Into the Next 50 Years

Bar-Ilan University Jubilee
1955-2005

Into the Next 50 Years
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Introduction

As Bar-Ilan University celebrates its 50th year, we have already begun laying the foundation for the next 50 years. Innovative new programs are being undertaken, targeting growth and excellence, with the aim to catapult the University into the 21st century. These plans can only succeed with your help. The University raised $250 million in contributions over the past decade. Our new challenge is to raise the same amount in half the time.

Our story

Bar-Ilan University is the world’s leading institute of higher learning which provides an environment for academic excellence to Jews of every level of observance as well as to the community at large. Firmly committed to the Jewish people, studies and culture, and to deepening Jewish literacy among its diverse student population, the University has also achieved an international reputation in the sciences and the humanities. Although home to the largest student body in the country, the University has succeeded in generating a sense of personal attention and a family-like atmosphere for the more than 30,000 students, faculty and scientists on its main 135-acre campus just outside Tel-Aviv and in five regional colleges across Israel. Since Bar-Ilan’s inception in 1955, this nurturing community has proven to be the right formula for building bridges between Israel’s diverse entities and molding leaders in every field of human endeavor.

Our plans

Bar-Ilan intends to raise $250 million between 2005 and 2010 in order to finance exciting new programs within the following campaign categories:

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Our case

Bar-Ilan donors represent a cross-section of modern Jewish life spanning the globe, from the Americas to Europe to Australia. Thanks to their generous contributions over the years, Bar-Ilan has become one of the fastest growing universities in Israel, with a strong financial base and a continuously improving academic infrastructure. We turn to our old friends, as well as to the new generation of Jewish philanthropists, to help raise the $250 million required by the University to sustain its stellar growth well into the 21st century. Together, we will turn the Bar-Ilan dream of a world-class institution centered on the values of Judaism, pluralism and democracy in Israel into a reality.

Campaign Chairman’s Message

It is an honor to serve as Chairman of Bar-Ilan University’s $250 million Jubilee Campaign. The benefits emanating from Bar-Ilan are felt not only within Israel’s economy but throughout the Jewish world, in a wide range of scientific and academic disciplines that bring value to humanity as a whole.

Bar-Ilan University is not only one of Israel’s largest academic communities – it also fulfills a unique mission.

Bar-Ilan plays a critical role in maintaining and revitalizing the Jewish nature of the State of Israel, while integrating successive waves of new immigrants and ensuring that Israel can successfully compete in the global economy. It does so by recruiting faculty and producing graduates who embody the highest standards of excellence in scientific and academic research, and who bear a deep commitment to the Jewish community.

With the Jubilee Campaign, we launch a comprehensive development plan aimed at catapulting Bar-Ilan into the 21st century, firmly establishing the University as a strategic asset of world Jewry for decades to come.

There are academic and capital projects to suit every interest and budget. While Bar-Ilan University is proud to offer you this unique opportunity to invest in our collective futures, your children and grandchildren will be the true beneficiaries.

I invite you to join me, and other forward-thinking individuals, to help make Bar-Ilan’s next 50 years an outstanding success.

Prof. Yaacov Neeman
Jubilee Campaign Chairman
President's Message

These are promising and challenging times for the Jewish People.

Some of us are blessed with the capability to influence the future and to lead the way toward a tomorrow filled with promise. As Bar-Ilan University celebrates its Jubilee, we call upon you to help us forge a better world.

In the 50 years since the University’s establishment, Bar-Ilan has assumed the unique responsibility of building bridges between modernity and tradition, for the benefit of the developing State of Israel and for the Jewish people. Our profound commitment to advancing scientific excellence through groundbreaking research, while providing a unique Jewish learning experience, has made Bar-Ilan University a singular and distinctive academic leader.

With the help of visionary contributors over the past half century, Bar-Ilan has developed its 135-acre campus into a world-class institution that annually educates over 30,000 of Israel’s future leaders. To accommodate this expansion, we have recently completed the first phase of construction on our new north campus, effectively doubling the physical plant of the University. The architectural splendor of the north campus was awarded the Council for a Beautiful Israel’s most prestigious prize, at a ceremony at the residence of the President of the State of Israel.

Our faculties – including Jewish Studies, Social Sciences, Exact Sciences, Life Sciences, Humanities and Law – are second to none, our scientists are at the forefront of their fields, and our graduates are highly valued in the public, industrial, business and academic sectors. Our core curriculum of Jewish Heritage Studies, required of all undergraduates, is a unique model for closing the secular-religious divide.

But our task is far from complete, as we strive to build an advanced, technological society on the foundation of an enlightened and pluralistic Jewish democracy.

Our Jubilee year represents an historic opportunity not only to reflect with pride on our accomplishments to date – but also to plan our objectives for the next 50 years.

Bar-Ilan University’s $250 million Jubilee Campaign will provide the financial resources required to elevate our already world-class institution to new lofty levels of excellence, attracting top scientists with new state-of-the art facilities and fulfilling our unique role as thought-leaders for the Jewish world.

