps from their generation we will see the fruits of peace,” said Ofer.

Ambassador Gould welcomed the guests and said: “Every time someone asks me about a British boycott on Israel, I refer them to the collaborations between the University of Haifa and universities in England.”

The purpose of the Business Leaders Forum, as formulated upon establishment by VP for External Relations and Resource Development Amos Gaver, is to develop a productive partnership between business leaders in Israel and outstanding projects at the University.

The University’s Friends & Alumni Association held a launch event at the University, attended by guest of honor Prof. Manuel Trajtenberg, Chairman of the Council of Higher Education’s Planning & Budgeting Committee, and hundreds of University of Haifa alumni, business leaders, and others. The Association is directed by Dr. Dalia Perl-Olshvang under the wing of the Israeli Friends Association and its CEO, Shira Ben-Or.

Addressing the audience, President of the University Amos Shapira revealed the University’s plans to enlist 400 new faculty members, mostly returning scientists. This, he explained, would support the University’s strategic goals of strengthening the viability of Israel’s north, and of course ensuring the University’s continued excellence in research and teaching.

A highlight of the event was the awarding of a certificate for social excellence to Atty. Itzik Dessie, a graduate of the Faculty of Law and Israel’s first lawyer of Ethiopian origin. Dessie is Founder and Executive Director of Tebeka - Advocacy for Equality and Justice for Ethiopian-Israelis.

Inspired to Give

The University of Haifa continues to provide a setting that energizes students and researchers of all backgrounds to develop and contribute to Israeli society and growth. Inspired by momentous achievements in marine sciences, natural sciences, humanities, social welfare and health sciences - and much more - I call upon our friends and patrons to fully support the University’s promise for tomorrow. To continue our world-class research and development, we have set a very high fundraising goal for 2013. With your help this will quickly become a reality to celebrate together at the next Meeting of the Board of Governors in June 2013.

Amos Gaver
VP for External Relations and Resource Development

Israel

Inspired to Give
Children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors are no more likely to experience trauma than the general public, according to Prof. Avi Sagi-Schwartz, Director of the Center for the Study of Child Development and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences. Prof. Sagi-Schwartz presented findings of a 20-year study of Holocaust survivors at an American Society of the University of Haifa (ASUH) symposium in New York, hosted by BOD Chair, Warren Gleicher. Guests included Dr. David Bricker and staff members of the Hope for Depression Research Foundation.

Visiting San Francisco, VP Amos Gaver met with Maurice Kanbar, a friend and major benefactor of the University, who took the opportunity to make a gracious donation toward a research facility for returning scientists. In Los Angeles, Gaver met with Herta and Paul Amir (University of Haifa Honorary Doctorate, 2010), longstanding members of the University family, who made a generous gift to the Returning Scientists Program.

ASUH and its Executive Director, Yefet Ozery, warmly welcome Naomi Western to its staff as West Coast Regional Director. Naomi comes to ASUH from the Jewish Agency, following a long career in corporate marketing. “Professional representation in the Western region is key to maintaining and growing a solid base of support,” says VP Amos Gaver.

The Canadian Friends held a “Mount Carmel Dinner” in November where Canadian Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Jason Kenney received an honorary doctorate degree from University President Amos Shapiro and Rector Prof. David Faraggi in the presence of 550 distinguished guests. Minister Kenney received the award in recognition of his steadfast position against antisemitism, racism, and intolerance, for his solidarity with the State of Israel and his condemnation of Israel Apartheid Week. Major supporters of the event, Tony Comper and Joseph Rotman, participated in the ceremony.

National Vice President of Canadian Friends, The Honourable Gerry Weiner, P.C., received the Carmel Award of Merit at the dinner in recognition of his long-time service to Canada and the Province of Quebec, his deep sense of community, and his dedicated support of the University of Haifa.

