Message from the Chairman of the Board

Dear Friends,

As Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the past 10 years, I have been privileged to participate in the growth of our University, not only in the doubling of its physical size, but also through the establishment of our new Schools of Medicine and Engineering, along with distinguished Centers of Brain Research and Nanotechnology, among others. Partnering with Bar-Ilan University in its ongoing quest for academic and scientific excellence has been a rewarding experience for me, especially as the University has succeeded so well in bringing outstanding new and returning faculty from abroad to our campuses, and brilliant and talented students to our degree programs.

As we approach our 60th anniversary, Bar-Ilan continues to flourish, under the guidance and engagement of our Trustees. We must also recognize, and pay tribute to the succession of visionary leaders who have built this University, from its small beginnings, to its current status as a multi-faculty and multi-campus academic powerhouse. We are especially grateful to Prof. Moshe Kaveh, our recently retired President, who led the University for the past 18 years, which was the period of maximum expansion and growth in Bar-Ilan’s history.

We are now delighted to welcome Rabbi Prof. Daniel Hershkowitz, who has taken the helm as President of this institution. We wish him much success with his ambitious plans for the University. Let us all join with him as we move forward together in the spirit of friendship and cooperation.

With best wishes,

Dr. Mordecai D. Katz

Message from the Chairman of the Council of Trustees

Dear Friends,

It was with great pleasure and with a full appreciation of the responsibility of the position that I accepted the mantle of Chairman of the Council of Trustees of Bar-Ilan University on February 1, 2014. My association with the University goes far back and I consider it an honor to have been elected to this post, formerly filled by my predecessor and colleague Dr. Joshua Rosensweig.

I believe that Bar-Ilan University is unique in the way that it successfully represents the melding of scientific excellence and Jewish values. The University’s unprecedented development and academic achievements in recent years have increased its standing in Israel and the world at large. I am proud to be a member of a leadership team at Bar-Ilan led by the new University President, Rabbi Prof. Daniel Hershkowitz, and am certain that under his helm, together, we can all bring the University to even greater heights in the future.

Thank you all in advance for your warm support and wishing us all most productive Board Meetings and great success in the coming year.

Sincerely,
Dr. Lipa Meir
On February 1, 2014 I completed four and a half challenging and fulfilling years as Chairman of the Council of Trustees and of the Standing Committee (which corresponds to the Board of Directors), until the new chairman, Dr. Lipa Meir, was installed. During this period, I had the privilege to be involved and to participate in significant developments – such as the opening of the School of Medicine in the Galilee – which may change the landscape of BIU and of the State of Israel for many years to come.

No less important, this period also saw the passing of an “era” – 18 years of unprecedented growth during the presidency of Prof. Moshe Kaveh and, with due process in accordance with the bylaws, the election and appointment of Rabbi Prof. Daniel Hershkowitz as the new President of BIU. President Hershkowitz is profoundly committed to the BIU vision and mission in the context of the Jewish world, and brings his own innovative proposals and strategic thinking to the administration. He will, I believe, prove to be an inspiring leader, and spark the strengthening and development of Bar-Ilan’s Jewish, religious and educational character.

I wish to thank you all for your support, friendship and assistance during the years of my tenure. I remain, as always, a staunch supporter of Bar-Ilan, acknowledging the uniqueness of its structure, its message and its contribution.

All the best,

Dr. Joshua Rosensweig
As a relatively "new" President, I have the privilege of bringing with me a world view shaped by experiences in the academic, political arena, government and pulpit. This gives me a distinct advantage of being able to look backwards with impartiality at the University’s almost 60 years of significant achievements, while looking forward with unbridled enthusiasm and anticipation at the next quantum leap forward.

From the sidelines, I have viewed BLU’s remarkable progress – particularly in the areas of science and technology – as nothing less than spectacular, and it is one of my primary objectives to take these critical successes and “grow them” in a manner that will allow the University’s infrastructure and human capital to “catch up,” and develop commensurately along with them, anchoring and securing them in a way that will enable them to thrive in good times as well as bad. Indeed, the dramatic speed of BLU’s development in such a relatively short time has, in many ways, made the University a victim of its own success, leaving yawning gaps between the fast-paced drive for excellence, on the one hand, and the services and budgets that can support this forward thrust, on the other.

While setting into my new role as President, I have asked myself a number of important questions:

Is advancing science alone sufficient to fulfill the mission of our founding fathers? Is it the combination of both science and Jewish values that make us truly a unique institution different from all others in Israel?

Can an institution that aspires toward both scientific and scholarly excellence enriched and enhanced by Jewish values fulfill its mission without embracing a deep social commitment to the “other,” to our responsibility to the people, country and nation of Israel?

As a scientific institution, should we not be aiming to use our knowledge and skills as a means to help our countrymen and all mankind?

As a Jewish institution, do we not have an intrinsic obligation to do more and to work harder in order to strengthen the collective community?

My strategic vision will seek to recognize and reconcile the balance between these complex issues.

Indeed, the questions posed here open up a world of challenges to the leadership of Bar-Ilan University in general, and as President, in particular.

But, I strongly believe that when the dust settles and the laydishes of choices are navigated, this institution will be a stronger, more stable, more innovative and more resilient one than before – a university with a unique calling which will not only fulfill our forefather’s dreams, but exceed them.

I have outlined ten strategic directions for my vision, which I will detail herein:

1. Embrace Who We Are and What We Stand For

The very unique nature of BLU’s core values is our greatest strength, but at the same time, it presents a huge challenge. Indeed, the complexities inherent in synthesizing these values into a coherent identity that not only celebrates our uniqueness, but allows for and encourages our diversity, is a delicate process that requires careful stewarding and nurturing.

In my many hours of meeting and speaking to faculty, staff and students, I have learned that BLU means a great many things to a great many people – and that is wonderful. The mere fact that every person involved or engaged in the University is able to take something valuable from their experience is, in my opinion, the best sign that we are doing something right.

Religious or secular, Sephardic or Ashkenazi, new immigrant or sabra, BLU must continue to be true to ourselves and what we stand for as a Jewish Zionist university, while accepting that others might choose a different path – that is ok.

As a Jewish institution, do we not have an intrinsic obligation to do more and to work harder in order to strengthen the collective community?

2. Continued Drive for Research Excellence

Bar-Ilan University has undergone, in the past few years, transformative growth. As former Minister of Science and Technology, I invested great energy in helping to advance the national initiative of bringing brilliant scientists back to Israel. This will no less as President of BLU, particularly as the results of the previous period of faculty development have yielded such impressive results – borne out by the increased research outputs and international recognition earned by the newest recruits.

Recruitment of the best and brightest will remain an uppermost priority, as will my commitment to not only bring “innovators” to the University, but also to provide an environment that will allow for and facilitate their ability to innovate. Sustaining organizational structures and processes that promote and support academic excellence is of the highest priority.

The latter is no easy feat, and accomplishing the one without the other is an exercise in futility, and a missed opportunity to optimize the talent brought by the outstanding people who have joined us. Moreover, widespread prevalence of this frustration is counterproductive to our ability to yield the most “bang for our buck” from the new brainpower which we have recruited, and it must be addressed quickly and decisively.

It is also my intention to focus not only on the hard sciences, but confluence with the strengthening of our Jewish studies, also research in the behavioral and social sciences, the arts and humanities, disciplines of business management and public policy, and in the natural and mathematical sciences. It is my firm belief that creativity and inquiry which shape the University in terms of generating new ideas, and cross fertilizes with the other disciplines. Bar-Ilan must serve as a model for this innovative and energized approach.

There are a number of things that need to be done in the next five years, but first and foremost is the revitalization of the research infrastructure which manages the business of basic and applied research, from theoretical or scholarly to experimental. From simple acts like ordering lab equipment to hiring manpower, it is clear that the University must make a commitment to improve the way in which it supports its research community. The approach must be integrative and far-reaching, simple and economical.

To this end, I have tasked my management team to explore ways in which to create an environment that will encourage scientific and scholarly innovation. This will allow us to optimize our “return on investment” not only financially, but in terms of energizing our human capital, which is a precious resource which needs to be appreciated, nurtured and cultivated – all this, while fulfilling our mission to maintain BLU’s Jewish character and connection to Jewish values.

3. Increase Our Global Outreach

The universality of science and its ability to transcend geographic borders is a recognized notion. Indeed, where Israel is concerned, despite the list of detractors in the geopolitical arena, the one undeniable truth is that Israel is a scientific powerhouse, with the resourcefulness and oomph needed to play to its strengths.
At BIU, our increased scientific capabilities are beginning to positively impact on global recognition of our scientists for their excellence and innovativeness. The number of research collaborations between colleagues from overseas has increased, as has our involvement in the types of consortium encouraged by the European Union.

Above and beyond the relationship between and among individual researchers will be our aim to extend our outreach globally with outstanding universities at the institutional level, and it is here where I wish to put the emphasis now and in the coming years.

I am encouraged by recent agreements with universities in Europe as well as membership in EU educational and mobility initiatives, which not only declare “intent” for partnership, but also build in the modus operandi required for it to actually transpire. Developing and stewarding these relationships is critical to this process, and success builds on success. I will do all that is necessary to continue and enhance this process.

Faculty exchanges, post-doctoral fellowships fueled not only by EU grants but continual exposure to international university delegations sponsored through the Foreign Ministry and the diplomatic community – these will also play a significant role in the globalization of our University, and as we open ourselves to more opportunities, I am optimistic that our global impact will increase.

It is also our intention to actively contribute to our students’ understanding of and engagement in global societies, and notably of issues critical to sustainable civilization. BIU is at the forefront of moving forward with a far-reaching Study in Israel and Study Abroad program, which will truly change the face of the higher education experience for our students. These programs will focus, first and foremost, on Jewish experience for our students. These programs will truly change the face of the higher education and global societies, and notably of issues critical to sustainable civilization. BIU is at the forefront of moving forward with a far-reaching Study in Israel and Study Abroad program, which will truly change the face of the higher education experience for our students. These programs will focus, first and foremost, on Jewish experience for our students. These programs will truly change the face of the higher education experience for our students.

Bar-Ilan University has come a long way along its academic development path, endeavoring to provide each and every student with a quality educational experience which will prepare them for their lives and professions ahead. Rather than “discard” the liberal arts, as has been the global trend, BIU has been true to its commitment to create new generations of intellectual leadership. The huge talent pool brought to the University through the mass influx of younger faculty, however, provides a unique opportunity for revitalization of our academic offerings and programs in established areas of study, and this is something that I will encourage and support now and in the coming years.

It is clear that in Jewish studies, we have a real competitive advantage as the largest and most comprehensive such faculty in the world. From Bible to Talmud, Jewish history to archaeology, if properly nurtured, BIU has the capability of becoming a powerhouse in these fields. But so, too, do we have great opportunities to combine undergraduate and graduate programs in the engineering, exact and life sciences with concentrations in the liberal arts. Brain research, for example, an area that was developed from the outset as a “multidisciplinary” endeavor, gives a superb example of how the traditional boundaries of “departmental” specialization can be greatly enriched. Criminology and chemistry, engineering and music – combinations such as these are just the tip of the iceberg, with a brave new world of inter- and multi-disciplinary options available at our fingertips.

Teaming Jewish content with other disciplines is another direction which will be encouraged. Areas like Judaism and democracy, cognition and rationality, and many others, will allow us to make an innovative impact on contemporary thinking as well as on Jewish identity.

Our basic Jewish studies programs are the “jewels in the crown” of the University. In order to maintain this pre-eminence, I believe that the content should be re-invigorated, and that the latest teaching methods be employed to ensure that all of our students, no matter what level of Jewish knowledge they had when they entered the University, leave us with a better understanding of Jewish sources, wisdom, culture and life. Academic revitalization can take many shapes and forms. One path to explore is greater flexibility to combine study areas and disciplines. Another is to formally introduce new multidisciplinary programs. Yet another is to continue to expand our e-learning opportunities, and to consider new technological platforms that will make learning more accessible. BIU must not only recognize the trends, but advance them. The internet has made higher education available to all, and I have asked our senior management to explore how MOOC’s and other such programs can enable us to provide a unique BIU experience to larger audiences.

Energizing the educational models of our faculties remains an uppermost priority. Not all of our eight faculties have the luxury of beginning anew, as did our younger faculties like medicine and engineering, with enormous success. It is our obligation to ensure that students in our more veteran faculties have the opportunities to partake of innovative academic models that will optimize their learning experiences and will better challenge their intellectual capabilities.

### Energize Academic Programs by Crossing the Disciplinary Divide and Embracing New Technologies

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### Transform BIU into a University of the Jewish People and for the Jewish Nation

One of the most important building blocks in our plan to make Judaism accessible to all is actually tackling it at home. BIU is committed to bringing the ultra-orthodox community within the higher education fold, and is planning in 2015 to establish two key initiatives – the first, a pre-academic program (Mechina), separate for men and women, which will adapt the highly refined learning skills developed by Torah study to appropriate academic levels, and the second, a four-year degree program in optometry which will give haredi students the qualifications required to practice in the field.