Your active participation in the Jubilee Campaign will enable our scientists and scholars to remain focused on cutting-edge research and original thinking. Flagship programs like the institutes for Nanotechnology, Biblical Archaeology, and Judaism and Israel – and the mentoring of a new generation of doctoral fellows – are among the ambitious goals we are determined to achieve.

Throughout the illustrious history of our people, when we collectively confront the challenges, we are ultimately successful in shaping our future.

We turn to you who share the vision, to share in the responsibility and the rewards.

Prof. Moshe Kaveh
President of Bar-Ilan University
Flagship Programs

The merit of a great university is not measured in the here and now. Rather, it is calculated according to its ability to create a coherent vision for the future, and by anticipating the intellectual challenges that will shape public discourse for years to come.

Bar-Ilan University has identified a number of Flagship Programs that will bring its brightest minds together, and is lending unstinting support to their efforts as they examine the great themes of human culture. Bridging the gap between artifact and innovation, unique colloquia relating to Biblical Archaeology, the fate of contemporary Jewry in the Diaspora, and the place of democracy in modern Israel are giving historical perspective to our evolving society. In the Exact Sciences, cutting-edge centers for Neurobiology, Stem Cell Research and Gene Therapy are putting the University on the frontlines of the biotechnological revolution.

Prof. Yedidia Stern
The Insititute for Judaism and Israel

“As Israelis, we draw from two civilizations – one based on liberal Western values and the other on Jewish traditional culture. Forming a coherent identity out of these two influences is not just important – it is the job of Israeli society.”
While continuing to teach at the Law School, Stern has spearheaded a range of legal and social initiatives in cooperation with the Israel Democracy Institute and YACHAD – a Hebrew acronym for Secular-Religious Relations, an organization in which he serves as President. He is also a member of the five-person Shamgar Commission, which is charged with drafting a constitution for the State of Israel. And since the fall of 2005, Stern has headed a new academic enterprise affiliated with Bar-Ilan University: The Institute for Judaism and Israel.

"As Israelis, we draw from two civilizations – one based on liberal Western values and the other on Jewish traditional culture," says Stern. “As jurists, we are expected to provide answers for major dilemmas that affect society as a whole.”

As a 20-year BIU faculty veteran and former Dean of the Bar-Ilan Faculty of Law, Stern now devotes half of his time to issues of religion and state in hope of softening the friction between traditional and secular Jews in Israel.

The Institute will sponsor a bi-annual international conference on the future of the Jewish People, promote legislation conducive to religious/secular coexistence, and encourage cross-talk between leaders from the academic and yeshiva worlds. Furthermore, Stern hopes to “reshape the public consciousness” by supporting the creation of “cultural masterpieces” that will give voice to the uniqueness of the Jewish People.

“We are paying the price of globalization,” says Stern, stressing that without indigenous developments in art, theater and music, Israel may “assimilate” itself out of existence. “The question of who is a Jew is not just a religious issue,” he says. “If we are to live together, we must forge an Israeli identity out of a shared cultural life.”

Stern sees Bar-Ilan’s endorsement of the new Institute as evidence of the University’s commitment to social and cultural involvement, as well as to the support of innovative research that blurs traditional academic boundaries. “Bar-Ilan is also launching other interdisciplinary institutes, including one for Biblical Archaeology, as well as integrated programs in Medicine and the experimental sciences,” he says, pointing out that such flagship initiatives enrich campus life by attracting leading thinkers to the University. “Beyond regular degree programs, specialized research groups like these set the agenda for the future.”

And as a man who has spent much of his career in the “trenches” of the “real-world” conflicts between modern and traditional cultures, the presence of Yedidia Stern at the helm of the new Institute for Judaism and Israel seems to ensure that its agenda will be anything but “academic”.

Through its Flagship Programs, Bar-Ilan is emerging as an outstanding model of forward-thinking academic governance, and has established itself as a lightning rod for the electrifying ideas hidden just beyond the horizon.
Physical Plant

It only takes a minute – but a stroll between the The Jack and Gitta Nagel Family Jewish Heritage Center, the Mordecai and Monique Katz Interdisciplinary Studies Building and the Jerome L. Stern Family Graduate Studies Center feels like a giant leap into the future. Leaving behind the structures that hearken back to the University’s humble beginnings, this is the shining gateway to the North Campus – the focus of an expansion that has doubled the University’s size over the past five years. Providing much-needed physical space for Bar-Ilan’s growing student body – particularly in graduate-level programs – the North Campus reflects the administration’s firm commitment to both educational and aesthetic excellence, by offering students and faculty the unparalleled opportunity to work in state-of-the-art, specialized facilities. In keeping with Bar-Ilan’s reputation as a world-class research institution, the North Campus is dotted with dramatic structures designed by some of the world’s top architects.

Over the next five years, an ambitious building drive will enhance these already impressive facilities with dedicated buildings for Nanotechnology, Engineering, Humanities, Education, Social Sciences and Jewish Values – as well as classrooms, libraries, dormitories, and a new sports complex that will serve Bar-Ilan’s student population and the wider community.