Also in attendance were VP Amos Gaver, Senator Irving Gerstein (MC), and Dr. Arnie Aberman who chaired the fundraising campaign. Orchestrating the successful event was Canadian Friends Executive Director Hetty Shapiro. Proceeds will establish The Jason Kenney Holocaust Education Fund for Canadian and International Students, which will support the new international MA program in Holocaust Studies — a one-of-a-kind multidisciplinary program immersing students in general and Jewish history, sociology, anthropology, social psychology, law, literature, European languages, and more.
LATIN AMERICA

Argentina

Remarkable entrepreneur Andrea Grobocopatel, Vice President of Los Grobo Group, held an event in Buenos Aires on “Practices of Governance in Family Firms” for the University of Haifa, featuring a panel of Argentinean business leaders. On the panel with Ms. Grobocopatel were Amadeo Vazquez, Independent Director of Tenaris; Carlos Pace, Partner at Price Waterhouse & Co; and panel chair Laura Gaidulewicz. Also in attendance, alongside 60 guests, were President of the Argentinean Friends Association Dr. Marcelo Meier and Executive Coordinator Liliana Burdman.

Brazil

Longstanding friend and supporter of the University of Haifa, Eli Horn of Brazil made a special visit to the University’s Vilna Gaon Synagogue generously donated by the Horn Family. He took the opportunity to meet with President Amos Shapira and VP Amos Gaver to discuss new programs at the University.

The University welcomes Carolina Birenbaum who has recently joined the Brazilian Friends association as its CEO. “I am very excited to take up this position. I look forward to working with our board members and giving the Brazilian people the opportunity to connect with the University of Haifa,” she says.

UK

Hosted by Sir Maurice and Lady Hatter together with Isaac and Myrna Kaye, 200 guests attended a festive dinner at Claridge’s in celebration of the University’s 40th anniversary. The event, coordinated by British Friends Director Tali Sayar and attended by President of the University Amos Shapira and VP Amos Gaver, launched a new fundraising initiative to bring top Israeli scientists back to Israel and the University of Haifa. Gerald Ronson CBE received the University’s Carmel Award of Merit for his tremendous contribution to education, and speeches were made by keynote speaker Ed Balls MP, Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, and Israeli Ambassador Daniel Taub. Following the event, Amanda Ronson was warmly welcomed at the University, along with her son Jonathan and business partner Nathalie Schwarz, where they were introduced to plans for a Science Pavilion – a home for returning scientists.

continued generous support from the Sobell Foundation has enabled the Edmond J. Safra Brain Research Center for the Study of Learning Disabilities to introduce its new Mobile Learning Disabilities Unit.

Mexico

Audiences in Mexico enjoyed fascinating talks on the Internet’s impact on economies, education, societies, and politics worldwide, given by Prof. Sheizaf Rafaeli, Head of the University’s Center for the Study of the Internet, and Director of the Center for the Study of the Information Society. The successful events launching the newly established Mexican Friends Association were orchestrated by Coordinator Gita Solay.

The University of Haifa has dedicated Israel’s first research center for Green Roofs Ecology, which will focus on research and development of non-irrigated green roofs; improving biological diversity with green roofs; and developing ecological and evolutionary theories. The center has been established thanks to a generous gift from a British expert in the field, who was introduced to the University by VP for External Relations and Resource Development Amos Gaver.

Dr. Brenda Shaffer, an energy and politics expert from the School of Political Sciences, was hosted in London by the British Friends and gave a comprehensive overview on the new gas discoveries off the shore of Israel. She covered geopolitical and economic angles, and touched on the opportunities and risks of self-consumption vs. export. The discussion was moderated by Sir Bernard Rix. Participants included Sir Maurice and Lady Hatter; Lord Jonathan Kestenbaum, representing the Rothschild Group; and Simon Fourmy, Director of Grants at the Wolfson Foundation.
The recently established Swiss-French Friends of the University of Haifa, Les Amis Suisses de l’Universite de Haifa, celebrated its establishment with an elegant fundraising event at the Grand Hotel Kempinski in Geneva, coordinated by Executive Director Bianca Simon. Distinguished guests feasted their eyes on 26 unique apples designed by luxury brands, such as Porsche Design, Lalique, Ron Arad, Marc Jacobs, DKNY, and Fazzino, which were auctioned by Christie’s. Among the guests was Philippe Nordmann, Honorary President of the Swiss-French Friends association.

