



October 10, 2012

Dear member of the Board of Governors,

I am proud to be returning to the University and joining you here.

I am presently taking office as President of the University of Haifa, and consider it a great privilege to be given this opportunity to lead such a large, worthy, and unique academic institution at this challenging time. I hope to justify the trust placed in me.

Thirty-five years ago, I had the privilege of studying in one of the first classes of the young and small University of Haifa. That small University has developed into an academic institution that considers excellent academic research and teaching its primary goal. The result is a University that has developed unique and outstanding areas – of which the University most recently received publicity for winning the role of the University to lead marine research in Israel.

However, working toward this primary goal does not suffice. The University of Haifa has two additional roles that are strategically critical for Israel's academia and for the ongoing existence and prosperity of the State of Israel.

First, as the only research university in the northern region of the country (alongside the Technion, which is focused on technology and engineering), we have a strategic task of strengthening and conserving the northern region. Anyone who recognizes the extent of the threat involved in Israel's becoming an overall extension of the central region can also comprehend the importance of the University of Haifa.

Our second role is the direct outcome of the University's distinctive composition of students and faculty, and the University's unique contribution to creating a shared experience for Israel's populations, which is essential for Israel's existence and

As every leading research university does, the University of Haifa has always considered excellent academic research and teaching its primary goal. Beyond excellence in research and teaching, the University of Haifa is making an exceptional strategic contribution to the State of Israel and society by creating a shared social experience for the different population groups, and by strengthening and conserving the northern region of Israel as a strategic asset for Israel.

resources. Academic research and teaching are at the core of every research university, but alongside these, the University of Haifa has always pulsed with a fresh and distinctive atmosphere, characterized by a does. Ours is a human assemblage comprising all population groups: Jews and Arabs, old-timers and new immigrants, secular and religious of all religions and ethnic origins. The University of Haifa has always contributed and will continue to contribute to the coexistence of Israel's different populations, to creating a shared social experience, and to positioning its graduates with a high standard of personal and interpersonal skills. These are distinctions and goals that we will uphold with pride and with responsibility.

We will wisely and responsibly maintain our uniqueness and goals.

The University of Haifa's excellence in many areas, combined with our unique objectives to strengthen Israel's society, its northern region, and coexistence, is our special narrative. Yet this too does not suffice. We are now facing great challenges that we will have to overcome together in the near future:

The challenge facing us is in objectively and uncompromisingly identifying those researches and teaching areas in which we hold relative distinction and advantage, and in accelerating the thrust of development in those areas.

First is the ever growing competition with other research universities in Israel and abroad. It is a struggle for outstanding students and researchers, and for research funds. We are also facing increasing competition with the colleges, where we must take a lead while strengthening our advantages as a research university - and by no means doing so by compromising our research standards and academic demands. In approaching prominent employers who ought to be engaging our graduates, we will focus our efforts on clarifying the unique qualities of academic education provided by the University of Haifa.

Our second challenge results from being Israel's research university with the narrowest range of study in the exact and natural sciences. Modern research is multidisciplinary, as is academic teaching. We have many outstanding areas of study, but in the future it will not be possible to maintain an academic institution at international standards without combining the Humanities, Social Sciences, Social Welfare and Health Sciences, Law, Natural Sciences, Exact Sciences, and more.

To place the University of Haifa on the map as a forerunner amongst multidisciplinary research universities around the world, we are required to strengthen those fields in which we already carry a relative advantage, while accelerating momentum in expanding the areas of Natural and Exact Sciences. This will necessitate an accelerated introduction of outstanding researchers and a boost in development. For this we will need significant financial and managerial resources. Such processes require immense efforts for any academic institution, and particularly in Israel's academically replete environment.

In the near future, we will have to sharpen our narrative so that we can enlist the entire organization from within and external sources whose help we will need, to gather around it. Excellence is a relative concept, and so we will have to objectively, transparently, and uncompromisingly identify those fields of research in which we are outstanding and unique relative to other academic institutions in Israel, so as to justify giving resources to the University of Haifa. We will also have to set clear goals with regard to the standard of teaching and services for our students and researchers. This will be a combined effort for all sections of the organization, in its management, teaching, and research divisions.

Focus, transparency, professionalism, and organizational spirit are the most important factors for our success.

In order to create the thrust in development that we all wish to see, we will have to be a focused organization that knows how to maximize being a relatively small university with regard to professionalism in process management, movement speed, determination, and team spirit.

At this opportunity, I wish to thank Professor Aaron Ben-Ze'ev, the University's outgoing President, who went to great lengths to advance the University and will continue to do so as an outstanding researcher. I would also like to thank the Board of Governors and its Chairman Leon H. Charney, and the Executive Committee headed by Ami Ayalon, for the trust that they have placed in me.

Dear University of Haifa Family, within a short time you have managed to connect me to our story and to the enthusiasm that pulsates within you. Now we must transmit this enthusiasm to potential students, to young and outstanding researchers, to alumni, to the leading employers, to the government authorities, and to potential donors.

I will be with you to learn and assist. And when I err, do not hesitate to approach me.

I am proud to be joining you. I will be here for you and with you at every moment and everywhere. I will do all that I can to learn from you and to help wherever possible. I will surely make mistakes along the way, and please do not hesitate to correct me when I do.

Wishing you all a happy New Year.

As the New Year begins, I wish you and your families a year of health and success, advancement, and self-fulfillment.

Yours,



Amos Shapira

President, University of Haifa