Ezra Yevarkan
Engineering Student

“The improvements in BIU’s physical plant over the past few years make a world of difference for today’s students. We can focus on our studies and optimize our time on campus far better than ever before.”
Attending a religious boarding school, Yevarkan completed a rigorous program in Physics and Gemara, and also attained an excellent command of English. By eleventh grade, his hard work paid off – in the form of an invitation to tour schools in the United States as a representative of the State of Israel. But despite the offer’s prestige, Yevarkan felt he had something more important to do. “I joined my class on the March of the Living in Poland,” he says, “After all, it was the children and grandchildren of European Jewry that took care of me in Ethiopia.” Visiting the camps fueled Yevarkan’s motivation to contribute to the physical defense of Israel. However, after a four-year stint in the IDF, he turned down a military career in favor of Bar-Ilan University.

Yevarkan chose electrical engineering – “maybe because I almost electrocuted myself a couple of times when I was a kid,” he jokes. Moving into the dorms on campus, Yevarkan soon found himself putting in long hours in the Physics building and the Yed Lool Computer Center. “Engineering is still relatively new at Bar-Ilan,” says Yevarkan, a member of the program’s second class and its first-ever Ethiopian participant. “When the new Engineering building on the North Campus is finished in 2008, the department will have more labs and classrooms, and will be able to attract more students and faculty.” Still, he says, getting in on the ground floor has advantages. “I’ve gotten excellent instruction, and a lot of personal attention.”

Yevarkan has gotten lots of attention from outside the University as well. In addition to his studies, he works at Hewlett Packard in Rehovot, and he hopes to continue there full-time after graduation. The job was facilitated through Atidim – a joint IDF-Jewish Agency project that provides mentoring and scholarship funding for outstanding students from underprivileged backgrounds. The program was spearheaded by former Defense Minister and IDF Chief of Staff Shaul Mofaz – himself a Bar-Ilan alumnus. According to Yevarkan, the participation of such well-known figures sends an important message – about inclusion, access and hope for the future.

Like a seed that needs fertile soil, successful education begins with the right environment. With bold new building projects sprouting up all over campus, Bar-Ilan is dedicated to giving every member of the University community the best conditions in which to learn and grow.
Nanotechnology Institute

Situated at the microscopic meeting point between Chemistry, Biology, Engineering and Physics, Nano-science – the study and manipulation of matter at the atomic scale – is one of today’s most exciting fields of endeavor. At Bar-Ilan University’s Nanotechnology Institute – a $100 million enterprise partnering the Israeli government, BIU and donors – over 200 faculty members and graduate students devote themselves full-time to the secrets of the “small”, in an environment that nurtures basic science while encouraging the smooth transfer of promising ideas to industry.

The Bar-Ilan faculty has already pioneered internationally recognized advances in the fields of Nano-Energy, Nano-Environment, Nano-Medicine, Nano-Security and Nano-Materials. As part of the Jubilee Campaign, our multidisciplinary Nanotechnology research, which is currently spread over the campus, will move into a new 172,000 square foot dedicated triplex on the South Campus, where cutting edge facilities will speed the pace of discovery. The Nanotechnology Triplex is scheduled for completion in 2008.

By committing itself to cracking the tiniest of mysteries, Bar-Ilan research is opening up new, wider vistas of the possible – for the good of humankind.

Prof. Arie Zaban
Bar-Ilan Nanotechnology Institute

“Israel is a tiny country with limited natural resources. Bar-Ilan is at the forefront of scientific research that may lead to new, environmentally-friendly technologies.”
of solar technologies for small-scale applications – in Israel, every home relies on rooftop photo thermal panels for heating water – the use of solar energy for general electricity production is a problem. A very big problem.

"Generating enough renewable energy for the next century using conventional methods would require laying out a field of solar cells covering an area the size of Utah and Nevada combined," Zaban states. "The only way to make solar energy practical is to make solar cells more efficient."

And as an expert in nanotechnology, Prof. Zaban has done just that. He built an electrode in which nano-sized particles are arranged in a stable, sponge-like array on top of flexible plastic sheets. The porous structure of the "sponge" dramatically increases the sunlight-collecting surface area of the semiconductor, making it a super-efficient generator of energy.

Efficiency – especially cost efficiency – is the name of the game, stresses Zaban. That’s because, despite the success of solar technologies for small-scale applications – in Israel, key to Zaban’s system is an organic dye that colors nanoparticles of a transparent – and relatively inexpensive – semiconductor, giving it the ability to absorb light. "Cost is an important factor in any solar technology," says Zaban, pointing out that the sun-drenched countries most likely to benefit from solar energy often have little money to invest in it. "We have put in a huge, high-tech effort to create a simple, low-tech system."

The importance Zaban sees in renewable energy research is perhaps best expressed by the painting that dominates his office wall. A striking Rothko print called "White and Greens in Blue," this work places a stripe of green – the color that symbolizes all that is environmentally conscious – into an abstract embrace of blue and white – the colors of the State of Israel.

"Israel is a tiny country with limited natural resources. Bar-Ilan is at the forefront of scientific research that may lead to new, environmentally-friendly technologies," says Zaban, adding that the University’s Jubilee commitment to creating a new Nanotechnology Institute is an important step toward that goal.