The German Friends Association, chaired by Ms. Sonja Lahnstein-Kandel, participated in the 2012 Board of Governors Meeting with the largest foreign delegation. “It was a special pleasure to welcome Dr. Kurt Liedtke and his wife, of the Robert Bosch Foundation, to the University,” said Ms. Lahnstein-Kandel. Liedtke was given the honor of accompanying Honorary Doctorate recipient Dr. Anthony S. Papadimitriou, President and Treasurer of the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation, at the Festive Opening Ceremony. The Bosch Foundation has generously supported the Association’s Werner Otto Graduate Arab Women Program over the past years. The German delegation met with the new scholarship recipients at the University and enjoyed a lively discussion about the situation of Arab women in Israel.

The German Friends Association is granting 10 scholarships for students in the Werner Otto Graduate Arab Women Program and 22 in the Jewish-Arab Community Leadership Program during the 2012/13 academic year. For Ms. Lahnstein-Kandel, personal interaction with the scholarship recipients is valuable. During the Meeting of the Board of Governors she took the opportunity to invite them with their families to a talk on the topic of peaceful coexistence at the German Friends Association Reception. The response was enormous, with a crowded room and a moving panel discussion. “It is this personal relationship and exchange that gives us energy and new ideas for our work,” says Ms. Lahnstein-Kandel.

Continuing his family’s warm ties with the University, Sylvain Jekel of Paris has donated scholarships for students who served in the IDF, in memory of his beloved parents Jacob and Bella Jekel. Next to a classroom donated by Jacob Jekel, two plaques reveal the family’s warmth and generosity.

The French Friends of the University of Haifa, led by Executive Director Dr. Yossi Chvika and Board of Governors member Dr. Eyal Chvika, continues to raise awareness of the University of Haifa in France. As a result, a number of University of Haifa programs are being enhanced thanks to generous support. These include cancer research led by Dr. Sarit Larisch, Head of the Cell Death Research Laboratory, and neuroscience research led by Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Head of the Brain and Behavior Laboratory Prof. Gal Richter-Levin.
40th Meeting of the Board of Governors

Celebrating 40 years since the momentous establishment of the University of Haifa, the Meeting of the Board of Governors highlighted achievements and defined its vision. Members of the Board, faculty, students, and guests participated in numerous exciting events, chaired by Vice Chairman of the Board Prof. Manfred Lahnstein.

Honorary Doctorates

Recipients of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Honoris Causa, were: Shlomo Artzi, Lorenzo Dellai, Justice Salim Joubran, Benny (Benzion) Landa, Prof. Patrick D. McGorry, Avinoam Naor (Aharonovich), Dr. Anthony S. Papadimitriou, Alberto Ruiz-Gallardon, and Prof. Dan Shechtman

Inaugurating the University Alumni and Friends Association

A festive ceremony inaugurated the University’s new Friends & Alumni Association initiated by Vice President for External Relations and Resource Development, Amos Gaver.

The Association is directed by Dr. Dalia Perl-Olshvarg and the University’s Israeli Friends Association, which is headed by Shira Ben-Or. Among the alumni honored on-stage were University President Amos Shapira, Israeli mayors, chief executives, and policy makers.

(Photo: Vladimir Eskin)
Committee Meetings

Ricci Swart of Australia was welcomed onto the University’s Board of Governors this year. As daughter of the late Eddie Kornhauser, a dedicated supporter of the University of Haifa, she is proudly continuing heartfelt support of the University.

Younes and Soraya Nazarian Library

Longstanding friends of the University Younes and Soraya Nazarian of Los Angeles dedicated the Younes and Soraya Nazarian Library.

Photographed here with a model of the “Legacy” sculpture created by Soraya Nazarian that graces the central intersection on the University of Haifa campus (Photo: Ori Habushi)

40th Anniversary Exhibition: “Forty”

The Sagol Department of Neurobiology & Ethology was dedicated and the Emili Sagol Creative Arts Therapies Research Center inaugurated, kindly donated by Mrs. Tova and Dr. Sami Sagol.