As we learn from this pilot phase, I plan to gradually increase the degree options. Bar-Ilan University is deeply committed to embracing the ultra-orthodox community within the fold of Jewish
nationalism, social responsibility, and economic viability. This is nation-building at its very best.

In sum, my goal is to make Bar-Ilan the largest Jewish university in the world, a thriving intellectual, spiritual and cultural Jewish hub and home for our citizens and our brethren from around the world – a place where Jewish pride takes an orientation, but Jewish learning and understanding is a must. This is a daunting challenge – one which will require determination and unswerving commitment to the task at-hand, as well as the necessary resources to take this from the drawing table to reality.

I am encouraged by the overwhelming response of our alumni, and increasing the nationalism, social responsibility, and economic viability we are currently exploring the acquisition of sophisticated software that will allow the University to more accurately manage its performance according to global standards. Like most Israelis, we tend to think we "know where we stand," and we probably do in the larger areas – but there are nuances that are quite revealing which, if understood and acted on, have the potential to carry us over the top.

Achieving a notable ranking among “peers” is essential to our efforts for globalization and internationalization, and will require a continual and focused review, which is one of the strategic directions which I hope will be advanced over the coming year.

One of the key initiatives that I will be actively supporting is embracing our alumni community, which is growing from day to day. The painstaking work of actually knitting together such a community from over 100,000 graduates is challenging; but by employing the appropriate technological tools as well as social activities, I am optimistic that it will be done. I am encouraged by the overwhelming response of our alumni, and look forward to increasing the extent and depth of their engagement in the current and future life of the University.

It is my belief that fundraising must be used as a means to help the University expand and enhance what it does best, or what it aspires to do, according to the priorities that we have established, and not as a means to balance budgets or control deficits. Philanthropy provides an opportunity for a donor to be a true partner in growth, and that experience must be rewarding and gratifying, and handled with transparency and accountability.

The transition from one president to another is not something that happens overnight, because philanthropy is based on trust and personal relationships which are not always transferable. It is my intention, therefore, to get to know our current supporters, and build relationships with them based on where we want to go, and not necessarily where we were. I have only just now begun this important work in the US, Latin America and Switzerland, and I look forward to more and more opportunities to make friends for the University.

It is also my intention to do all that I can to reach out to new donors. I am a firm believer in a strategic approach to resource development, but also recognize the importance of serendipity – you never know where the next lead will come from! Therefore, I have maintained an open door policy, in which I meet not only donors, but also individuals who I believe can introduce us to new donors. I believe that this is vital in identifying new prospective friends for the University.

Finally, just as I am seeking stability in the University’s fiscal management, I am also seeking stability in the programs being funded through resource development. Funds raised for faculty development and recruitment, building and equipping labs, scholarships and fellowships – are the backbone of the University, and funding these initiatives is my greatest priority. I believe if we tackle these priorities with consistency and vigor, we will succeed in establishing a firm foundation on which the University can continue to grow and flourish.
The two key sources of university income are government funding and donations. Our financial model must expand to include other business-like opportunities. One direction is our R & D and commercialization of our intellectual property. So too is creating a continuing education initiative that is campus-wide and responds to market needs, expanding "enrichment" education, special certificate and unique degree programs, and much more.

In order to do all this successfully, a professional marketing operation must be set up, one which will have its finger on the pulse, armed with measures for benchmarking success through timely data collection and analytics that will allow us to make real time, informed rather than intuitive decisions.

Student recruitment is also an area that requires professionalization. The government budgets the University on the basis of its student enrollment and an inability to meet the anticipated levels leads to a potential loss of income. There is no doubt that, sooner rather than later, the University must grapple with existential questions, and make decisions that might change BIU forever — nothing less than the future of our undergraduate programs is at stake here.

Can we successfully compete with the dozens of Israeli colleges which are often more attractive to students because of lower entry levels and lesser academic demands?

Is the erosion of our undergraduate constituencies a battle worth fighting, or should we recognize the change in demographics, and shift efforts on our graduate programs, where we have a competitive advantage?

Is this purely a "business" decision (i.e., less students means less government income), or is there an ideological consideration that will tilt the statistics?

While it’s clear that there are no simple answers here, we are fast approaching a stage where not deciding will simply no longer be an option.

Realistically, decisions made now will be relevant for academic year 2014-15 — but in order to optimize this window of time, we need to work speedily and decisively to consider all our options, and act with conviction and intelligence.

**Improve Governance and Public Accountability**

The steps proposed by the State Comptroller to improve the governance of BIU are now being implemented, and I am committed to ensure that this critical process will continue. I pledge to work tirelessly with our Board of Trustees Chairman, Dr. Mordecai D. Katz and our Chairman of the Council of Trustees, Dr. Lipa Mei, to make this an ongoing reality.

It is not an easy thing to change an institutional “modus operandi” overnight, particularly as this was the accepted norm of “doing business” for many decades — but nevertheless, change it we will. BIU must do all that it can to ensure that we are open and welcoming to public scrutiny and are transparent in our actions.

Some of this is “uncharted territory.” Until recently, for example, we only had to adhere to the guidelines of the Association of Foundations. Today, however, as with all Israeli universities, we must adjust to operational regulation from the Finance Ministry and all the challenges inherent therein. This has sweeping impact on every aspect of university life, from salary levels and beyond.

My team will do all in their power to ensure that there be full adherence to these principles — not only because we are obligated by law to do so, but because it is the right thing to do.

**In Conclusion**

The above strategic directions will now be incorporated into a Presidential Dashboard, which will allow me as well as our leadership to keep track of our progress.

I welcome your input, advice and counsel, and look forward to a productive and successful year.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Prof. Daniel Hershkowitz
President
It is gratifying to know that Bar-Ilan University is endowed with a leadership team that has demonstrated intelligence, resourcefulness and creativity, which in turn has inspired an academic and administrative staff to tirelessly devote itself to advancing the University’s mission.”

Rabbi Prof. Daniel Hershkowitz
President

Since the last meeting of the Board of Trustees in May 2013, much has happened at Bar-Ilan University, and I am delighted to update our friends and trustees on the productive year that has transpired.

Leadership

The transition in leadership is the most striking of the changes that have impacted on Bar-Ilan’s development over the past year. Prof. Moshe Kaveh stepped down from the presidency at the end of September 2013, after serving an unprecedented four terms of outstanding leadership. I assumed the mantle of leadership on October 1st that same year, and have been striving to continue both the enormous growth drive implemented by my predecessor, while bringing the infrastructure to a level that keeps pace with the progress.

Dr. Joshua Rosensweig, who as Chairman of the Council of Trustees, stewarded the University through one of its most challenging times, stepped down from the chairmanship on February 1, 2014, and Dr. Lipa Meir, one of Israel’s leading attorneys, was elected in his stead. I am most grateful to Dr. Rosensweig for easing my way into office and for his outstanding endeavors to implement changes in the University’s governance in keeping with the times. I am also delighted with the prospect of working with Dr. Meir in guiding the University in accordance with best practices and governance.

In January 2014, a new Director General was appointed for the University – Menachem Greenblum – a highly experienced manager who served in both the public and private sectors. Ofer Shragay, who generously served as Acting Director General for over a year, is owed a huge vote of thanks for his dedicated work during and after the appointment process.

Dr. Mordecai D. Katz has remained as our deeply committed Chairman of the Board, providing an island of consistency and stability during such significant leadership changes. We are grateful to Morty for his continued generosity and wise counsel.

Academic

Bar-Ilan’s Rector, Prof. Haim Tartelbaum, together with Deputy Rector, Prof. Min Faust, Deans, Department Chairs, and administrative support team led by Mrs. Pnina Agassi, have continued to lead the University’s impressive academic development, which has grown from strength to strength.

Faculty Development: Changing the Academic Face of BIU

In 2011, the Rector launched a bold five year plan to add 100 senior faculty members to the departments which met the following criteria: outstanding academic performance to its’ equivalents in other Israeli institutions, positive recommendations by the international quality control committees of the Israel Council for Higher Education, and potential candidates who would significantly upgrade the academic standing of the department. The Rector has informed me that the very ambitious five year goal has already been reached in only three years. Indeed, 200 new faculty members joined our academic ranks, replacing 100 who retired or left, and pre-filling a further 100 positions.

As you can imagine, this has created a dramatic transformation for BIU’s academe of unprecedented proportion, forging an active, performance-driven faculty base which is now younger, larger and better by all standards.

In addition to the above actions, the Rector also instituted a policy of promotion for all academically deserving faculty members who meet the rigorous criteria of research productivity, teaching accomplishments, and overall contribution to the University’s successful development – removing heretofore bureaucratic restrictions which stifled academic growth in the past. As such, over 120 senior faculty members have already been promoted in the past three years. About one quarter of all active faculty members at BIU and many other talented members are in the process of review for advancement.

Recognizing that this massive growth surge compelled the University to reinforce and strengthen our “roots,” in order to ensure that this huge investment in human capital brings about the desired results in terms of research performance and education, the Rector launched our “Operation Root and Branch,” to resolve chronic bureaucratic problems and streamline all fields of research and teaching. This has included such actions as instituting quality control mechanisms at the departmental levels to guarantee best usage of senior and junior faculty positions, restructuring junior positions in order to reassign the “unused” ones to hire or promote senior faculty, regulating appointments and promotion of faculty in the Jesselson Institute for Advanced Torah Studies as well as their financial support structure, expanding the libraries’ acquisition budget, building much needed research facilities, and more.

Integration of the School of Medicine in the Galilee into the Academic Infrastructure

It has been almost three years since the School of Medicine first opened its gates, and while the integration of a brand new School of this specialized nature, geographical distance and budgetary proportions into the University’s mainstream academic infrastructure is still a huge challenge which the Rector has addressed with great vigor and creativity, there is no doubt that the School’s impressive achievements in this short period of time far outweigh the many obstacles that have had to be navigated by BIU’s academic leadership.

The Rector reports that guidelines for clinical appointments have been completed, as has their de facto implementation. Dozens and dozens of doctors in all Galilee hospitals are applying to the BIU Medical School for academic positions at all levels, applications for which are being carefully reviewed by professional committees and experts from Israel and abroad. The end-results of this process are attested to, with great pride, in the many dozens of scientific articles in professional publications all over the world which bear the BIU Medical School imprint.
Rothschild Prize awarded to Prof. Shlomo Havlin, the first BIU faculty member to receive this honor in the past 55 years. Just as we went to press, the Rector happily informed me that two of our most outstanding young researchers received the prestigious Alon Award – one in physics, and the other in medicine – the first for our fledgling new School. Heartfelt congratulations to all those who made us so proud.

New Study Programs
The Rector has informed me that a number of new study programs were recently approved by the Council for Higher Education, a process that takes a number of years. These include a degree in Technological Management as well as an advanced degree program for research students in the School of Medicine, which is already attracting a number of students.

Prof. Taitelbaum has also given me the exciting news about the significant upgrade of our Optometry Program, the only one of its kind in Israel, which aims to significantly upgrade the research and academics of our original program begun some 15 years ago. The best scientists in the field have been recruited, a new research lab constructed, and an agreement of cooperation between the BIU Optometry Program and the optometry program at UC Berkeley – one of the leading optometry schools of its kind – all augur a most propitious future for this important BIU initiative.

School of Graduate Studies
While the School of Graduate Studies was established a few years ago, this year marked its move into a permanent physical location, a factor that has contributed significantly to the ability of the School to move forward with vigor in its mission to oversee the academic and scientific content of all advanced degree study programs at the University. We are also proud of our students’ impressive accomplishments in the national certification exams in a number of medical fields, i.e., second place in the national psychiatry boards, etc.

Prizes and Awards
This year, the University’s faculty excelled in receiving national and international recognition for their outstanding scientific and scholarly achievements. While a select list of the most important awards is presented in the Awards section of this publication, I would be remiss were I not to mention the Israel Prize in Talmud awarded this year to Prof. Shamma Friedman, and the

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Nitzotzot and Nitzotzot Shachar Programs
These two programs, founded by Rabbi Shabtai Rappoport, Head of the Beit Midrash at the Jesselson Institute for Advanced Torah Studies, and embraced by the Rector, have become an integral part of the scientific-spiritual activities at the University. Each session focuses on the Jewish and scientific perspectives of timely and complex issues, the subject of which is set before a panel of senior faculty and research students which explore their substance and impact. The “Nitzotzot Shachar” program includes research students from other universities, who are awarded a special scholarship for their participation in this program. The Nitzotzot programs position BIU as Israel’s leading institution in debates about issues that are at the intersections of Torah and science with all things spiritual, halakhic and scientific.

Students and Instruction
On this front, we have continued our drive to achieve the highest level of academic excellence for our students, through the good offices of our Deputy Rector Prof. Miriam Faust.