In the meantime, in a new twist on an age-old mission, Prof. Zaban is helping Israel bring more "light unto the nations" – in the form of a renewable energy technology small enough to meet the very big needs of the future.

By investing heavily in Nanotechnology, Bar-Ilan University – an academic community that treasures the past – is underscoring its belief in the future. It is also expressing its faith in a universal truth: that when you want to create something truly big, sometimes, you have to start small. Very small.
Faculty Development

Founded in 1955 with just two dozen faculty members, Bar-Ilan University’s outstanding reputation as a teaching and research institution is reflected in the internationally recognized achievements of its faculty, which now numbers 1,300. Serving as a home for established “stars” as well as up-and-coming academicians, the University is currently in a mode of dynamic expansion, aggressively recruiting top thinkers from all areas of the arts and sciences – who, in turn, attract top students and junior faculty to the campus to join in their work.

Alongside its renowned Faculty of Jewish Studies – today the largest in the world – Bar-Ilan is a leader in the Exact and Life Sciences, and is now planning to expand that stake by recruiting some fifty additional experimental researchers over the next several years. This process includes the repatriation of Israeli scientists and the absorption of immigrant faculty members.

Faculty development, including scientific scholarships, forms the bedrock of the campus learning experience. Through its Jubilee Campaign, the University will continue to ensure its place in fields of the future, by creating a growing community that is alive with intellectual curiosity, Jewish values and professional promise.

Prof. James Kugel
Department of Bible Studies

“Alongside the value Bar-Ilan places on Jewish tradition, the University maintains a tradition of openness. That’s why I joined the ranks of BIU’s distinguished faculty.”
Combining Academic Cultures

After dividing his time between Harvard University and Bar-Ilan for over a decade, James L. Kugel – a Yale and Harvard alumnus who is one of the world’s foremost Bible scholars – has finally come home. Now a full-time faculty member, Kugel cites his presence in Israel, and specifically on the Bar-Ilan campus, as a boon to his own scholarship.

“At Harvard, I was one of a handful of people teaching Jewish studies,” says Kugel, adding that Bar-Ilan students – both religious and secular – tend to be better informed about the Bible than their American counterparts. “Back in Cambridge, Massachusetts, people were impressed when I would quote Biblical verses by heart. Here, nearly everyone can do it! This allows the learning to progress at a different level.”

Something of an anomaly in the religious world, Kugel is a kippah-wearing traditionalist with an interest in modern, secular, Biblical scholarship. His academic specialty, however, has focused not on the Bible itself, but on the earliest stages of Biblical interpretation as witnessed in the Dead Sea Scrolls and other writings outside of the Biblical canon. His survey of these ancient Jewish writings became the basis of The Bible As It Was, which became an academic bestseller after its publication in 1997.

Kugel attended Yale University, then moved on to study Medieval Poetry and Biblical Commentaries as a graduate student at Harvard. “At Harvard I became interested in the workings of Biblical poetry,” he says. “This was a subject that Jews and Christians had written about since late antiquity, so I ended up surveying its history as well.” The result was Kugel’s 1981 book, The Idea of Biblical Poetry.

Kugel’s relationship with Bar-Ilan University dates back to 1991. “When Bar-Ilan offered me a position, the Dean at Harvard told me, ‘Just tell me what they’re offering and we’ll match it,’” Kugel recalls. “I told him that Bar-Ilan wanted me to do more teaching for less pay. He found it odd I would consider leaving, even part-time, but that’s what I did.”

In retrospect, Kugel says he has benefited from being involved in two very different academic cultures – the broad-based liberal education that characterizes university life in America, and the highly focused model of Israeli universities, which Kugel sees as an outgrowth of the scholarly traditions of central Europe. At the same time, he points out the special position that Bar-Ilan University holds – its “core curriculum” of Basic Studies in Judaism makes undergraduate education at Bar-Ilan a kind of hybrid, combining aspects of both systems.

“Whenever a university welcomes a scholar into the ranks, it is expressing a willingness to broaden the type of thinking and teaching that occurs on campus,” says Kugel, pointing out that his own transition to full-time work at Bar-Ilan – one of many senior appointments the University plans to make in the coming years – came with no strings attached. This is despite the reservations a Jewish institution might be expected to have about Kugel, whose work is characterized by academic – and religiously ecumenical – Biblical scholarship. “Bar-Ilan offers serious engagement with the Jewish religious tradition without flinching from conclusions drawn from modern scholarship,” says Kugel. “Alongside the value Bar-Ilan places on Jewish tradition, the University maintains a tradition of openness. That’s why I joined the ranks of BlU’s distinguished faculty.”

And as someone who uses modern, critical tools to achieve a scientific understanding of Judaism’s greatest book, James L. Kugel could not have chosen a better place to call home.