Groundbreaking Science

Supreme Court Justice (Ret.) Dorit Beinisch was awarded the Carmel Award of Merit at an event featuring an academic panel discussion.

Carmel Award of Merit

L-R: Prof. Eli Salzberger, Faculty of Law; Justice Dorit Beinisch; Prof. Shulamit Almog and Prof. Gad Barzilai, Faculty of Law (Photo: Ori Habushi)
The magic and wisdom of the Classical world is not just a thing of the past. The University’s Faculty of Humanities is ensuring that its relevance lives on, aiming to make the old new again by bringing the intellectual riches of the Classical world to the Israeli educational system and general public. The Faculty was recently awarded a prestigious Yad Handiv grant in partnership with three other top academic institutions in Israel to develop a program called “Studying the Classical World in Israel in the 21st Century”.

The program, to be developed over the next four years, will focus on intensive MA studies on the literature, languages, history, and culture of Ancient Greece and Rome. The detailed and encompassing proposal, composed and orchestrated by Dr. Ory Amitay of the Department of General History, states that as a joint effort - in cooperation with Ben-Gurion, Tel Aviv, and Bar-Ilan Universities - the program also intends to enhance the appeal of the study of the Classical world in broader circles and expand its community of scholars.

“This will be done in part by bringing the Classics to high schools and through various outreach activities. The program will strengthen the presence of the Classics on the Hebrew-language Internet, making them available to the public through advanced online language learning tools for Latin and Greek, through a unique and dynamic repository for translations from the Classics into Hebrew, and through social networks and Wikipedia articles,” explains Amitay.

“The grant from Yad Handiv — a Rothschild foundation — provides us with an exciting opportunity, enabling us to counter the disappearance of central fields of Humanities research from Israeli schools and universities,” says Prof. Reuven Snir, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities. “I hope that this will give us the tools to motivate youngsters to develop an interest in the Classics and encourage our students to think critically about how the cultures of Ancient Greece and Rome affect the infrastructure and development of this region.”
The International Advantage

A 20-year-old from Poland, a 40-year-old from Canada, and a 30-year-old Israeli walk into a classroom.

That’s not the beginning of a joke. Students from around the globe are enrolling in the University of Haifa’s international graduate programs. So what’s attracting them?

The significant increase in graduate students at the University - from Israel and abroad - can be attributed to the distinctive range of multidisciplinary English-language programs, geographical setting, and an environment that is welcoming and engaging for foreign students. The University of Haifa offers international students several paths for advanced studies: semester or year-long options; MA programs taught in English; independent and collaborative research programs; part-time study in Hebrew or English; and exchange programs.

“In creating new programs for graduate students coming from abroad, we target areas in which we have strong faculty and research,” says University Rector Prof. David Faraggi, who formulated the vision for an international university. “Our MA programs include Holocaust Studies, Maritime Civilizations, Creative Art Therapies, Patent Law, Peace and Conflict Management, National Security Studies, Diplomacy Studies, Israel Studies, International Executive MBA, and more.”

“Coming to the University of Haifa from abroad is in itself a way for graduate students to broaden their horizons,” emphasizes Dean of Graduate Studies Prof. Itzhak Harpaz. “It is also the fusion of ideas that contributes to diversity and that facilitates exceptional research,” he adds. “To achieve this, the University of Haifa attracts extraordinary advanced degree candidates from a wide range of fields and backgrounds.”

The University also participates in cooperative PhD programs with European universities, giving European students the opportunity to research at the University of Haifa. Current partnerships include the University of Trento, Italy; the University of Marburg, Germany; and Pierre-and-Marie-Curie University (Paris VI) in France. The University of Haifa is now in the process of finalizing agreements with additional universities in Belgium and Germany.

Anne Albrecht of Germany received her MD and PhD in Neuroscience from the Otto-von-Guerike University of Magdeburg, and a collaboration project has enabled her to join the University of Haifa’s Department of Neurobiology and Ethology as a postdoctoral student. She is enjoying the atmosphere, which she says is very open minded. “For a postdoc student, it is important to experience different scientific environments and learn new techniques that cannot always be provided in your home lab,” she notes. Relating specifically to her work here, she adds: “The combination of a psychological way of thinking with biochemical and electrophysiological work is a rare blend that is difficult to find.”