Academic Quality
The Quality Education Unit, which was established a number of years ago in order to facilitate compliance with the standards set by the Council of Higher Education and the international professional committees established by them for this purpose, helped the Faculty of Law, Churgin School of Education, Department of Arabic, Louis & Gabi Westfeld School of Social Work, School of Engineering, Department of Music and School of Medicine gear up for this rigorous evaluation process. Great efforts are made to continually improve the preparation processes, with marked success.

Teaching & Courses
The Academic Course Committee has continued its important work of evaluating academic courses, as well as teaching proficiencies of new, junior and adjunct faculty, on campus as well as in our regional colleges. We are pleased to announce that a number of new expanded double-major programs were approved, including Economics/Accounting/Computer Sciences, Economics/Business Administration in English, and a new undergraduate program in Sociology (Social Leadership and the Digital Culture). I have no doubt that exciting courses such as these will be extremely attractive to potential students.

Teaching Evaluation Program
The Teaching Advancement Center, the University strives to ensure proficiency in preparing examinations and tests in keeping with national standards, and provides seminars on best practices for using and developing teaching aids like power points. Every new faculty member joining the University academe is obligated to participate in a two-day teaching seminar.

Of great success this year was a conference which was organized under the Center’s auspices with a lineup of national and international luminaries: “An Analogical Lecture in a Digital World,” which focused on the use of new educational technology in academic teaching.

In an effort to create a sense of pride in teaching excellence, the “Outstanding

The Teaching Evaluation Program has continued in cooperation with the Student Union, allowing the BIU academic management team to receive open and transparent feedback which is then translated into action. A new pilot program was launched this year in four departments, which called for interviews with students soon to be completing their studies.
Student Marketing and Recruitment

In an effort to better understand why potential students choose to do or do not choose BIU as their preferred institution, an external survey was commissioned by the Deputy Rector which provided very important data regarding our “attractiveness” to students. A number of the recommendations proposed in the report are being implemented in order to better prepare us to address the competition more successfully, and improve our recruitment quotient. Others are being seriously studied.

This year, a huge shift was implemented as regards the marketing media. The first Open House was quite successful, this year divided into two different physical sites – and a second Open House is being organized during the latter part of the second semester. The meager advertising budget was focused primarily on the social, as compared to print media. Efforts to attract potential students from the national religious sectors continued. Nevertheless, despite these superhuman efforts, BIU has not been able to avoid a downward spiral in undergraduate enrollment – the current reality of all research universities in Israel – as the competition for students with the colleges becomes ever greater.

Drive for Academic Excellence

This year marks the fifth cycle of the Honors Scholars program, a special project devised by Prof. Taitelbaum and overseen by Prof. Faust to nurture student excellence, in which only students who score in the first percentile of the psychometric exams with a matriculation average over 110 qualified for application. Some 25 students began the program this year, joining the 55 others at various stages of their studies. The Tikva Foundation provided the funding for an enrichment seminar which aims to expand the intellectual horizons of the Honors Scholars above and beyond the subject of their degree, and enhance their leadership potential as Jews and Israelis. This year, the subject was: “The Inter-Cultural Challenge: Judaism and World Cultures,” which provided an expansive comparison of contemporary Jewish and world thought.

Aside from the Honors Scholarships, it is clear that offering scholarships to outstanding students is key to attracting the best students. These scholarships, raised by our Friends associations around the world, enable us to gradually elevate the quality of our students. A new special scholarship was added two years ago, and is offered to graduates of pre-military preparatory programs, thanks to the generous donation of Drs. Mordecai and Hanique Katz. Another special scholarship is offered to the members of the Bnei Akiva branch operating on campus, which, among other activities, helps the many operations of the Campus Rabbi, Rav Shlomo Shefer.

Special Needs Students

Together with the Dean of Students, guidelines for handling the special student constituency were drafted and are in the process of being distributed to all department chairs – this in an effort to improve the services being provided to this sector. It is particularly gratifying to be updated by the Deputy Rector that after a year’s pilot, all departments were instructed to accept into the undergraduate programs Ethiopian students who demonstrated high academic potential (through a special evaluation process developed for this purpose) without the necessity of psychometric exams. In order to ensure the success of these students, the Dean of Students office will be providing this group with enhanced student services. A similar process is now being explored for students with severe handicaps.

Research

Over the past year, Prof. Benjamin Ehrenberg, Vice President for Research, reported that we continue to see momentum in the University’s research activities, largely as a result of the absorption of 44 experimental scientists. We are also continuing to absorb new researchers, particularly in the Schools of Engineering and Medicine and the Gonda (Goldstern) Multidisciplinary Brain Research Center. All these scientists returned to Israel after having completed post-doctoral training at the best research universities in the world.

Bar-Ilan Institute of Nanotechnology & Advanced Materials (BINA)

We are celebrating the second year of the Institute’s second five year program, initiated through the national initiative of the Israeli government. BINA’s new recruits are exhibiting excellent scientific output and the funds that they are generating from research grants cover by far the internal seed funding provided by the University. No doubt, this has been an excellent investment, scientifically and financially. The International Supervising Board of the Centers of Nanotechnology (INN) has commended BINA year after year for its outstanding scientific performance. In October 2013 Prof. Arie Zaban completed his term as founding director of BINA and Prof. Yuval Garini assumed this leadership role in his stead. Prof. Garini was one of the first recruits of the experimental science absorption program, so this is particularly gratifying.

Centers of Research Excellence

Prof. Ehrenberg has updated me that Bar-Ilan’s researchers are members of five national centers of research excellence (I-CORE), each set up by the government with multi-million dollar research budgets. The topics of the centers range from research into human disease through cognition, chemistry and alternative energy. The new centers of research excellence are structured as inter-university collaborations with most of Israel’s top universities.

Research Grants

I was delighted to be updated by the VPR and Dr. Eli Even, Director of the Research Authority, that the total number of grant submissions to various granting agencies last year (2012-2013) increased over the previous year. So did the number of awards and the sums allocated in the grants that were approved. The Faculties with most significant wins and sums were those of Exact Sciences and Life Sciences. The total value of grants started in 2010-11 was NIS 59,996,000, the total value of grants started in 2011-12 was NIS 79,954,000, while the total value of grants started in 2012-13 was NIS 79,822,000.

The jump in the second year above was due to the I-COREs [centers of excellence] that were announced in that year. The number for 2013-14 is expected to rise over the last number. The total number of grant applications in 2010-11 was 548, while the total number of grants that started in this year was 139. The total number of grant applications in 2011-12 was 775, while the total number of grants that started in this year was 163. The total number of grant applications in 2012-13 was 789, while the total number of grants that started in this year was 195.

National and International Cooperation

In addition to the I-Core centers, we are continuing to collaborate between BIU and Sheba Medical Center as well as Rabin Medical Center, two of the largest hospitals in Israel. Bar-Ilan researchers continue to develop international ties with researchers from other universities through research grants from the US- Israel Binational Science Foundation (BSF) and the German-Israeli Fund (GIF). The University has hosted numerous university delegations from various countries ranging from Canada to Uganda, all of whom wish to establish scientific cooperation with BIU. Several Memorandums of Agreement were signed, the latest with the University of Potsdam in Germany, to encompass all fields of scientific research.
One of the key challenges faced by the University’s senior management, led by the new Director General, Menachem Greenblum, has been the implementation of an efficiency plan which included budget cuts across the board, on the one hand, while introducing economies such as reduction of costs expended for infrastructure and maintenance, overtime and student hours, on the other.

The administration was further tasked with the job of taking steps to rectify the management issues raised in the report of the State Comptroller. Many of these problems were addressed, and others, like hiring practices for consultants, employees in the Research Authority, absorption and promotion of new employees in the Research Authority, were in the process of being resolved. We are pleased to announce that we have also implemented the recommendations of the State Comptroller for sexual harassment, including a revision of the disciplinary bylaws.

The computerization process for the Student Administration division has progressed according to plan, and with the initial stages now completed, preparations are being made to launch the ERP system for the Student Administration and the Student Information and Service Center with a view to setting up and operating same, as well as improvements in infrastructure and internet wireless technologies – all this so as to enhance our student’s interface with the university services so critical to their lives at BIU.

The administration has endeavored to improve purchasing and logistic services for academia, establish new restaurant options for the BIU community, upgrade cellular services, and introduce automation of guest parking lots.

The building front has been a hub of activity – from creating a new home for the School of Graduate Studies to preparation of a tender for the Build-Operate-Transfer student residence and services project. At the School of Medicine, the building of Site One has been completed, as has the upgrade of classrooms and labs in the affiliate hospitals and signing of a maintenance contract with an external supplier.

The Religious-Secular Dialogue Program, unique to BIU, aims to create an atmosphere of tolerance and to establish a new dialogue in Israeli society, a dialogue that is more respectful and open to accepting others who come from different backgrounds and who hold different points of view. At the same time the over 750 Arabs who study at BIU receive personal mentoring and special courses aimed at supporting their advancement. Among many activities, there is a one-year Musical Dialogue program for Arabs and Jews that promotes mutual listening and allows the participants to better understand each other.

English language academic programs are gaining ground. The International BA Program allows students to study in Israel without having to make compromises on academic excellence inherent in learning a foreign language. English language degrees are offered in Communication (with a minor in Political Science), Economics (with a minor in Business Administration), Interdisciplinary Macro Social Sciences (Economics, Political Science, Sociology), and Interdisciplinary Micro Social Sciences (Psychology, Criminology, Sociology). The one-year Pre-med Program in the English Language for graduate students in the sciences who are interested in studying medicine prepares participants for acceptance to medical schools in Israel and abroad was launched in the 2013-14 academic year.

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In order to improve and promote media efforts, a survey was commissioned from Yifat Ltd., Israel’s largest media repository and clipping service, to examine the volume and quality of BIU’s coverage in media outlets (in Israel and abroad). The survey’s results indicated that BIU’s coverage is of a higher volume than Israel’s other universities and that most references to BIU in the media are positive. The Office has taken it upon itself to explore the problem of negative reports and looks forward to great success in this regard.

The Department is beginning to focus on internet media outlets, since most of BIU’s target audience uses this medium more than others. Consequently, it is investing more in on-line resources, both for academic and marketing promotions, and uses various platforms, such as the Ynet Judaism section, with the help of the University’s Orot Jewish Studies Channel, which enjoys a special cooperation arrangement with the Spokesman’s Office.

**Division of External Relations**

The ongoing efforts of the Division of External Relations, headed by Vice President Judith Haemoff, to translate the University’s huge body of activities into support, recognition and appreciation of the BIU Brand continues to develop from strength to strength, with Prof. Zilbershats’ encouragement and direction. This can be seen in the enhanced university presence on the web and social media, i.e., addition of some 500 video clips which have been added to our YouTube repertoire bringing the total to 1,400 with a doubling of individual viewers, an increase of 200% in the number of “likes” on Facebook, etc. A marked shift toward digital marketing has also been a focus of the Social Media Unit, particularly as regards student recruitment.

I am particularly pleased to report that the Division’s focus on the Alumni Community is also bearing fruit, and major membership drives supported by newsletters and films have led to 6,500 card-bearing members, and 40,000 alumni who receive our mailings. Almost 26,000 alumni follow our profile on LinkedIn. As reported by our Deputy and Vice Presidents, we are proud to announce that the Alumni website in English was launched this year, providing an important conduit to reach out to alumni who live abroad.

University achievements continue to be showcased in our many publications, which include a re-branding of the Midrasha, new brochures for the Schools of Engineering and Medicine, new Student recruitment materials, and more.

Managing the University brand is an important aspect of the Division’s work, and I can say with all honesty that I feel a tremendous sense of pride when I represent the University in a visual manner that is commensurate with the excellence towards which we aspire.

Opening the University up to many different constituencies is also the priority of our Events and International Visits units and key to Prof. Zilbershats’ strategic direction for the University’s positioning. Moving to a more proactive stance of event initiation rather than just organization, the Events Unit has been responsible for bringing thousands of people to campus to partake in a multitude of interesting programs which demonstrate our many different intellectual platforms. Most recently, they partnered with the Jewish Agency to organize the visit of over 750 youngsters from youth movements around the world, which was truly an inspirational sight to behold.

The International Visits unit has worked tirelessly to ensure that BIU is properly positioned to receive the dozens of high level academic and scientific delegations which come to Israel seeking partnership with Israeli universities in general and BIU in particular. This work, done in cooperation with the Vice President for Research, Research Authority and Deputy Rector, is growing from day to day. Requests from the diplomatic community to learn about BIU and its offerings have become overwhelming, particularly as a result of the highly successful Ambassadors’ Forum, which exposes them to the best of BIU lecturers who discuss pressing issues of Israeli and international relevance.

In sum, by skilful use of diverse PR conduits in tandem, the Division for External Relations has succeeded in helping to further etch BIU into the minds and hearts of Israelis and overseas friends.