As it continues to attract top-level faculty, Bar-Ilan is enhancing its reputation as a world leader in research and teaching. At the same time, rigorous recruitment – of native-born Israelis, immigrants and academics from abroad – is making education at Bar-Ilan a truly “world class” experience.
PhD Fellowships

In just 50 years, Bar-Ilan University has grown from a small teaching institution into a major center of academic research and instruction. A key factor in this transformation is the Doctoral Fellowships of Excellence Program. Thanks to a significant increase in scholarship funding, Bar-Ilan now boasts the fastest-growing population of doctoral students in Israel, with over 1,600 PhD candidates breaking new ground in disciplines ranging from Physics to Talmud, from Economics to Music and from Law to the Life Sciences.

The best PhD candidates are chosen as Doctoral Fellows of Excellence, a distinction that gives young scholars the support they need to complete a doctorate within four years. As part of its Jubilee Campaign, the University has committed to raising its target number of PhD candidates to 2,000. Moreover, it seeks to transform the Doctoral Fellowships of Excellence program from a four-year commitment to a permanent endowment that will ensure an ongoing source of funding for this vital academic training program. By attracting the most promising students, and giving them full support as they embark on their academic careers, Bar-Ilan University is guaranteeing its position at the forefront of Israeli intellectual, scientific and spiritual achievement.

Orr Karassin
PhD Candidate, Faculty of Law

“Bar-Ilan relates to its doctoral students very seriously. This means more than just financial and academic support – it means hope for the future.”
Orr Karassin is not a policewoman. But she does fight crime. Environmental crime.

A PhD candidate in the Faculty of Law, Jerusalem-born Karassin, 32, specializes in environmental law and public policy. Ever since her undergraduate days, when she co-founded The Green Course – now a 5,000-member organization promoting environmental activism among students – Karassin’s academic career has been guided by her belief that the University must become involved, on a practical level, with society’s most urgent issues. For Karassin, involving academia is a vital first step toward turning Israel into a better, more environmentally-conscious place to live.

“In my doctoral thesis, I’m focusing on environmental crime – criminal acts that harm our natural world, or have a damaging effect on human health and welfare,” says Karassin, one of the bright stars of the University’s Doctoral Fellowships of Excellence Program. “Beyond the strictly legal issue of how to define such a crime, I’m looking for practical ways to promote better compliance. For cases of non-compliance, I’m examining new models that may lead to better, more effective law enforcement.”

“I chose to pursue my doctorate at Bar-Ilan because it is still a relatively young university, and there’s much openness to new ideas here,” Karassin states, noting that while environmental law is an established field in the West, it is still largely undeveloped in Israel. “The flexibility shown by the University administration, including its willingness to promote cross-disciplinary research, is not only intellectually challenging for me as a student – it also creates a framework in which faculty can come together to create new initiatives for public policy.”

Karassin predicts that, in the future, environmental research will be enriched by ever-deeper interdisciplinary cooperation. “Effective environmental policy can only come out of cooperation between professionals in a range of fields, including Law, Ecology, Economics, Engineering and Psychology,” she says. “It is my hope that someday I’ll help create the answers that will help policymakers and law enforcement officials do their jobs more effectively.”

In the meantime, Karassin continues to “do her job” – pursuing research and teaching, staying on top of her various public responsibilities, and (together with her husband) raising two young children. Karassin credits Bar-Ilan’s Doctoral Fellowships of Excellence Program for giving her the support she needs to keep going, full steam ahead:

“Bar-Ilan relates to its doctoral students very seriously, and is steadfast in giving them the best work environment possible,” she says. “For someone like me, this means more than just financial and academic support – it also means hope for the future. Whether my doctoral work points me toward a life of scholarship or toward a public career – or maybe a combination of the two – I will remain grateful that I studied at a university that had the foresight to understand the importance of the environment. I will remain grateful that I studied at Bar-Ilan University.”

Investing in the best – that’s what the Doctoral Fellowships of Excellence program is all about. By nurturing the potential of the next generation of academic leaders, Bar-Ilan is lighting up the campus with rising stars – and guaranteeing the University an even higher place in the academic firmament.

PhD Fellowships
Goal: $20 Million

Endowment in Annual Cycles
Target of 150 Fellows Per Year
Divided Among All Faculties:
Faculty of Jewish Studies
Faculty of Social Sciences
Faculty of Exact Sciences
Faculty of Life Sciences
Faculty of Humanities
Faculty of Law

“Sponsor-a-Fellow” Programs
Academic Infrastructure

Bar-Ilan University is a vibrant academic institution, which, for a half century, has evolved into a growing educational concern, replete with six faculties, 45 departments, hundreds of study tracks, thousands of courses, and existing scientific centers and institutes which have helped secure Bar-Ilan’s distinguished place in the world of higher education.

In recognition of the fact that too often the excellence from within is overlooked, the Bar-Ilan Jubilee Campaign will also dedicate significant efforts to investing in the best of its existing programming, by providing a broad spectrum of naming opportunities for programs that are “up and running”, have a proven track record, and will be able to maximize their potential through new funding opportunities.

Prof. Yosef Yeshurun
Professor of Physics

“As a physicist, I know that it can be difficult to move heavy systems. But if you have a clear vision, even the biggest system – like a university – can be improved.”
and now heads the University’s National Center of Excellence in Superconductivity. “When a surge occurs, the magnetic fields inside the device automatically adjust. When the crisis passes, the material’s internal magnetic structure – and the flow of electricity – is restored.”