The University helps ensure a smooth landing for foreign students with on-campus housing, a caring community, and cultural activities, assures Prof. Hanan Alexander, Dean of Students and Head of the International School at the University of Haifa, who is implementing the important internationalization process.

“Graduate programs turn out the next generation of researchers and the academic elite. They strengthen our reputation as a university and have great impact on Israeli society,” Harpaz emphasizes. In fact, the University of Haifa has more graduate students than undergrads. Faraggi concurs and adds, “Reinforcing graduate studies and their international aspect, has become a top priority and university-wide mission.”
To see where the future in Israel’s advanced healthcare training is heading, one need look no further than the University of Haifa’s Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences. Many of its programs are unique in Israel and distinctive in their multi-disciplinary approach. In fact, the Faculty has a weighty mandate: It is the only university faculty in Israel’s northern region that combines both health and welfare management training, addressing the country’s acute social and healthcare needs. Many of these practitioners are choosing to settle and establish careers in the country’s peripheral areas, which are typically underserved in many social, health-related, and community areas.

With over 4,000 students, 10 departments, and 10 research laboratories and clinics - and growing, the Faculty recognized the immediate need to expand its state-of-the-art teaching and research activities under one roof. Plans are now well underway for a 21,000-square-meter educational, research, and clinical complex - the Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences Complex.

What is behind the Faculty’s remarkable expansion? “Israel is home to a potpourri of immigrants and minorities. In the last two decades alone, this small country has absorbed over a million newcomers, a number of whom are aged or ailing. Rates of poverty and unemployment have increased in recent years, and terror and war are a constant threat. Each of these and other factors have wrought a set of physical, mental, and emotional issues,” explains Prof. Shai Linn, Dean of the Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences. “To tackle these health issues and provide the best possible training and research opportunities for our thousands of students and researchers, the time is very ripe for the Faculty to establish this new home.”

The new complex will house four main buildings: the Community Building - where the Faculty’s clinical services and laboratory facilities will serve the community at large; the School of Public Health, which includes the Department of Community Mental Health, the sole department of its kind in Israel; the Graduate School of Creative Art
Teach First

The Faculty of Education is spearheading academic training for a new generation of teachers with Teach First Israel - Hotam. The program is a member of the international Teach For All network that operates in dozens of countries around the world, including Teach for America and Teach First (UK).

With a specially designed courses of study, Teach for Israel is training dozens of outstanding Israeli university graduates from a range of disciplines at the University. “Our guiding principle is that those participating in the Teach First Israel program strongly believe in equal opportunity in education,” says Dean of the Faculty, Prof. Lily Orland-Barak. “This is supported by a range of unique courses that emphasize the ‘teacher-as-researcher’ role in teaching and that enhance teaching skills. We also provide acclimation assistance for graduate teachers in schools where they can make a significant impact,” she says. “As such, this program aims to provide the tools for its teachers to influence their students’ development, specifically along the path to higher education and a better future.”

The first class of university graduates participating in Teach First Israel included 66 students, who received high school teacher training. The second group comprised of 86 students studying to be high school teachers, and during the summer of 2012, there were 96 students in the University of Haifa program for high school and elementary school teaching qualification, all of whom were then successfully integrated in the Israeli school system as principals or in other leadership roles.

Multicultural Israel

The Faculty of Humanities, headed by Dean Prof. Reuven Snir, hosted the 28th Annual Association for Israel Studies Conference at the University, based on the theme “Multicultural Israel in a Global Perspective: Between One Society and Many Societies”. Coming from around the world, some 550 professional scholars in many different disciplines explored the political, socioeconomic, cultural, and legal forces that generated conflict and cooperation in Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine and during the period of the State’s founding and early development, and how similar forces affect Israeli society today, says Dean of the Faculty, Prof. Reuven Snir. Guest keynote speaker was renowned Israeli author Sami Michael, social activist, President of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, and recipient of the University’s Honorary Doctorate degree 2009. About 600 research papers were presented at over 120 discussion panels, roundtables, and workshops. The conference was directed by Program Committee Chair, Prof. Gur Alroey, Head of the University’s School of History.