**Global Resource Development Operations**

The third entity working under the capable leadership of the Deputy President is the Global Resource Development Operations, headed by Dr. Merav Galili, who works with us on a daily basis in implementing a five-year fundraising campaign designed to support a variety of key University projects which are critical to BIU’s growth and advancement. These monumental efforts made by a relatively small group of talented development professionals and dedicated lay leaders in Israel and abroad provide the “oxygen” for our ambitious drive for excellence, and I am truly grateful to the Friends of Bar-Ilan around the world for their hard work and devotion.

Among the multitude of strategically vital projects, the Division’s efforts have been instrumental to our faculty development and research efforts which I described in previous pages, particularly in the faculties of medicine, exact and life sciences, humanities and Jewish studies. The Division has also provided invaluable support for our...
The BIU Friends Associations overseas continue to be enthusiastic and dedicated partners in the University’s growth and development, and the outstanding level of cooperation achieved between our Friends, the University leadership and the Global Development team is worthy of praise. I am aware that this is the result of long hard work in relationship and confidence-building, and I hope that my presidency will contribute to these close ties now and in years to come. Indeed, still not six months in the chair, I have already been a guest of the Friends in the US, Europe and South America, with the UK and Canada also being penciled into the schedule, as has Prof. Zilbershats and Dr. Galili that there is huge potential in our own home territory.

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As of April 2014

** Brookdale, One-Year Program, Midrasha, High School Prep Programs, Overseas Students

Bar-Ilan University Student Community*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BA Students</td>
<td>8,824</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA Students</td>
<td>6,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD Students</td>
<td>2,282</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional Colleges</td>
<td>6,579</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haredi colleges</td>
<td>586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-degree students on campus**</td>
<td>4,715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: summer courses/continuing education</td>
<td>2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>31,488</td>
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** Brookdale, One-Year Program, Midrasha, High School Prep Programs, Overseas Students

Bar-Ilan University Community Clinics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number of Clients Served in 2013</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health (Psychology)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Childhood (Psychology)</td>
<td>279</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>1,508</td>
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<tr>
<td>Optometry</td>
<td>2,700</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4,842</td>
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Number of PhD Students According to Academic Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Jewish Studies</th>
<th>Humanities</th>
<th>Social Sciences</th>
<th>Life Sciences</th>
<th>Medicine</th>
<th>Engineering</th>
<th>Exact Sciences</th>
<th>Law</th>
<th>Interdisciplinary Studies</th>
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<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By 2016, due to the absorption of new faculty there is an anticipated increase of 200 PhD students.
Celebrating Our Excellence

Select Articles on BIU Achievements
Currently 30 graduate students (including six PhDs) are enrolled in the program, which includes musical and psychological courses. The ability to play piano and at least one other instrument is a unique admission requirement. "We want high quality musicians and improvisation is one of our key tools," says Prof. Dorit Amir, the program’s founding director, who treated the clients quoted above.

Each week, MA candidates study two days on campus and spend two days in supervised field work (e.g., psychiatric institutions, hospitals, centers for children at risk). "We’ve also established a research tradition," relays Amir, mentioning the dozens of grads who have conducted clinical research as part of their MA and PhD studies. In fact, BIU’s PhD track in music therapy research is Israel’s first. Recent doctoral dissertations examine the impact of music therapy on diverse populations, including Holocaust survivors (music helped to recall and work through memories, pain and hardships), Alzheimer’s patients (singing improved language abilities), victims of combat and terrorist activities (Rhythmic and collaborative drumming facilitated group cohesion and ‘drumming out the rage’), youth at risk (music illuminated and developed hidden strengths), and teens from uprooted Gush Katif settlements (improvisations released physical and emotional tension, and playing instruments together strengthened feelings of trust and aided in bonding).

"The international music therapy community is very impressed with what’s going on at BIU," says Amir. "We publish articles in highly regarded professional journals. Our grads are leaders in the field, and many of our staff members and students present at international conferences."

Amir, who plays piano, recorder, drums, and other instruments, first encountered a music therapist while working with children with CP following her IDF service in Intelligence. Drawn to the field, she chose to pursue a master’s degree in music therapy at New York University after completing her BA (special ed and criminology) at BIU and studying at the Israel Conservatory. Upon her return to Israel she established BIU’s Music Therapy Program (“inspired by the vision of Prof. Bathia Churgin, founder of the BIU Department of Music”). She later returned to NYU to obtain a doctorate.

"I love music therapy," Prof. Dorit Amir enthuses, adding, “I have much nachat from teaching our students to use music as a key communication and expression tool and see the power of music for the individual as well as for the community.”
"My grandfather gave me my passion for Torah and a commitment to joining the chain."

Rabbi Mayer Lichtenstein:
Advancing and Enhancing the Talmudic Legacy

A Yeshiva educator and college Talmud lecturer who heads a community Beit Midrash, Rabbi Mayer Lichtenstein is a BIU Doctoral Fellow of Excellence in Talmud. His dissertation, "Towards a History of Blessings before Eating in Rabbinic Literature" traces the formulation of halakha from the Second Temple (200 BCE) through the period of the Jewish Sages (600 CE).

Brought up on an analytical approach to Talmud study, which he learned from his late grandfather, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (the "Rav") and his father, Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, he says, “My academic studies broadened my horizons and utilizing research tools enriched my study.” Part of a cadre of religious Zionist rabbis who advocate combining Torah learning with academic methodology, he opines that “broad knowledge of history, sociology and realia will make Talmud more relevant for the younger generation.”

Born in New York (1964) and raised in Israel, he began at age 14 to make annual visits to the US to learn with his grandfather. Following high school, he spent a year in the Rav’s shiur at YU before enrolling at Yeshivat Har Etzion, where he attended the shiur of his father, the co-Rosh Yeshiva. A Hesder student, he served in the IDF armored corps, later receiving semicha from the Israeli Chief Rabbi, and his BA (Jewish History) and MA (Talmud) from the Hebrew University.

Pleased to be pursuing a PhD with supervisor Prof. Leib Moskowitz in BIU’s Talmud department with its “focus on content, diverse makeup and respect for tradition,” Lichtenstein is grateful for the Kahana Doctoral Fellowship which enables him to “devote more time to research.”

With plans to fully resume his teaching career upon graduation, “using my Yeshiva and scholarly knowledge to reach a higher understanding of Talmud,” the father of eight is continuing a family tradition.

“I learned most of my Torah from my father and was inspired by his wisdom, and morality,” says Lichtenstein. “My grandfather gave me my passion for Torah and a commitment to joining the chain.”
An “Up-and-Coming Woman Scientist” to Look Out For

Shoshana Naiman: Halfway through PhD studies in molecular biology, 26-year-old Shoshana Naiman is already making headlines. Chosen twice by the Israeli media as an “up-and-coming woman scientist,” the BIU Doctoral Fellow of Excellence pursues international collaborations on aging and metabolic diseases, which have resulted in extension of lifespan in animal models, and articles in top scientific journals such as Nature. A fellow in the Israeli Centers of Research Excellence (I-CORE), she is a nominee for the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting for young scientists.

“Shoshana is the best PhD student I have had,” says her advisor, Prof. Haim Cohen, citing her passion for research and excellent academic record. Collaborating with BIU life scientists Cohen and Dr. Yariv Kanfi, and Carnegie Mellon computational biologists in designing a search engine for gene expression research, she was an equal first author of the report, which was published in Nature Methods (Oct. 2013).

Born in Chicago, she immigrated to Israel alone, at age 17, with little knowledge of Hebrew. She holds a BSc in biotechnology Magna cum Laude; and an MSc in molecular biology Summa cum Laude from BIU. Recalling the challenges of learning Hebrew, she tutors immigrants and initiated a BIU service to allow foreign students free translations of science exams.

“BIU helps me forge contacts and apply for grants, and sends me to conferences,” relates Naiman, who says that without the doctoral fellowship she wouldn’t be pursuing a PhD. “I hope one day to establish my own research lab, collaborating with others to investigate molecular mechanisms of metabolic disease.”

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Unique among Israeli universities, Bar-Ilan has, from its inception, sought to acquaint every Jewish student with core Jewish values and tradition. Each year, more than 20,000 BIU students enrich their Jewish literacy, as they delve into Biblical and Talmudic works, examine central tenets of Judaism, and explore key chapters in our people's history in close to 300 courses offered by the Helene and Paul Shulman School for Basic Jewish Studies. Unique among Israeli universities, Bar-Ilan has, from its inception, sought to acquaint every Jewish student with core Jewish values and tradition, with an eye toward fostering Jewish unity, and commitment to the people and land of Israel.

The Shulman School, recently upgraded from a Center, services the entire University, including the regional and haredi colleges, and special programs. Housed in the striking Jack & Gitta Nagel Family Jewish Heritage Center, the School offers courses (including internet and independent study) in Jewish history, the Bible, Talmud, Jewish thought, Jewish art, Hebrew and Semitic languages, and more. Some 120 distinguished academicians who are also talmidei hachamim, (including 20 full-time faculty members) impart fundamental Jewish knowledge to religious and secular alike, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and intellectual inquiry. Students readily attest to the engaging courses and excellent lecturers in their course evaluations:

- “You taught me to read the Bible in a way that’s more personal and experiential. You are my role model for derech eretz.”
- “The creative way in which you relayed Jewish family law made for a real learning experience. Now I want to deepen my knowledge in the area.”
- “Sitting in class was an energizing and uplifting experience.”
- “You piqued my curiosity, instilling in me a desire to continue to enrich my knowledge about Jewish tradition and customs.”
- “Much to your credit, I have become a devotee of the Bible. For decades, my home library – replete with Biblical books and commentaries – has been gathering dust. Now I am excited to delve into these works and find a world unto itself – the story of the evolution of the Jewish people intrigues me and I study it with passion and awe.”

Contemporary Jewish History Prof. Judy Baumel Schwartz, who heads the School, highlights the importance of BJS courses in addressing widespread ignorance of our deep Jewish roots. “It’s impossible to understand the true depth and beauty of life in the State of Israel without knowing where it all comes from. It’s what epitomizes BIU for our students.” A sought after lecturer on the Holocaust, she stresses: “We teach academic Jewish studies but do not ‘proselytize.’”

During their undergrad studies, students take seven year-long BJS courses (Jewish studies majors take fewer). MA candidates take 1-2 courses. Students must also pass an exam in basic Jewish concepts. Popular courses include Halakha and Medicine, Contemporary Issues, Holidays, and the Jewish Home (when a student learned about the pidyon haben – redemption of a first-born son – the staff organized the ceremony he never had). The School regularly hosts guest lectures on topics ranging from the Rabbinical Courts to organ transplants in the light of halakha.

Over the years, the program has sought to adapt to changing needs, providing courses in Russian and French for the influx of immigrant students. Currently, the School offers two yearly courses each in English and in easy Hebrew.

The Shulman School for Basic Jewish Studies is clearly making its mark, ensuring that each and every BIU grad has core Jewish knowledge. As the students note:

“Having grown up on a left-wing, secular kibbutz, I thank you for enabling me to redress my ignorance of Jewish tradition. This was an important beginning for me and I hope to continue throughout my life, without any connection to becoming religious.”

“As a secular Jew who is far from tradition, I didn’t expect much from BJS, but after I began taking courses, a profound world unfolded before me, leaving a deep impression and bringing me closer to the traditional world.”

Finally, a Parisian-born IDF Intelligence officer, who attended his first Jewish studies course ever at BIU, was amazed to ‘learn so many things about Judaism from Megillat Ruth. Although the semester hasn’t come to a close, I already feel my outlook has changed significantly.”
When a patient is diagnosed with lung cancer, doctors typically examine murky X-ray or CT images to characterize its subtype. But what if it were possible to stratify lung cancer through the crystal clear means of mathematics? This was one question posed by the IMPROVER Diagnostics Signature Challenge, an international competition designed to assess computational approaches to classifying clinical samples. With some 50 teams in the running, top honors went to BIU Dr. Sol Efroni and his PhD student Rotem Ben-Hamo, for their method of deriving clinically-significant information from gene expression data.

“Doctors need imaging to direct cancer surgery, but molecular methods are becoming ever more important for determining post-operative treatment,” says Efroni. “Our goal in this competition was to establish predictive ‘signatures’ based on unlabeled gene expression data from tissue samples, and to link a particular computational outcome with a specific tumor type and prognosis.”

Efroni’s approach focused on a gene which, expressed at different levels, is associated with tumor type. Crediting his doctoral student Ben-Hamo with being the first to study this gene as a mediating factor in lung cancer progression, Efroni also points out that this prize-winning observation differs from the network-based studies that are his lab’s primary research focus.

“In systems biomedicine, we study not only the genes, but the networks of gene-regulated activity that drives disease,” he says. “We want to see how gene expression forms the basis of connected biological pathways that result in a particular outcome. These pathways, in turn, can point the way toward targeted therapy.”