Yeshurun spent a sabbatical year at IBM’s New York laboratories, examining the new superconductors. “The excitement was tremendous,” he recalls. “To this day, I feel gifted by the opportunity I had to be part of such a revolutionary era.”

In 1987 Yeshurun published a paper that identified the cause of superconductors’ most problematic characteristic – the tendency of its initially strong magnetic force to decay. Yeshurun’s findings became a springboard for basic research all over the world. Amid this activity, Yeshurun – while continuing his work in Fundamental Physics – had moved toward applied research.

Yeshurun’s penchant for the practical serves him well in his demanding secondary career – as a leading formulator of academic policy. A former member of both the Israeli Council for Higher Education and the National Council for Research and Development, Yeshurun has also served as Head of the Bar-Ilan Physics Department, as well as the Dean of Students, Dean for the Absorption of Immigrant Scientists, Chairman of the University Computerization Committee and Vice Rector. In 2002 he made yet another step up Bar-Ilan’s academic ladder – to the position of Rector.

“My first love has always been science. But at the same time, I feel a deep responsibility to do what I can to strengthen academic society as a whole,” Yeshurun says, adding that he finds the challenge of building a strong academic infrastructure for his home campus to be as satisfying as a successful day in the lab. “As a physicist, I know that it can be difficult to move heavy systems. But if you have a clear vision, even the biggest system – like a university – can be improved.”

The National Center of Excellence in Superconductivity is but one of the many ongoing research efforts at BIU that are worthy of philanthropical support.
Libraries

After five decades of steady and conscientious investment, Bar-Ilan University’s 22-unit library system serves the student body well. The hub of the system is the Wurzweiler Central Library, which dates from the founding of the University and today holds one of the ten largest concentrations of Judaica in the world, as well as a full range of professionally maintained resources in every area of the sciences and humanities.

With today’s campus-wide library infrastructure granting access to a million volumes, 20,000 periodicals and a dizzying variety of on-line resources, the University is currently investing heavily in digital integration in order to ensure full access to both electronic and physical materials.

Over the next five years, particular focus will be placed on book and journal acquisition, database development, and assimilation of new technologies that will form the basis of a simple, campus-wide interface that will open the door to the rich resources that the Bar-Ilan University library system has to offer.

Dr. Joshua Rosensweig
BIU Law, Class of 1976

“Researchers and students need to sift through a huge amount of digital information. The importance of the libraries has never been greater.”
The Importance of “Miracle Workers”

An infectiously cheerful man who extends one hand in greeting while thumping on a desk-top picture of his latest grandson with the other, Dr. Joshua Rosensweig is not what you would call “bookish.” But as Chairman of the Board of the First International Bank of Israel, a member of the Bar-Ilan University Executive Council and a renowned expert on tax law, Rosensweig knows the value of finding and using the right information – something made clear to him during his training at BIU.

“We lived in the library,” says Canadian-born Rosensweig, a member of the Law School’s fourth graduating class who later returned there to teach. “The staff members were absolute miracle workers; whatever you needed, they made it appear.”

Along with book-based learning, Rosensweig says that personal contacts were an important part of his Bar-Ilan education. Noting that the current Dean, Prof. Yaffa Zilbershatz, was a member of his graduating class, Rosensweig also has special praise for Prof. Arnold Enker, first Dean of the Law Faculty. “Arnold has always been known as an exceptional jurist,” he says. “He taught us what a noble, uplifting and socially important profession law can be when practiced correctly.”

After finishing his studies at Bar-Ilan and going on to complete a PhD at NYU in just two years – “I was in a hurry to get back to Israel,” he explains – Rosensweig founded a private law firm in Tel Aviv, and, at the same time, launched very “public” careers in both academia and government service.

“Working for the betterment of the State is a natural for Rosensweig, who has been an ardent Zionist since his youth,” Rosensweig’s thoughts turn back to his student days at Bar-Ilan during the Yom Kippur War. “I was part of a student band called Shivat Zion,” he recalls, referring to the group that went on to record three albums and to win the Hassidic Song Festival in 1975. “We played for the troops on both sides of the Suez Canal. For a new immigrant – for anyone – it was an amazing experience.”

Visiting the Bar-Ilan campus, Rosensweig is delighted to see how his old haunts – particularly the library system – are remaining true to their core educational values while, at the same time, keeping up with technological developments. “Libraries are not just for books,” he says. “Researchers and students need to sift through a huge amount of digital information. The importance of the libraries – and the professionally-trained ‘miracle workers’ who run them – has never been greater.”

As the world’s leading academic center for the “People of the Book,” Bar-Ilan University is committed to providing up-to-the-minute information services. With boundless enthusiasm for the literary treasures of the past and present, and an eye toward future technologies, Bar-Ilan is proud to serve as the guardian of our intellectual heritage.
The spirit of Jewish inquiry is alive and well at Bar-Ilan University. A place where all Jews can feel truly at home, the campus boasts the world’s largest and most respected center for academic research in Judaic studies, as well as the University’s celebrated Ludwig and Erica Jesselson Institute for Advanced Torah Studies for Men and the Midrasha for Women – advanced learning programs that allow young men and women with Yeshiva or Ulpana backgrounds to devote themselves to Torah study, while simultaneously pursuing their academic degrees. Central to the Bar-Ilan University mission is its Core Curriculum of Jewish Heritage Studies, a unique program that every year brings approximately 20,000 students together to generate a dynamic dialogue about history, tradition and modern Jewish identity.