Therapies, Israel’s only accredited graduate program in this growing field; and the School of Social Work, which is deeply involved in outreach-related projects and Israel’s social health challenges.

“To provide the best possible training and research opportunities for our thousands of students and researchers, the time is very ripe for the Faculty to establish this new home.”

“I am hopeful that the financial resources needed for this crucial complex will be raised soon,” Linn emphasizes. “Ultimately serving all of Israel’s populations, the facility will make a special contribution to Northern Israel, attracting to this area bright and motivated students, many of whom will remain, strengthening this region and its economy.”
Law in a Changing World

The Faculty of Law marked its 20th anniversary with a festive celebration, at which it hosted guests from the Israeli legal academy, along with policy makers, jurists, and judges. Addressing the event’s theme, “Law in a Changing World”, a panel of speakers related to the challenges facing our region in the economic, technological, and political spheres and reflected on the evolving role of the law. Participants also discussed the faculty’s special vision and setting, far from government institutions in Jerusalem and the business nerve center of Tel Aviv. In particular, they noted the faculty’s success in developing new and time-relevant areas of research such as health law and bio-ethics, law and information technologies, maritime law, and laws of natural resources.

The Faculty, headed by Dean Prof. Gad Barzilai, has also become an innovator in legal education, and more than 70% of the students complete another degree in areas like economics, psychology, communications, and computer sciences. An active world player, the faculty is engaging the international community through the Global Law Program and is demonstrating its firm social commitment through a cluster of legal clinics.

Science At Home

As part of a national program to bring home Israeli researchers from overseas, the University of Haifa has already recruited dozens of exceptional “returning scientists” who have chosen the University as their new academic home for its innovation and high standards of excellence. Now the University is striving towards the recruitment of many more. The University and its Faculty of Natural Sciences believe that such an undertaking serves to strengthen and conserve the northern region of Israel as a strategic asset for the entire country.

For these returning scientists and other researchers, the Faculty of Natural Sciences, under the leadership of its Dean, Prof. Gal Richter-Levin, is expediting construction and renovation of state-of-the-art laboratories for Natural and Marine Sciences. This new Science Pavilion, 1,000 square meters of scientific research facilities, will reinforce the Faculty’s investment in innovative teaching and research with wet and dry laboratories, cutting-edge equipment, advanced technology classrooms, monitored storage areas, animal rooms and conference halls. It has been made possible thanks to fundraising events held by the Canadian and British Friends of the University.
Professor of Computer Science Ronen Shaltiel addresses the nature of computers with a question. “Modern computers require the ability to toss many independent random coins for encryption, communication, and for solving some difficult algorithmic problems. But, how can computers toss coins? Is it sufficient to have access to coins that are somewhat biased and correlated?” Shaltiel suggests that perhaps we can generate coins that “look random” without using real randomness.

Supported by generous and prestigious funding from the European Research Council, Shaltiel has developed a new and influential mathematical theory, in an attempt to delineate the interplay between randomness and computation.

To Boldly Go

The recently restructured Graduate School of Management, headed by Prof. Yossi Yagil, now includes the newly formed Department of Information and Knowledge Management, under the leadership of Dr. Daphne Raban. With its sky-high goals and advanced subject matter, the department has been nicknamed “Nimoy” in honor of the memorable Star Trek Vulcan, Mr. Spock, played by Leonard Nimoy. Illustrating the desire “to boldly go where no man has gone before, student demand for admission has been high, and “Nimoy” is now home to 83 carefully chosen master’s students.

The school has also introduced an innovative MBA in Risk Management and Insurance, which is joining a number of notable programs already available in the Department of Business Administration, headed by Prof. Aviv Shoham. Current specialty programs include the international MBA in English, focusing on the Far East, and programs specializing in non-profit organizations (supported by the Marc Rich Foundation), real estate, and human resources.