With the publisher Landes Bioscience, Efroni has recently launched Systems Biomedicine – a journal focusing on how the emerging field of systems biology can yield clinically relevant results.
The solution is to define mathematical rules such that every computation gives you exactly the data you need, but no more.

“Networks are essential, but they create problems of privacy. Namely, how can we ensure that every component in the network learns the information it needs, without unnecessarily exposing secret data to unauthorized parties? The solution is to define mathematical rules such that every computation gives you exactly the data you need, but no more.”

Hazay describes a scenario in which sharing – and mutual suspicion – go hand in hand. “Let’s say that the CIA and FBI have two lists of suspects that they want to compare, while keeping information not common to both lists hidden,” she says, adding that this is a classic “set intersection” scenario. “Secure protocols, properly executed, can keep this kind of information from falling into the wrong hands.”

Hazay’s approach can be applied to the basic design of a distributed computer system, rendering it more secure before it begins functioning. Because it is based on software rather than hardware, it can also come to the rescue – adding a layer of security on top of an existing network, and “mopping up” problems as they are discovered. Still, Hazay says, as new technologies emerge, new challenges follow.

“One of the hottest areas of research relates to data-protection protocols for distributed components linked by an arrangement known as ‘the cloud’ – in which computationally weak devices can lease computing and storage services on demand from external servers, rather than maintaining their own infrastructure,” says Hazay. “These servers are powerful, but untrusted; if all your data is ‘in the cloud’ how can you know the answers you’re getting are correct? In my current research I’m designing new tools for secure computation in the cloud environment.”

During her PhD, Hazay spent a summer at IBM in New York, where she became co-owner of a patent related to computer security. Now, after a stint in Europe, she’s happy to be back in Israel. “I grew up at Bar-Ilan,” she says. “It’s good to be home.”
They are drawn to Bar-Ilan due to the friendly and welcoming atmosphere and the many programs and activities offered by the University – both in English and Hebrew.

“Anglo” students from both observant and secular backgrounds enjoy the general feeling of acceptance and warmth they receive from BIU faculty members.

The close-meshed Bar-Ilan University Anglo community has even drawn the attention of Nefesh B’Nefesh, the organization that provides olim with employment resources, assistance with governmental absorption, community-based guidance and support and need-based financial aid in order to make each individual’s aliyah as successful as possible.

“Due to the strong BIU Anglo community and offerings, Nefesh B’Nefesh is encouraging young singles and families to make aliyah to the neighborhood surrounding Bar-Ilan,” says Benji Davis, Advisor and Program Coordinator for the Nefesh B’Nefesh Post Aliyah Department. “We definitely see Bar-Ilan University and its environs as an attractive target for new olim,” he adds.

The BIU student community has many plans on the drawing board, such as establishing student welcoming and chesed committees to organize volunteer activities.

“It’s great to live in a place with so many people who share a common background as me,” says third-year optometry student Shai Steiman, originally from Toronto, Canada. “With the studies being as hard as they are, it’s fantastic to know that the BIU community is there to support you.”

The Jewish Agency partnered with BIU for a first-time “happening” on campus in March to offer innovative ways to enhance Jewish and Zionist informal education to over 750 college-age students representing 30 countries and 13 Zionist youth movements through lectures, entertainment, group discussions, TED style lectures and other activities.

Improving the Lives of New Olim Students on and about the Campus
“Through making the legal world more aware of behavioral considerations we can hopefully improve society as a whole, by promoting legal policies that deal with people as they really are.”

The purpose of public policy is to set expectations for good behavior — and consequences for bad behavior — in a way that encourages individuals to follow the path of rational self-interest. But according to Prof. Yuval Feldman, of the BIU Faculty of Law, there’s a catch: while policy makers typically assume that rationality plays a central role in human decision-making, most people are neither “smart” nor that “bad.”

“Traditional law rests on the idea that people will obey laws if they are awarded for compliance and punished for infractions,” says Feldman, a BIU alumnus who earned his PhD in jurisprudence and social policy from UC Berkeley and recently returned to Israel after serving as a Visiting Fellow at Harvard University’s Social Cognition Lab and its Center for Ethics. “There is a growing body of evidence suggesting that the behavioral sciences – from psychology to economics to the study of the brain – can help administrative agencies design policies that accommodate how people really act, not how they are assumed to behave. In my work, I examine how people respond to different legal formulations under different circumstances. The better we understand this dynamic, the better prepared we will be to create laws that are effective not just on paper, but in the real world.”

Exploring both conscious and non-conscious processes of decision-making in legal context, Feldman’s experimental research shines a light on the limitations — as well as the moral ambiguity — of systems predicated on classic models of crime and enforcement. “Policy makers tend to assume that every ethical decision made in response to a particular law is deliberate, and dole out punishments accordingly,” he says. “However, there are both situational and cognitive factors that affect personal decision-making of which we are entirely unaware. These factors can diminish the effectiveness of a law, but can also point toward strategies for improvement.”

To illustrate this point, Feldman describes a recent study he co-authored, in which subjects were asked to interpret ambiguous contracts. “One group of participants received a financial award for every correct answer. A second group was offered no positive incentive, and instead lost money every time they made a mistake,” he recalls. “We discovered that this second group was far more aggressive in promoting their self-serving interpretation of the contract, even though both groups faced the same economic situation.”

The decision to obey a law depends on many factors — from the law’s wording, to people’s varying motivations and cognitive abilities to absorb relevant information, to the physical environment in which decisions are being made. Despite the complexity, however, Feldman asserts that policy makers will be better equipped to create laws that really work if they take behavioral factors into account.

“There’s an erroneous assumption that when trying to regulate a particular issue — one policy fits all. What’s more, traditional legislation is predicated on the idea that breaking the law is always a deliberate act,” Feldman says. “But we now know that much decision-making is rooted in automatic, sub-conscious processes. As we gain more knowledge about these processes, it will be possible to frame laws pro-actively, in a way that reduces resistance and promotes voluntary compliance. Governments the world over are taking these issues into account as they formulate public policy, and Israel – as a leader in behavioral research – should too.”

In the future, Feldman is hoping to establish a cross-departmental, interdisciplinary infrastructure for field studies — something that he says will help speed integration of his findings into practical initiatives. “There is no question that properly constructed laws can improve the behavior of individuals,” he says. “Through making the legal world more aware of behavioral considerations, we can hopefully improve society as a whole, by promoting legal policies that deal with people as they really are.”
Cancer patients want effective medical care, and they want it now. But when it comes to cancer of the breast, there’s a problem: the initial diagnosis sometimes marks the beginning of a long process, in which doctors struggle to identify the best therapeutic approach. BIU Prof. Bilha Fischer is facing this problem with a new biotechnological solution – a fluorescent probe that shines a light on individual tumors’ hidden characteristics.

“In our lab, we’re diagnosing breast cancer, which is not a single condition, but rather a family of diseases, each characterized by the presence of specific molecular markers,” says Fischer, an expert in medicinal chemistry who holds eleven patents, has published more than 90 papers, and today chairs BIU’s Chemistry Department. “To ensure effective treatment, we need a molecular-level diagnosis of each tumor. This would allow doctors to choose the personalized strategy of chemotherapy, radiation or surgery that is most likely to work.”

According to Fischer, the key to tumor “fingerprinting” lies in small pieces of genetic information called messenger RNA, which are involved in transforming genes into the biologically active proteins. “We’ve created novel fluorescent probes that identify the specific mRNA markers present in cancer cell extracts,” she explains. “When the probes meet up with their targets, the double strands of the DNA probes unzip, triggering a bright fluorescent signal that provides molecular-level proof of the tumor’s genetic profile.”

Fischer’s system could potentially be used for early cancer detection, for defining the treatment course, and for enabling post-operative monitoring of patients. “Today, doctors identify breast cancer with a combination of ultrasound and histochemistry, but have no means of defining the individual tumor type,” she says. “Our method – which is simple, fast, cost-effective and very sensitive – could make the treatment of breast cancer more scientific, and save lives.”

In another area of her research, Fischer is developing drug candidates for the treatment of glaucoma – including one promising compound being explored within the framework of an early-stage incubator, sponsored by Israel’s Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor.

“In our lab, we’ve synthesized a compound that lowers intra-ocular pressure by 45% – that’s almost 30% percent higher than the best drugs currently on the market,” Fischer says. “Our approach also offers an alternative for medications contraindicated for patients suffering from cardiovascular problems, diabetes or asthma. The incubator will help move this project along, so hopefully it can someday become a real treatment option.”

A scientist who has developed drugs for other diseases, including diabetes and Alzheimer’s, Fischer has yet to receive FDA approval for any of her discoveries. This is because the FDA process typically takes 20 years, longer than she has been working in biomedical research. Still, Fischer remains optimistic, and committed to helping others.

“Drug development is a marathon, not a sprint,” she says, “and patience is definitely part of the prescription. But when you compare our frustration to the suffering of the people who have these diseases, it gives you perspective. The difficulties we face are really very small.”

Towards Personalized Medicine:
Prof. Bilha Fischer and the Molecular ID of Breast Cancer Tumors

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Each year, some 250 men attend the Beit Midrash, engaging in hevruta (paired) learning and shiurim. Most are enrolled in the Gemara Program, with the “Learn-When-You-Can” project targeting majors in time-intensive fields such as the sciences. Some 18 lectures in philosophy, Hasidism, and the history of halakha are also given annually.

The Halakha Program prepares aspiring community and municipal rabbis for the Israeli Chief Rabbinate exams while the Rakowitz Center for the Community Rabbinate in Israel provides a two-year practical training course for a group of 16 ordained rabbis and their wives (mostly qualified lawyers and PhD candidates), with the aim of creating a cadre of proactive community Rabbis/professionals.

The PhD Program enables 15 BIU Doctoral Fellows of Excellence to explore and publish in a specific Talmudic area. A Torah and Science elective course, on topics such as genetics and life and death issues, made its debut in spring 2014 in the Mina & Everard Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences.

The Johanne and Norman Sternthal Reshit Program equips 70 students from secular backgrounds with a deeper understanding of Jewish values and tradition through study of Bible, Talmud, and Jewish philosophy, while the “Ask the Rabbi” free service provides answers to religious questions via email, fax, or mail.

Beit Midrash community outreach includes the popular Friday Kollel and a "Yeshiva" for retired judges, bank managers and others during the week.

The Nitzotzot forum regularly convenes scientists, rabbinical scholars and PhD candidates to explore how research breakthroughs impact upon Torah and vice versa. Nitzotzot Shachar, the year-long seminar for outstanding PhD candidates from all Israeli universities, grants fellowships to some 22 students to examine cutting-edge research from a Jewish perspective.

Says Nitzotzot founder, Rabbi Shabtai Rappoport, who heads the Beit Midrash, “The Torah should not be apologetic, rather it should benefit from science and create new ideas.”

BIU’s Flagship Program: The Jesselson Institute for Advanced Torah Studies

The flagship of Bar-Ilan’s “Torah U’Madah” ideal, the Ludwig and Erica Jesselson Institute for Advanced Torah Studies uniquely enables BIU students to combine intense, high-level Torah scholarship with their academic training in diverse fields. The Institute’s Beit Midrash [for men] and Midrasha [for women] have produced thousands of graduates who figure prominently in the Israeli government, hi-tech industry, business, academia, education, the Rabbinate, law and other fields, providing exemplary Torah U’Madah models.

Approximately 80 overseas students who come to study at BIU for a semester or a year through “The Israel Experience” program, participate in the Midrasha in specially-designed classes taught in English.

A special program is available for training pre-marital coaches. Etnahta is a new program catering to students who have completed their military or national service but are not yet registered at the University, introducing them to Jewish learning and helping them decide which framework best suits their desire to continue their Torah studies.

In addition to programs offered to students, the Midrasha organizes seminars, lectures, and other public forums open to the community-at-large prior to Jewish holidays, thus serving as a magnet for women, both on and off campus, who wish to further their Jewish knowledge and strengthen their Jewish identity.

“The Midrasha,” says its director Dr. Tova Ganzel, “aims to educate future women leaders who will be able to figure prominently in the public Jewish discourse, both in Israel and worldwide.”

Over 750 women participate annually in a variety of Midrasha programs comprising some 80 different courses that cater to all levels of Jewish educational background. In the main program, Midrasha studies may be recognized in lieu of the University’s Basic Jewish Studies requirements.

The Metivta program is designed for guided study of Jewish Law or Talmud in pairs (hevrutot), while in the Reshit program, students from secular backgrounds focus on Jewish identity through familiarity with Jewish texts.

The Doctoral Program is for outstanding students who dedicate time to studying Talmud in addition to their regular graduate studies. Two unique courses offer law students the opportunity to examine the halakhic background of cases presently being argued before Israel’s rabbinical courts in depth. A prestigious Tikvah Fellowship workshop for exceptional students addresses core issues on the Israeli public agenda through the prism of Jewish sources, building an elite cadre of Jewish leaders of the future.