At Bar-Ilan, the Jewish experience is alive and accessible beyond the classroom, with informal learning, Shabbat programs and holiday activities available to touch the life of every Jew on campus. As part of its Jubilee Campaign, the University is redoubling its efforts to fight the forces of assimilation by investing in programs that place the spark of spirituality at the center of its campus culture. By doing so, Bar-Ilan is leading the way toward a more enlightened – and unified – Jewish future.

Davina Ejnes
Economics and Business Student

“I define myself as religious, but am happy to have both secular and religious friends. It’s good that here on campus, different people can learn together and respect each other – whatever their beliefs.”
Ejnes began her Israeli odyssey at Kibbutz Ein Hanatziv. In addition to her work on the kibbutz, she studied in Ulpan – “I couldn’t speak Hebrew at all when I arrived!” – and at Emuna College. Then, “shopping” for university programs, she soon settled on Bar-Ilan.

“I have always loved math, and was looking for a place where I could prepare for a career in business,” says Ejnes. “At the same time, because I made Aliya by myself, I was looking for a campus where I could feel at home.”

After almost three years in her on-campus “home,” Ejnes knows that she made the right decision, and hopes to continue on at Bar-Ilan for a Masters degree in Business Administration. She attributes her satisfaction with the University to two things: the high academic level and the positive Jewish atmosphere.

As a French and English speaker, Ejnes works as a counselor for groups of high school students visiting Israel. She has also been employed by the Birthright program, which brings Jewish young adults to Israel for the first time. Because of her experience and outgoing personality, it was only natural that Bar-Ilan would choose Ejnes as a student “ambassador,” occasionally calling on her to introduce the University to French-speaking tour groups and potential students. But according to Ejnes, the lively campus atmosphere makes Bar-Ilan an easy sell.

“I attended all-Jewish schools in France, and was very active in Bnei Akiva,” recalls Ejnes. “Despite the strong Jewish atmosphere at home, I was looking for something more, and decided to come to Israel.”

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Student Welfare

At Bar-Ilan University, education is a living process that takes place twenty-four hours a day, both within the walls of the classroom and beyond. With a student population made up of religious and secular Jews and Arabs, native Israelis and new immigrants, the University is a living laboratory for dynamism and diversity.

Underscoring the University’s commitment to inclusion is its growing scholarship program, which allows students from disadvantaged backgrounds to break the cycle of poverty, and climb the educational ladder to independence and success. Over the next five years, Bar-Ilan plans to increase support of programs aimed at improving student welfare – from psychological counseling services, to help for disabled veterans, to programs aimed at drawing the heterogeneous student body together into a more unified learning community.

By making student welfare central to its long-term strategy, the University is sending a strong message: that every Bar-Ilan student is a “blue chip” investment for the future.

Nati Birnbaum, Law student
“Spending three hours together in a classroom, week after week, you can’t just walk away from the hard questions.”

Chen Mere, Law student
“By sponsoring student welfare projects like the Secular-Religious Dialogue, Bar-Ilan is sending a strong statement ... After all, whatever our backgrounds, we’re all in this together.”
Chen Mere and Nati Birnbaum have a lot in common. Both are Tel-Aviv natives and second-year Law students. Both are confident and outspoken. But Mere is religious. Birnbaum is secular. At Bar-Ilan, that’s what brought them together.

This past year, Mere and Birnbaum participated in the University’s unique Secular-Religious Dialogue, a semester-long program that has become one of Bar-Ilan’s most sought-after seminars. Through discussion, text learning, and trips to sites of religious and secular interest, the program seeks to help students clarify their attitudes toward Jewish tradition, while at the same time, to gain a greater understanding of their secular or religious counterparts. And while they both grew up in relatively mixed neighborhoods, both of these students agree that the seminar helped open their eyes about the other “half” of Israeli society.

According to Mere – who herself did two years of National Service on a religious track instead of joining the IDF – it was gratifying to see secular participants’ assumptions change over time. “At first, some seemed to believe in religious stereotypes – that we all live in Mea Shearim, or that we’re all right-wing,” she says. “And some were afraid of religious coercion. But by the end of the semester, we went away together for a Shabbat – prayer was optional and we sang modern Israeli songs around the dinner table instead of traditional zmirot – and it was a beautiful experience for everybody.”

Birnbaum was pleased to discover a surprising degree of flexibility among religious participants. “Most of the religious students favored some kind of compromise about public Sabbath observance, like allowing shopping malls in the city centers to remain open,” he says. “I think our weekly meetings had an impact on how they see this issue.”