The steadily growing Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management, directed by Prof. Abraham Haim, now numbers over 100 MA and 16 PhD students. Active in organizing international scientific gatherings, the department recently coordinated the 21st International Congress of Zoology.

Advancing in Leaps and Bounds

An exceptional decision by the University’s Nomination and Promotion Committee has recently promoted two young members of the Faculty of Social Sciences directly from senior lectureship to full professor, skipping over associate professorship. “This is an unprecedented decision that reflects outstanding and groundbreaking scientific achievements by these two young scholars who are already internationally renowned,” says Dean of the Faculty, Prof. Avi Sagi-Schwartz.

Professor of Psychology Simone Shamay-Tsoory is engaged in research devoted to the analysis of the biological mechanisms of emotional behaviors. She investigates how the brains of highly creative people differ from standard individuals; and whether there are certain brain pathologies associated with increased creativity.

Shamay-Tsoory also studies brain systems that regulate emotions, especially social bonds, and processes underlying social dysfunctions in individuals with psychological disorders such as autism and schizophrenia.
Mushroom
Momentum

Prof. Fuad Fares has discovered a mushroom species that promises to be highly effective in treating cancer.

We know they are good for flavoring sauces, inducing psychedelic trances, and sheltering elves from the rain. But can mushrooms cure cancer? It could well be, says University of Haifa Professor of Biology Fuad Fares, who has found a mushroom species that shows great promise in directly preventing and treating malignant growths.

Born and raised in the Northern Galilee Druze village of Hourfeish, Fares was recently appointed Head of the Druze Section of the Jewish-Arab Center at the University of Haifa, with the goal of promoting academic achievement amongst Druze researchers and students at the University. His own laboratory is not only a hub of exceptional research; it is a microcosm of the shared Israeli experience, where Christian, Circassian, Druze, Jewish, and Muslim students are working together toward a common goal.

“Nothing is more compelling to me than finding a cure for cancer.”

Focusing his research on identifying and developing natural plant-derived substances as cancer therapies, Fares teamed up with a world-renowned medicinal mushroom expert, Prof. Solomon Wasser of the University of Haifa’s Institute of Evolution. Together with doctoral candidate Lital Sharvit they selected and examined 35 types of medicinal mushrooms. Using a technology they developed in-house, the researchers inspected the mushrooms’ qualities for use in prevention and treatment. They found that the Cyathus striatus species (of the Basidiomyecetes phylum), endemic to Israel, proved the most effective cancer killer.

This species discharges a substance into its growing medium and Fares’s team took a low-molecular ethyl-acetate extract from it. They administered this extract into the growing medium of human cancer cells and also injected it to animals. The preliminary testing on human pancreatic cells and current animal testing is indicating that administering low concentrations of the extract — which the researchers also found to be non-toxic — significantly inhibits tumor growth, induces cell death, and destroys more than 90 percent of the treated cancer cells.

Fares and his team in the Faculty of Natural Sciences’ Department of Biology — the only scientists known to be working on Basidiomyecetes worldwide — are seeking to identify the molecular behavior of these substances. “Identifying the chemical structure of the active compound and characterizing its molecular mechanism of action may be helpful in developing new strategies for cancer treatment,” Fares explains.

Having reached an advanced stage in this project, Fares has applied for a patent on the mushroom strain, the extract prepared from it, and the treatment process. He is working with Carmel Haifa, the University’s technology transfer arm, for further development.

Fares is driven by a desire to help humanity. “I may have considered becoming a medical doctor when I was very young, but once I entered research and started seeing the direct results of my work, I understood that this was my calling,” he says. “Nothing is more compelling to me than finding a cure for cancer.”
Social Inequalities in Health

Prof. Orna Baron-Epel is encouraging changes for healthy and safe living.

Whether the issue is cancer, traffic accidents, smoking, obesity or other public health problems, Prof. Orna Baron-Epel of the Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Studies’ School of Public Health is guided by a clear mission: to build an environment where the healthy choice is the easy choice.