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“I try to understand the theology and ideology behind the Bible, and expose its key messages, which are as relevant today as they were in antiquity.”

With a passion for the Bible, Prof. Elie Assis seeks to convey the beauty and spirit of the “Book of Books” around the globe. The English-born dean of BIU’s premier Faculty of Jewish Studies has lectured to hundreds of students in Israel as well as to audiences from Korea to Japan to Belgium. Chairing Bible studies at the Israeli Ministry of Education, he implements innovative school curricula which delve into Biblical text and recurring motifs. “The Bible is the root of our history, religion, and the formation of our People,” stresses the former head of the Zalman Shamir Bible Department, who has published eight books and over 40 articles.

“I try to understand the theology and ideology behind the Bible, and expose its key messages, which are as relevant today as they were in antiquity,” relays the Hesder yeshiva grad, who served in the IDF infantry, and was a pulpit rabbi in London. A 1999 Schupf fellow, Assis, then married and the father of two, says “the Fellowship gave me a big push to finish my PhD.”

A visiting professor at the Universities of Shandong (China) and St. Petersburg (Russia), he notes that over 20 students from the Far East study Bible at BIU. “While little ancient material culture remains, our forefathers’ spiritual legacy still fascinates millions.”

Assis believes that the Bible can unite most Jewish streams and, in fact, the Faculty’s new “Open Bible” lectures draw hundreds. “The Bible’s aim is to educate and shape Jewish and religious identity. Although it’s an exemplary literary work, it was not written for creativity’s sake but rather to transmit values and ideology.”

Today, the Faculty Dean reiterates the Bible’s appeal. “The beauty is that the prophets’ words resonate in our ears, even after thousands of years. We read ancient texts about inheriting the land which have become even more relevant with the modern Zionist revival.”
The BIU campus is home to close to 750 Arab students from Moslem, Beduin, Druse, Christian, and Circassian backgrounds, who hail from towns and villages the length and breadth of Israel.

“Arab students are particularly drawn to BIU rather than at colleges closer to their homes because they are attracted to the University’s location in the center of the country, along with its one-of-a-kind courses and programs,” claims Rifat Sweidan, the Academic Advisor for Arab Students within the Office of the Dean of Students, adding that they prefer Bar-Ilan University because “their families are happy with its traditional respectful character and serene learning atmosphere.”

Sweidan, born in the Beduin village of Aramsha in northern Israel, began his academic career at Bar-Ilan (after serving as an officer in the IDF) 13 years ago, obtaining both bachelor’s and master’s degrees in social work, then going on to complete his BA, MA (and is now working on his PhD) in political science. Before obtaining his present position he volunteered in the BIU Student Union assisting the Arab sector.

“Popular courses of study at Bar-Ilan that appeal to Arab students are the University’s unique degree programs in Radiology and Imaging and in Optometry,” says Sweidan. “Our numbers are increasing annually, with 120 new students enrolling this year alone!” he adds, revealing that close to 70% of the BA, MA and PhD Arab students are women. Most students dorm in rented apartments nearby.

Along with concentrating on their studies, BIU Arab students are involved in a host of activities. Outings to the theater, movies, stand-up comedy, musical evenings and yearly trips to various parts of the country are all organized by Sweidan, along with counseling, translation services, scholarship assistance, extra courses in Hebrew and English, the BIU Arab-language website, and an intensive summer three-week-long university orientation program.

Finally, in a bid to enhance tolerance and awareness of all cultures on the Bar-Ilan campus, a special Musical Dialogue program joins Arab students along with their Jewish counterparts, promoting mutual understanding and appreciation through music.
For hundreds of severely wounded IDF combat vets and their families, Jaffa’s Rehabilitation Center for Veterans after Traumatic Brain-Injury has served as a lifeline. Since its founding 40 years ago by BIU’s Department of Psychology and Israel’s Ministry of Defense, this model project has enabled patients to lead as normal a life as possible considering their challenging disabilities which preclude a return to the mainstream. What started as a sheltered workshop has expanded over the years to include a broad range of work, social and enrichment activities. Patients come from 8:30 am – 2 pm, moving from one “station” to the next – carpentry, ceramics, silk painting, greenhouse – each according to his capabilities and attention span. They receive art, music, and occupational therapies and meet regularly with a social caseworker and psychiatrist, if needed.

“There’s nothing much like this anywhere else in the world,” elucidates BIU clinical neuropsychologist Prof. Eli Vakil, who directs the center, which is administered by BIU’s Research Authority. Currently there are 50 patients and 20 staff members – “an unbelievable ratio,” says Vakil, noting that “Israel is a leader in the rehabilitation of head trauma patients.”

It was only natural that BIU, which pioneered Israel’s first rehabilitation psychology program, should join forces with the Defense Ministry. “We have the expertise,” relates Vakil, who heads the Memory and Amnesia Research Laboratory at BIU’s Leslie and Susan Gonda (Goldschmied) Multidisciplinary Brain Research Center. Vakil served as the Jaffa center’s clinical advisor for nearly two decades before succeeding founding director BIU Prof. Solly Katz seven years ago.

Patients, known as “Haverim,” range in age from 25 until 70, and include Yom Kippur War vets as well as those wounded more recently. They elect their own social committee, which decides on funding leisure activities from income from the sale of their products. “We want to give them the feeling that they are in charge. We call it the ‘therapeutic milieu’, and it gives them a sense of dignity and pride.”

“Haverim” are especially proud of their choir, which this past July held a special concert in Jaffa to mark the debut of their third professional disk.

“With a BA from BIU and a PhD from City University of New York, Vakil cites the advantages of associating a head trauma rehabilitation program with academia: “Knowledge is amassed in a very systematic way and enables us to develop better diagnostic tools.” A BIU-Sheba Medical Center joint study indicates that through developing cognitive abilities, the brain becomes more resilient to dementia. Individuals with traumatic brain-injury (TBI) who are highly educated tend to fare better than those who are not, although the “cognitive reserve” is less likely to kick in with the more severely injured. Current research evaluates the benefits of cognitive intervention, and a large-scale study is assessing the long-term effects of memory in older TBI patients.

“I’m privileged that I can merge research with academic and clinical activities and see results in such an immediate and concrete way,” relays Vakil, crediting BIU for its pioneering community outreach. “I am proud to be part of such a university.”

Demonstrating BIU’s social commitment, the Jaffa center offers TBI Israeli combat vets with a new lease on life. “Many of our patients felt lost before they came to us. We make sure they are happy and fulfilled,” he says, adding that some patients marry and have children and the center guides them along the way.

“The fact that they get up in the morning and go to work at the center enables them and their families to conduct a relatively normal life. It would be devastating if they stayed home all day.” Affirms BIU Prof. Eli Vakil. “This is a real life-saving venture.”
It is well known that, if scratched, the rash associated with chicken pox can leave scars on the skin. Less well known is something else this disease can leave behind – a viral infection that, after many years, can reactivate in the form of Herpes Zoster, or shingles.

Shingles is a painful rash that usually lasts two to four weeks. However, in one-third of cases, this is followed by debilitating pain that lasts for months or even years.

VZV, the virus that causes shingles, only grows well in human nerve cells, making it difficult for scientists to study in the lab. To overcome this challenge, Prof. Ron Goldstein, a past president of the Israel Stem Cell Society, has developed a new system.

"Stem cells can be turned into any cell in the human body," explains Goldstein, the first researcher to successfully coax human embryonic stem cells (hESCs) into generating human peripheral sensory neurons. "Together with my colleagues, we are looking at how the VZV virus interacts with the human nerve cells we generate."

Goldstein notes that, thanks to a new vaccine, shingles incidence is down by about 50% in the US. However, that still leaves over half a million new shingles sufferers in the US alone each year. "Our goal is to reveal targets for new drugs that would help patients unable to benefit from the vaccine," he says. "Over the past two years we’ve made great strides – and this is particularly good news for vulnerable populations whose resistance is compromised."
With her bubbly, upbeat personality, it’s hard to imagine that BIU undergrad Sivan Abravaya has had to contend with major adversity during her 23 years. Born in Bulgaria, she spent the first four years of her life in an orphanage in Sofia before her adoptive Israeli parents brought her “home” to Ramat Gan. In school, she persevered to learn “the three Rs” undeterred by learning disabilities. Four years ago while serving as an IDF medic, she contracted a rare virus that left her visually impaired. But that didn’t stop her from completing her army service and enrolling last year in BIU’s Interdisciplinary Program in Neuroscience (Israel’s first and only one to grant a BSc in the field). Combining brain science with linguistics, she was drawn to BIU because of its high academic standards, cutting-edge research and Sybil Wigdor Social Involvement Unit, which she says “goes out of its way to help, with a magnifying machine and mentors to read texts and assist me in preparing for tests.”

Abravaya, who is not from a traditional background, also attends the “Reshit” basic Jewish learning program at the Midrasha, which is part of the Ludwig and Erica Jesselson Institute for Advanced Torah Studies. “My Talmud, Bible, Prayer and Jewish Thought courses are stimulating and our teachers are always willing to answer questions.”

She opines that BIU is in a league of its own in terms of empathy and social atmosphere. “We help each other, study together for tests, and eat together during breaks,” says Abravaya, who often meets up with her parents – “students” in BIU’s Brookdale Enrichment Program for the Golden Aged.

This year, engaged in volunteer initiatives “I’ve always wanted to do,” she helps high risk children with their homework, visits an elderly woman, and is spearheading a project for high schoolers to visit third agers in assisted living facilities.

Not one to be limited by disability, she asserts, “I want to obtain my BSc and MSc, pursue an academic or research career, and find better ways for people with learning challenges to study, and change attitudes via education with real emphasis on morals and ethics.”

“I see the world differently, using my other senses and intuitiveness,” she says, relating that she’s a great guesser. Once she even beat her boyfriend (a Technion grad in space and aeronautics) at Ping Pong. “He was amazed that I was able to follow his motions and figure out which way the ball was coming.”

Sivan Abravaya says she enjoys running – “and so what if I fall, I will get up and continue on!” That seems to be the BIU undergrad’s life motto as she cheerfully pursues her goals, with seeing-eye Labrador, “Happy” at her side.
Two New Law Clinics Make their Case

in the Clinical Legal Education Program for Social Justice

Bar-Ilan University’s law clinics program is unique in Israel. While the other universities offer their students the option to enroll in a legal aid clinic, at Bar-Ilan all law students are required to participate in one before graduating. This is due to the University’s ethic of encouraging social responsibility in its students.

An indication of the importance BIU places in its law clinics is the fact that it has hired a full-time professor to run the program. “This is my dream job,” enthuses Dr. Shiri Regev-Messalem, BIU’s new Academic Director of the Clinical Legal Education Program for Social Justice. “It combines my interest in academia, research and teaching with my desire to provide legal help to the disadvantaged. Bar-Ilan has invested a lot of resources into these clinics,” she adds.

Indeed, this year the Faculty of Law has added two new clinics to its roster, making a total of 10 clinics for some 200 students to choose from, a ratio of 20 students per clinic. While the eight existing clinics concentrate on issues of social concern, the main goal of the two new clinics is to expose law students to the internal legal processes within the Department of Justice and the State Attorney’s Office and to educate future lawyers to be agents of change in the public sector. The objective is to ultimately get future lawyers to impact society on a policy level as well as on a case-by-case basis – in order to truly influence social improvements.

The Criminal Justice Prosecution Clinic of the State Attorney’s Office is divided into two parts. The practical clinic takes place in Jerusalem where students go weekly to work with prosecutors and help them prepare their cases. The academic aspects of the course comprise classes held on campus that include joint courses with BIU’s Dr. David Weiner Criminal Law Clinic. Aimed at developing critical thinking, classes incorporate role-playing in which students assume opposite roles in order to gain understanding and compassion for the other side.

The Counseling and Legislation Clinic, headed by Dr. Ittai Bar-Siman-Tov and Dr. Assaf Harel, Advisor to the Attorney General, also involves a weekly visit to Jerusalem where students work with representatives of the Counseling and Legislation Unit at the Ministry of Justice on forming legislation. This is complemented by class work in which the legislative process is explored in depth. The clinic (the only one of its kind offered in Israel) gives students a unique opportunity to see how legislation works from the inside, in addition to the prestige of working with some of the top public lawyers in the country.
Israel defines itself as both Jewish and democratic. But while the definition of democracy is generally agreed upon, Judaism is variously seen as a religion, as a nation, and as a culture. Researchers at Bar-Ilan University are deeply involved in bridging the gap between Western democratic values and Judaism – in all its forms. And as Prof. Yedidia Stern explains, such ideological bridge-building is vital not only for ensuring Israel's physical survival, but also for strengthening Jewish identity, national resilience, and support for the Jewish State around the world.