Mere nods in agreement, but adds that along with her growing understanding of secular culture, the seminar helped her gain a new perspective on the world in which she grew up. “I started the seminar with an unconsciously condescending attitude – that religious life is simply better than any secular option. Now, while I still believe that a religious lifestyle is the best for me, I recognize there’s no one right way to be a Jew. By sponsoring student welfare projects like the Secular-Religious Dialogue, Bar-Ilan is sending a strong statement about unity for all Israelis.  After all, whatever our backgrounds, we’re all in this together.”

Because of the diversity of its student population, Bar-Ilan is proud to “get personal,” and provide a range of programs designed to enhance each and every student’s educational experience. From cultural events to remedial learning to financial aid, the University is committed to seeing each student grow as an individual – and find his or her place in society.
Community Outreach

Founded on the ethical principles of Judaism, Bar-Ilan University is guided by its commitment to Gmilut Chasadim – a Hebrew term referring to the Torah commandment to give to needy individuals and to the community-at-large. Bridging the gap between intellect and emotion, the University puts moral activism at the center of its pursuits, encouraging research that yields practical benefit to the disadvantaged.

In the world of education, the University promotes both excellence and equal opportunity, by giving a voice and institutional support to children and young people with special needs – including new immigrants, the learning disabled and the gifted. Research programs related to Male Fertility, Developmental Disorders and Aging are forging new ethical guidelines for life-long medical practice. And a wide range of personal support programs – ranging from legal clinics, to advocacy centers for the disenfranchised, to help for wounded IDF veterans – focus the University’s finest minds on meeting contemporary social challenges, while creating a framework that activates the healing power of their hearts.

At Bar–Ilan University, the ivory tower has been transformed into a tower of strength for those in need.

Moshe Bensimon
Graduate student, Criminology

“The social sciences are not just about understanding the people’s problems, but about using this information for communal outreach which improves society. I hope that my findings will help others deal more effectively with Post-Traumatic Stress.”
In Bensimon’s case, music helped. An avid pianist, Bensimon completed his undergraduate work at Bar-Ilan with a double major in Music and Criminology. He then went on to pursue a Masters degree in Criminology as well as a certificate program in Music Therapy – and eventually, a specially-designed PhD that combined aspects of the two.

“One of the subjects we study in Criminology is the experience of victims,” says Bensimon. “As a musician, I wanted to look at ways in which music therapy can help victims – specifically soldiers – express the pent-up emotions that are left behind by trauma. That’s how I became the IDF’s first-ever music therapist.”

Bensimon sees his study – which created a framework for helping needy individuals – as an expression of the Bar-Ilan ideal. “The Social Sciences are not just about understanding the people’s problems, but about using this information for communal outreach which improves society. As a therapist, I felt privileged to reach out to help these soldiers, and hope that my findings will help others deal more effectively with Post-Traumatic Stress.”

Ironically, most of the soldiers in the group were veterans of Operation Defensive Shield, a grueling IDF campaign launched in response to terror attacks against Israeli civilians – a campaign in which Bensimon, a reserve soldier, also served. For Bensimon, the coincidence only underscores the importance of creating effective treatments for trauma.

“At Bar-Ilan, compassion is built into the curriculum, and serves as a guiding light for the research agenda. Through community-based programs serving all sectors of the Israeli populace, the University is helping to promote the creation of a better and more just society.
Gift Opportunities

for the Bar-Ilan University Jubilee Campaign

The following is a select list of opportunities to name facilities, programs, chairs, special funds, scholarships and fellowships:

$40M and over
To Name the North Campus

$20M and over
To Name the South Campus
To Name a Building
To Name an Advanced Science Institute

$10 million and over
To Name a Faculty Mini-Campus
To Name a Building
To Name the Sports Complex
To Name a Dormitory
To Name an Advanced Scientific Center

$5 million to $10 million
To Name a Faculty
To Name an Institute or Center in Human Studies
To Name the BIU Press

$1 million to $5 million
To Name an Interdisciplinary Program
To Name a University Department
To Name a Faculty Library
To Endow a New Faculty Position
To Name a Floor in a Building
To Name a Professor
To Name a Program
To Name a Study Track
To Endow a Chair

$100,000 to $1 million
To Name a Building Wing
To Name a Science Laboratory
To Name a Student Cafeteria
To Name an Auditorium, Computer Lab, Classroom or Access Bridge
To Advance Jewish Identity Enhancement Programs
To Endow a Scholarship Fund for Needy Students
To Endow a Graduate Fellowship
To Endow a Library Fund
To Endow a Publication Fund
To Endow a Fund for Visiting Professors
To Endow an Academic Prize
To Endow an Academic Course
To Endow a Legal Clinic for the Community
To Endow an Annual Conference
To Purchase State-of-the-Art Research Equipment
To Name Programs and Facilities for Special Needs Students
To Name a Garden, Plaza or Walkway

Under $100,000
To Name an Annual Scholarship
To Support a Student Program
To Name Publications
To Sponsor an Annual Conference
To Sponsor a Four-Year Doctoral Fellowship of Excellence
To Purchase Computers and Equipment

For further information about these and other philanthropic opportunities, please contact our Friends organizations listed on the back cover.
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