Dedicated to the cause, Baron-Epel conducts research that serves as a basis for policy making and practical implementation. “It is up to us to seek out the best way for our surroundings to contribute to health, and how we can encourage healthy living and make it available inexpensively,” she says.

Take breast cancer. By comparing attitudes to mammography among different groups, Baron-Epel discovered huge gaps between Jewish and Arab women in willingness to perform the examination. She found that the barriers among the latter group were founded in lack of accessibility, low awareness, and fatalistic beliefs about cancer. In the wake of her findings, Israel’s sick funds and Ministry of Health invested generous resources to counter this disparity. Better accessibility has been provided and a large campaign to increase awareness was developed. “These undertakings have managed to decrease the gap, but more work is still needed,” she advises.

Traffic accidents? Baron-Epel’s research has provided statistics and reports showing a higher incidence of accidents in Israel’s Arab sector. In response and as a first and most obvious step in intervention, the government began implementing road infrastructure improvements in Arab villages. “Here too, change is already apparent, yet more work must be done to modify driving norms.”

In yet another study, Baron-Epel probed the smoking ban in Israel’s pubs and bars, which has proved to be less prohibition than suggestion. Investigating the lack of compliance, she has shown that the local authorities are reluctant to enforce the law. They maintain that it is not their job to do so when no funds have been allocated for it, and hold that the target population opposes the law. The Ministry of Health is now in the process of working with local authorities to help them perform their duty.

Baron-Epel is also keeping her finger firmly on the pulse of the problem of alcohol abuse, and will shortly begin an Israel Science Foundation-funded study to consider the correlation between obesity and the built environment.

To tap into executive channels and reach decision makers, Baron-Epel invests much of her time off campus. She is an active member of Ministry of Health committees, and she confers with doctors, hospital representatives, sick funds, and NGOs to examine and make recommendations. She speaks regularly at conferences in Israel and abroad, and publishes in peer-reviewed journals.

Baron-Epel believes that interventions such as raising taxes on alcohol or outlawing sale of cigarettes in the workplace do not only curb their use; they actually changes social norms. “Altering cultural and behavioral patterns remains a great challenge,” she says. “But changing laws and adapting the environment is attainable.”
What did you find was unique or special about your studies at the University of Haifa and its School of Political Sciences, which is now celebrating 10 years since its establishment? As a colonel in the IDF, I was privileged to be part of a special Political Sciences program for Ministry of Defense personnel. I enjoyed every minute at the University of Haifa. Most of us in our group had acquired the wisdom that comes with age, along with experience and intelligence. We learned from both our lecturers and from each other. It was the perfect combination.

How have your studies at the University of Haifa served you throughout your career? In a word, they gave me openness. Not only did I learn to think out of the box, but I also became receptive to new viewpoints. Previous “certainties” were given a new light, and I learned when to abandon long-held beliefs.

What vision or motto has guided you throughout your career? It’s hard to sum up something like that, but the Avis slogan “We try harder” has always had special meaning for me. Whatever I do, in all aspects of life, I try to give my all.

How does your organization guide the involvement of donors in social responsibility? Matan (“giving”) helps businesses and individuals make a difference and play a part in social change by creating partnerships within and between the different sectors. Many businesses want to give and make long-term commitments. We need to raise their awareness about strategic giving. We recommend that businesses create a ‘circle of giving’, such as workplace campaigns in which companies match the donations of employees, suppliers, and their families. This can bring significant sums of money into the community.

We support hundreds of diverse programs. For example, “Password for Every Student” increases computer literacy, communication, and knowledge among Jewish and Arab schoolchildren in outlying areas. In another program, we teach NGO leaders skills in budgeting, finances, legal matters, marketing, and donor relations, which ultimately enable them to advance their organizations. An employment project for single mothers helps individuals support themselves and has far-reaching social impact.

With over a decade of dedication to social development with Matan, how do you view the University’s social function? From my personal experience at the University of Haifa, graduates are not only able to perform research or write theses, but to think, do, and create. At Matan, I am lucky to be dealing with Israelis who are dreamers and doers. The University also cultivates people who think and ‘try harder’, and who are committed to serving society and its different communities.
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