"Every year I visit Brandeis University, where I teach a seminar to a group of professors – including participants from America, India and even Egypt – who then go back to their home institutions to launch Israel studies programs," says Stern, an expert on issues of religion and state who is a former Dean of the Law Faculty and currently serves as Vice President for Research at the Israel Democracy Institute. "Seminar participants gain a deeper understanding of how Israel is striving to harmonize liberal Western values and Judaism – a process that is continuously shaping public consciousness, and – if ultimately successful – will create a new, global model for the revitalization of Jewish identity, pride and commitment."

According to Stern, BIU's leadership in this area of research stems from a strategic decision related to recruitment. "In the Law School, it was decided that at least one third of the faculty should be working on questions related to the Jewish character of the State," he says, adding that such academic activities draw upon Jewish law and philosophy to provide guidance on “hot button” issues in Israeli society such as minority and women’s rights, and also to elucidate basic legal issues such as contracts, torts and property law from the Jewish perspective.

At the same time, BIU legal experts foster dialogue that plays an important role in formulating much-needed constitutional norms. "For thousands of years, Judaism had no national component – something radically different from today's experience of Jewish sovereignty," Stern explains. "Through our research, the University is helping to give voice to Jewish tradition within our modern, democratic world.

Stern stresses that the University’s contribution is not limited to the realm of law. "Academics from the BIU Jewish Studies and Humanities Faculties are involved in the preservation and advancement of Jewish language, literature and the creative arts. The Faculty of Social Sciences is helping to understand human behavior, and define policies for a just society rooted in Jewish ethical values," he says. "The main job of the Israeli university – and Bar-Ilan in particular – is to sift these influences together in order to create a coherent Israeli identity. This is the key to building a society that will not only survive, but will have a sense of meaning and purpose."

In one of his current projects, he is examining how Judaism’s foundational legal texts might be “advanced” to reflect on the changing circumstances brought about by Zionism’s success. "Jewish law pre-dates the emergence of the democratic process, and this is one of the reasons that it is difficult to apply halakhic concepts to the modern state of Israel," Stern states. "But the State is the most important Jewish phenomenon to occur in a thousand years. In my upcoming book, I ask: is there such a thing as Zionist halakha? Can a legal code that is rooted in the Jewish past – and is geared toward defining proper behavior for individuals – help the Jewish nation grapple with present-day challenges in the public sphere? If we can answer these questions, we’ll be one step closer to calming the ideological competition, and freeing up the energies needed to create a vital, unified Jewish society in Israel and abroad."
Member of Knesset
Dr. Aliza Lavie

From politics to prayer, from media to academia, BIU’s Dr. Aliza Lavie is making her mark in Israel and the Jewish world. A new member of Knesset (MK), she chairs the Knesset’s Committee on the Status of Women, sits on the Finance Committee and spearheads legislation to advance women’s rights and gender equality, and boost the number of women reps on key decision-making bodies, such as the judicial appointments and health basket committees. “When Yair Lapid asked me to join his party, I was excited to have an opportunity to impact,” says Lavie.

The former BIU Schupf scholar – whose PhD thesis focused on radio and gender in Israel – is an Israeli radio and TV program host, and member of the Council of the 2nd Authority for TV & Radio. Her best selling A Jewish Woman’s Prayer Book won a National Jewish Book Award. She also chairs a women’s Beit Midrash, promotes religious-secular discourse in Tel Aviv, and is on the directorate of a treatment center for young drug addicts.

Formally on leave from the University to serve in the 19th Knesset, the senior lecturer in the BIU School of Communication was instrumental in creating its Center for Media and Religion. Recently, she joined the School’s public diplomacy delegation, “Israel Up-Close 2014,” for a 10-day sweep of the US.

“The Schupf Fellowship has helped me pursue professional training, advance in academia and realize my career goals,” relays the mother of four, who was an IDF teacher soldier and Bnei Akiva emissary (with her husband) in Durban, South Africa. “My BIU education in gender and communication has equipped me with knowledge and tools to push through legislation and run committees.” A Brandeis U. research fellow after completing all three BIU degrees in 2002, Lavie wants to “encourage other women to advance in academia.”

A role model for many, the MK professes that “Bar-Ilan University – with its commitment to Torah and worldly pursuits, and its plethora of talented scholars – is uniquely positioned to impact on Israel’s public sphere.”
In addition, the Center has influenced public policy by running more than 300 symposia for defense, military industry, intelligence and foreign policy specialists, diplomats, ambassadors, businessmen, academics and politicians on security challenges in Asia, India, Europe, Germany, and Turkey.

Prof. Inbar relates that the BESA Center has pioneered a number of “firsts” – it was the first strategic studies center to identify Turkey as distancing itself from Israel – and the West; the first to identify the Oslo process as problematic when it was not politically correct to do so; and the first to deal with the implications of the proliferation of missiles by Israel’s enemies.

“We also hold closed dialogue-format workshops with other think tanks abroad,” adds Inbar. “We share regular dialogues with India, Singapore and other far-reaching places, as well as being very present on the North American continent. Much of our travelling (and hosting) is organized in coordination with Israeli government agencies.”

Among the Center’s highlights, Prof. Inbar notes that Benjamin Netanyahu has chosen the BESA podium as the venue from which to elucidate his key diplomatic policies eight times over the past 20 years, both as Opposition Leader and Prime Minister, most recently at the Center’s 20th anniversary international conference on “Israel Towards 2020: Perils and Prospects.”

Looking ahead to challenges the Center is addressing, Prof. Inbar cites that it is at the forefront of the fight against the ongoing anti-Israel BDS campaign.

“One thing is certain. In the years to come the BESA Center will continue to be committed to advancing a realist, conservative, and Zionist agenda in the search for security and peace for Israel.

Contributing to the Public Debate:

**Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies Celebrates Two Decades of Achievements**

This year the Begin-Sadat (BESA) Center for Strategic Studies was again ranked one of the top ten think tanks in the Middle East and North Africa by the prestigious Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program at the University of Pennsylvania. The distinction is not surprising. Since its founding 20 years ago, the Bar-Ilan University think tank has garnered impressive global recognition. It has partnered with the best global think tanks; published in top academic journals; been consulted by defense and foreign affairs ministries worldwide; and its researchers have been quoted in the leading newspapers, including The Los Angeles Times, New York Times, Time magazine, Wall Street Journal, and Washington Post, as well as in the media in Australia, Canada, China, England, France, Greece, India, Spain, and Turkey.

“I sense that our contribution to public debate is tangible,” states BESA Center Director Prof. Efraim Inbar. “BESA Center publications and policy recommendations are being discussed by senior Israeli decision-makers in military and civilian life, the defense and foreign affairs establishments in Israel and abroad, the diplomatic corps, the press, the academic community, leaders of Jewish communities around the world, and the educated public.”

Over the past 20 years, the BESA Center has produced over 250 original policy papers on cyber warfare, the diplomatic process with the Palestinians, Egyptian revolution, French-Israeli security cooperation, Hizballah, IDF force structure and budget, Iranian nuclear weapons, Muslim Brotherhood, Saudi-Israeli relations, South Korea’s Mideast policy, the Syrian civil war and chemical weapons, Turkish-Israel relations, and more. It has published 25 best selling books, including the recent *The Arab Spring, Democracy and Security* (Yediot Ahronot Books and Routledge Press, 2013).

“We share regular dialogues with India, Singapore and other far-reaching places, as well as being very present on the North American continent. Much of our travelling (and hosting) is organized in coordination with Israeli government agencies.”

Prof. Efraim Inbar

Founder of the BESA Center

Thomas O. Hecht

Founder of the BESA Center
Bar-Ilan University’s Faculty of Jewish Studies and each of its departments is the largest and most comprehensive of its kind in the world. Bar-Ilan is the only university that covers all areas of Jewish study, among them: Bible, Dead Sea Scrolls and Second Temple Literature, Rabbinic Literature, Medieval Literature, Kabbala and Hasidism, Modern and Contemporary History, Jewish Intellectual History, Jewish Philosophy, Archaeology and Land of Israel Studies, and Jewish Art. The Faculty strongly emphasizes research into Hebrew language, as well as Ladino and Yiddish, the study of Semitic languages and Near Eastern studies.

Exemplary Scholarly Reputation

Jewish Studies faculty members are internationally-renowned and respected for their scholarly research, appearing regularly at international conferences and venues. With a number of its scholars winners of the coveted Israel Prize, every year dozens of books and articles are published in the most highly regarded journals of Jewish research. Major works include the Biblical Dictionary edited by the late Prof. Menachem Zvi Kaddari, A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Periods by Prof. Michael Sokoloff, and the latest publication of Mikra’ot Gedolot based on the unique Aleppo Codex manuscript, a project led by Prof. Menachem Cohen, all internationally acclaimed as the gold standard for works of this nature.

Making an Impact on Jewish Education in the Jewish State

The Faculty of Jewish Studies plays an integral role in designing Jewish studies educational programs and curricula for the school system of the State of Israel. A number of senior faculty members work hand-in-hand with educators in the Ministry of Education and with textbook publishers, playing a key role in shaping Jewish education both in the religious and secular classroom in such subjects as Bible, Jewish history, Hebrew language and Talmud, among others. In addition, the Faculty trains the largest number of Jewish studies teachers in the country.

International Influence

The Faculty of Jewish Studies is a magnet for international students, especially those from the U.S. and the Far East (China and Korea, in particular), who are drawn to the Faculty by virtue its high level of scholarship and the singular advantage of Bar-Ilan having all the disciplines of Jewish study readily available “under one roof.” “Our main goal is to expand our international influence even more,” says the new Faculty Dean, Prof. Elie Assis. “We want to create a major international school that will attract people from all over the world to the Faculty of Jewish Studies at Bar-Ilan University.”

Bar-Ilan is the only university that covers all areas of Jewish study...
Prof. Shamma Friedman, Israel Prize Laureate for Talmud Research

Prof. Shamma Friedman, of BIU’s Naftali-Yaffe Department of Talmud, is the recipient of this year’s Israel Prize for Research in Talmud for his “enormous and varied study of Talmudic literature, which has earned him an international reputation as a leading speaker on the study of the Mishna and Tosefta [supplement to the Mishna], and questions of literary structure and formation of the Talmud text,” according to the Prize selection committee.

Prof. Friedman is considered one of the outstanding scholars of rabbinic literature of our time. His online Talmud Text Databank website encompasses an extraordinary collection of virtually all primary textual witnesses of the Babylonian Talmud, including all full surviving manuscripts of Oriental, Ashkenazic, Sephardic and Yemenite provenance; complete manuscripts and first printed editions of tractates of the Babylonian Talmud, and over one thousand fragments from the Cairo and European archives—many as both texts and digital images.

Prof. Friedman was born in the United States in 1937. He was ordained as a rabbi by the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1964 and received his doctorate there in 1966. He has taught Talmud and rabbinics at Harvard University, the Jewish Theological Seminary, Tel Aviv University, the Hebrew University, and the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies, and has taught and supervised students of Talmud at BIU for two decades. A member of the Academy of the Hebrew Language, in 2010 he received the prestigious Landau Prize in Rabbinic Literature and Talmud.

Jewish Studies in Action

Jewish Studies Facts & Figures

- 1500 courses and programs
- 150 staff members
- 9 academic departments
- 23 centers and research institutes
- 30 endowed chairs
- 2,500 undergraduate and graduate students of whom 400 are doctoral candidates
- 14,000 students in the Helena and Paul Shulman School of Basic Jewish Studies
Dr. Ronit Irshai:
Spearheading a
Spiritual Revolution
for Modern Orthodox Women

Dr. Ronit Irshai is fueling an Orthodox feminist revolution. One of a select cadre of scholars exploring the “dynamite combination” of halakha and feminist thought, she is a sought-after speaker, author of an innovative work on fertility and Jewish law, and activist in the Orthodox Jewish feminist organization Kolech. “My firm commitment to halakha, human dignity and equality inspires me to find ways to increase women’s involvement in synagogue and other rituals,” stresses Irshai, a former Doctoral Fellow of Excellence and recipient of a Schupf post-doctorate scholarship. “This is Tikkun Olam!”

After hearing Prof. Tamar Ross’s “fascinating lectures” on Judaism and feminism, she enrolled in BIU’s nascent gender studies program, learning with its founder, the late Prof. Dafna Izraeli, with Ross and Prof. Noam Tohar as advisors. “My doctoral fellowship afforded me with a great opportunity and crucial support,” recalls Irshai, who was then expecting her fifth child. Now the program’s academic advisor and a lecturer, she was a visiting scholar at Harvard Divinity School – “a dream experience” for Irshai, the first in her family to obtain a PhD.

“BIU is the only university that deals in depth with the connection between Judaism and feminism – an oxymoron for many secular feminists,” she says. “Fostering a feminist approach to the philosophy of Jewish law is still a challenging task both within academia and in the Modern Orthodox community. However slowly, but surely, we see progress.”

Charting a bold path with her hybrid commitment to both halakha and feminism, Irshai, who dons a tallit and reads the Torah in her synagogue (from the women’s section) advocates “consulting the books to find ways to enable women to enlarge their part. I see it as a spiritual revolution to bring women closer to holiness.”
Established in 2011, the new Bar-Ilan School of Medicine in the Galilee is expected to improve both the local medical infrastructure and access to patient care. But the most dramatic, long-term change may come from the School’s educational philosophy, which provides students with a thorough grounding in the “translational” scientific research upon which all clinical advances depend. By recruiting faculty members from front lines of basic science, the School helps students understand the mechanics of the maladies against which they, as professional clinicians, will do battle.

Hepatitis C – and the Cancer Connection

Dr. Meital Gal-Tanamy recently returned to Israel from the University of Texas. Her work relates to Hepatitis C, an infectious disease linked to cancer onset.

“Hepatitis C is a major cause of both chronic liver disease and liver cancer,” Gal-Tanamy says. “In our lab, we’re examining how the human immune system responds to Hepatitis C infection. This may eventually help us design a new vaccine that could save lives.”

In another project, Gal-Tanamy is examining the three-way balance – between the viral genome, the liver cell genome, and the immune response – that “tips” the liver toward malignancy. This may generate new treatments for liver cancer and liver cancer patients.

Effective chemotherapy depends on a number of factors, including patient-specific DNA mutations. In our lab, we examine cancer tissue samples to identify biomarkers linked to particular treatment outcomes. This gives a molecular ‘mugshot’ that will someday allow doctors to pre-screen their patients, and select the treatment – or combination of treatments – that is most appropriate. This approach may also generate renewed interest in existing medications that failed clinical trials in the past, but may be effective in certain cases.”

Personalized Medicine

Cancer is also the focus of Prof. Izhak Haviv, who recently returned to Israel from a senior research position in Australia. According to Haviv, successful treatment for cancer depends on the drug – and the patient.

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The Genetics of Aging

Muscle and bone-related ailments are also being examined. Dr. David Karasik – an expert in the genetics of aging who taught at Tel Aviv University, Boston University and Harvard Medical School – analyzes patients’ pre-disposition for developing inherited conditions such as muscular dystrophy, osteoporosis and osteoarthritis.

Now directing the School’s Musculoskeletal Genetics Lab, Karasik takes a systems-level approach to identifying genetic patterns that govern disease symptoms. He is also involved in international research groups that pool their data in order to create large-scale analyses of healthy and diseased individuals. “The goal of this type of research is to create a ‘roadmap’ for preventative medicine – something that will help us all lead healthier and longer lives.”

From the Lab to the Clinic

By linking practical training to an exposure to advanced translational research, the Medical School is creating a cadre of deeply knowledgeable doctors who are equipped to promote health in the north – and throughout the country.
Using a real stethoscope to monitor a stuffed animal’s heartbeat is pure fun for any child. But last year’s “Teddy Bear Hospital” – held at the BIU School of Medicine in the Galilee – is part of a serious mission: to integrate medical education with outreach to community members of all ages.

“The idea was to help young children overcome their fear of doctors,” explains Prof. Andrew Luder, Vice Dean of the Medical School’s four-year program. “Our mission is to be accountable to society, reaching out to children, the elderly, or anyone in between.”

The Medical School clinical curriculum requires first-year students to conduct a study within a health-related community institution. Under the supervision of faculty mentors, students evaluate the institution’s structure, its needs, and its effectiveness, and – at a special end-of-year program open to the entire faculty – present suggestions for improvement.

Another program is the Chronic Pain Project, in which each student “adopts” a patient suffering from a chronic condition such as diabetes or osteoarthritis. Visiting patients in their homes and accompanying them on doctor visits and hospitalizations, students gain empathy and interpersonal skills that will serve them well with future patients.

The Medical School also presents health-related “open days” and lectures, including an explanation of the government’s campaign to vaccinate the public against a recent outbreak of polio.

According to Luder, this model community outreach is innovative in Israel. “Just like our emphasis on translational research, our goal is to have a positive impact on the community,” he says. “This means being in touch, on all levels.”
Select Academic Conferences and Events

A sampling of academic conferences and events that took place in recent months.

September 2013
- Israel National Research Center for Electrochemical Propulsion (INREP) Annual Meeting (Department of Chemistry)
- An Evening of Science, with the Minister of Science, Technology and Space, Yaakov Pen (Research Authority)
- Magic & the Brain [Leslie & Susan Gonda (Goldschmied) Multidisciplinary Brain Research Center]

October 2013
- Zvi Medical Center’s Conference for Midwives and Gynecology [School of Medicine in the Galilee]
- 20th String Processing and Information Retrieval Symposium (SPIRE) [Department of Computer Science]
- BESA Center 20th Anniversary Conference – Israel Towards 2020: Perils and Prospects, with address by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [Begin-Sadat (BESA) Center for Strategic Studies] (See article on p...)
- Law, Society and Economics in a Changing Country: Symposium honoring the publication of Supreme Court Justice Daphne Barak-Erez’s two new books [Faculty of Law]
- Israel Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (ISPRA) Conference [Louis & Gabi Weisfeld School of Social Work]
- Humanists at Work. On Research and Academic Conference Marking the 40th Anniversary of the Yom Kippur War [Department of Middle Eastern Studies]

November 2013
- Sport and Media [School of Communication]
- The 21st Marathon for Ladino Research Marking the Tenth Anniversary of the Ladino Center [Naime & Yehoshua Salti Center for Ladino Studies]
- Nutrition, Feeding and Development in Early Childhood from Research to Practice [Baker Center for the Study of Development Disorders in Infants and Young Children]
- The Biblical Crops Society of Israel [Mina & Everard Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences]

December 2013
- The 18th Conference on Juvenile Diabetes [School of Medicine in the Galilee]
- Broadening Geographical Horizons – The 54th Conference of the Israel Geographical Association [Department of Geography and Environment]
- TED Talks at the University
- International Academic Conference of the Raymond Ackerman Family Chair in Israeli Corporate Governance [The Graduate School of Business Administration]
- International Conference on All Ovolo Photovoltaics [Department of Chemistry]
- International Conference: Democratization of Risk Governance [Faculty of Law]

January 2014
- Challenging Hegemonic Culture: Jewish and Non-Jewish Voices in the Debates on Conversions and Assimilation in Germany before World War I [Israel & Golda Koschitzky Department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry]
- International Workshop on Trauma and the Family: A Life Span Perspective [Louis & Gabi Weisfeld School of Social Work]
- Research Workshop of the Israel Science Foundation and the Research Institute for Econometrics [Department of Economics]
- White Coat Ceremony [School of Medicine in the Galilee]
- International Workshop on Thermal Analysis for Energy & Materials Applications [Department of Chemistry]
- International Winter Workshop on Symmetrical Cryptography [Department of Computer Science]

February 2014
- International Research Workshop on Focus Sensitive Expressions from a Cross Linguistic Perspective [Lechter Institute for Literary Research and the Lewis Family Foundation for International Conferences in the Humanities]
- My Bible is Open – A Series of Lectures on the Bible [Zalman Shamir Bible Department]
- The Lifelong Bond of Siblings: Conference on the Siblings of Adults with Intellectual Disabilities [Louis & Gabi Weisfeld School of Social Work]
- Concert #5: Gustav Mahler [Department of Music]

March 2014
- The 8th Annual Psychology Conference for Students [Department of Psychology]
- The Jews of Georgia: History and Culture [Aharon & Rachel Dahan Center for Culture, Society and Education in the Sephardic Heritage]
- Capability Enhancement through Performance Feedback Learning [Graduate School of Business Administration, the Economics Department, and the Management Department]
- Macro Economics Forum [Department of Economics, Abaran Meir Center for Banking, Azrieli Center for Economic Policy]
- The New Jewess: Gertrud Kolmar’s Critique of German Liberalism [Department of Comparative Literature – World Literature]
- Not That Safe, Yet Held: The Joint Effect of Need for Closure and Risk Aversion on Investment Decisions [Graduate School of Business Administration]

April 2014
- Annual Optometry Conference [Department of Optometry, Mina & Everard Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences]
- Equality and Affirmative Action [Faculty of Law]
- The Quest for Content: How User-Generated Links Can Facilitate Online Exploration [Graduate School of Business Administration, Department of Economics, Department of Management]
- Cultivating Excellence: Civil Marriage [Faculty of Law]
- Impact-Retraining Workshop: Effective Soft Skills Development [Office of the Vice President for Research]
- From the Seder to the Mimouna [Aharon & Rachel Dahan Center for Culture, Society and Education in the Sephardic Heritage]
- Writing and Literature - Renewed Collaborations: International Psychoanalytic Conference [Bar-Ilan University Senate Committee for Interdisciplinary Studies, The Program for Hermeneutics and Cultural Studies]
Awards and Prizes

Prof. Doron Aurbach, of the Department of Chemistry and Director of the Nano CleanTech Center at the Bar-Ilan Institute of Nanotechnology and Advanced Materials (BINA), was awarded the International Battery Association (IBA) Teager Award for his work in advancing battery technology.

Dr. Ido Bachelet, of the Mina & Everard Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences, was awarded the Leon and Maria Taubeblatt Prize for Excellence in Medical Research for 2012/2013 for his research on biological & biomedical applications of DNA-based molecular robots.

Prof. Gerershon Bacon, of the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry, together with Dr. Mirjam Rajner, of the Program for Jewish Art, won an ISF grant for an international research workshop to investigate the Holocaust in Yugoslavia. The workshop is partly sponsored by Yad Vashem.

Dr. Yael Bloch-Elkon, of the School of Communication, was honored with the prestigious Bruce E. Gronbeck Political Communication Research Award.

Dr. Emanuele Dalla Torre, of the Mina & Everard Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences, was awarded the Leon and Maria Taubeblatt Prize in Sciences and Research in the robotics category from Mifal HaPayis.

Dr. Omry Koren, of the School of Medicine in the Galilee, was awarded the prestigious Alon Fellowship.

Prof. Sam Lehman-Wilzig, Vice Head of School of Communication, was appointed to a new council started by the Minister of Communication, “Public Council for Regulation of the Future of Commercial Broadcasts”

Rabbi Dr. Aharon Lichtenstein, member of BIU’s Board of Trustees and Council of Founders, who serves as dean of the Har Etzion Yeshiva and is widely regarded as a leader of Modern Orthodoxy, is the recipient of this year’s Israel Prize for his contribution to “Jewish Religious Literature”

Prof. Yehuda Lindell, of the Department of Computer Science, was awarded an ERC research grant.

Prof. Amikam Nachmani, past Chairman of the Department of Political Science, has been awarded the 2013 Minas Nomikos Prize for Security Research Excellence from the Greek Research Institute for European American Studies (HIEAS).

Prof. Gideon Parchomovsky, of the Faculty of Law, is the recipient of the Zeltner Prize for senior researchers.

The Ruth and Emanuel Rackman Center for the Advancement of the Status of Women in the Faculty of Law has received the Gorni Prize from the Israeli Association of Public Law for its noteworthy activities in promoting human rights.

Prof. Gerald Steinberg, of the Department of Political Studies and Founder and President of NGO Monitor, received the 2013 Menachem Begin Award on behalf of the organization.

Prof. Galina Yanovsky, of the Department of French Language and Culture, received an Order of Chivalry (Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Palmes académiques) from the French Ministry of Education.

Changing of the Guard and New Appointments

Prof. Kimmy Caplan, of the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Department of Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry, was appointed a member of the Board of Directors of the American Association for Jewish Studies (AJS).

Dr. Tova Ganzel, of the Zalman Shazar Department of Bible and the Midrasha, is the new Director of the Midrasha, in the Ludwig & Erica Jesselson Institute for Advanced Torah Studies.

Prof. Yuval Garti, of the Department of Physics, is the new Director of the Bar-Ilan Institute of Nanotechnology and Advanced Materials (BINA).

Dr. Eli Even is the new Director of the Bar-Ilan Research Authority.

Prof. Aren Maest, of the Martin (Szusz) Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology, was appointed Associate Editor of Israel Exploration Journal.

Prof. Shulamit Michaeli, of the Mina & Everard Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences, was appointed its Dean.

Prof. Louis Rowen, of the Department of Mathematics, was named Fellow of the American Mathematical Society (AMS).

Prof. Susan Rothstein, of the Department of English Literature and Linguistics, was appointed a member of the Academia Europaea.

Prof. Malka Schaps, of the Department of Mathematics, is the new Dean of the Faculty of Exact Sciences.

Prof. Eliezer Schlossberg, of the Department of Arabic, was appointed Chairman of the Academic and the Arab Islamic World Advisory Committee of the Israel Ministry of Education.

Prof. Shlomo Shpiro, of the Department of Political Studies, is its new Chairman.

Prof. Yarda Soosalie, of the Louis & Gali Weissfield School of Social Work, was appointed Chairman of the Social Work Council.