THE UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA
AN OVERVIEW

Background

The University of Haifa is located at the summit of Mount Carmel. The campus, which extends over 180,000 square meters, includes academic facilities and dormitories as well as the IBM research laboratories, the university library and special archives, an archeological museum, the new Hecht arts center, three art galleries and an academic television channel. The university's grounds, on the ridge of a national park, offer panoramic views of Haifa, Haifa Bay, and the north of Israel. The University of Haifa is the first and only liberal arts university in Israel's north, a region characterized by a mix of thriving cities and towns as well as multicultural communities and underdeveloped areas. In addition to Haifa, home towns of many of our students include Acco, Kiryat Shmona, Karmiel, Nahariya, Nazareth, Sakhnin, and Shfar'am. As one of Israel’s six major academic institutions, the university is dedicated to the advancement of intellectual inquiry. The University of Haifa also actively integrates higher education with applied research and community outreach to address regional challenges and universal social issues.

Academic Horizons

The University of Haifa became an independent institution in 1971. Today, it includes 45 departments in six faculties: Humanities, Social Sciences, Law, Education, Health and Welfare, and Science and Science Education. The university enjoyed a major growth surge in the 1990s, and today 16,300 students are enrolled in six faculties, pursuing degrees in a wide range of undergraduate and advanced degree programs. Directions for development are focused on advancement of both emerging and interdisciplinary fields, and the cultivation of academic, business and community leadership.

Research Centers

The university has established over 50 research centers, among them, The Institute of Information Processing and Decision Making, led by Israel Prize laureate Professor Asher Koriat; to The International Center for Health, Law and Ethics, home to the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics; The Institute of Evolution; The Center for Brain and Behavior Research, and the Caesarea Rothschild Institute for Interdisciplinary Applications of Computer Science.

The university is also a leader in the academic investigation of social issues. The Center for Multiculturalism and Educational Research examines theoretical and practical models of multiculturalism from local, regional and international perspectives. Professor Majid Al Haj, the founding director of the Center, was appointed Dean of Research in 2005 and recently became the University’s first Vice President for Research.
The university seeks to bridge gaps between applied research and practice: *The Interdisciplinary Clinical Center*, led by Dr. Rivka Yahav, is making significant strides in advancing community care in fields ranging from communications disorders to physical and occupational therapy to gerontology and public health. Advanced study in fields from interdisciplinary applications of computer science to maritime studies are promoted by the university. Prominent research centers also include the Center for Democracy Education, led by Professor Raphael Cohen-Almagor and the Center for Research on Peace Education, headed by Israel Prize laureate Professor Gavriel Salomon.

**National and International Conferences and Symposia**

The university is home to many international conferences every year on a wide range of topics: scientific, social, and political. Some very recent examples:

- Artificial Intelligence and the Forefront of Computer Science Research
- Confrontation and Co-Existence in the Holy Places
- Contemporary Terrorism Issues in the European Union
- Dilemmas and Issues in Preserving and Cultivating a Tradition of Arab Building in Israel
- Economic Tools in the Management of Natural and Environmental Resources
- Empowerment, Leadership, and Social Change Among Arab Women
- Energy and Politics
- Ethics in the Public and Commercial Sectors
- Interdisciplinary Applications of Graph Theory, Combinatorics, and Algorithms
- International Conference on Medicine and Women
- New Horizons in Evolutionary Biology
- New Trends in Shaping Social Policy in Israel

**Cooperative International Agreements**

Academic excellence and contributions to international research are the University’s highest priorities, and its researchers participate in hundreds of joint investigations with colleagues from all over the world. Leading researchers from The University of Haifa are working with colleagues from France, Italy, Germany, The United States, Holland, Switzerland, and The United Kingdom, as well as with Palestinian and Jordanian colleagues, on projects funded by a variety of international sources, such as the U.S. National Institutes of Health, the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health, the European Union, the DIP (Germany-Israel Cooperation), and the Israeli-Palestine Science Organization.

Major projects in psychology, evolutionary biology, linguistics, learning disabilities, neuroscience, public health, archeology; and political science include some of the following topics: metacognition -- the conscious and unconscious determinants of behavior mapping; cloning and transformation of disease and drought resistance genes
into elite cultivars; treatment of dysfunctional plasticity in learning and memory; the emergence of grammar in a new sign language; diagnostic and prognostic tests for learning disabilities; strategies for the treatment of dysfunctional plasticity in learning and memory; air pollution; recognizing and preserving common heritage in Israel and the Palestinian Authority; and terrorism and traumatic responding.

In addition to individual research projects such as those listed, scientific collaboration agreements have been instituted between The University of Haifa and the Sorbonne (Paris IV), and another with the University of Trento.

**Nurturing leadership**

Innovative academic programs have been introduced to foster leadership development by the Graduate School of Business. Its Executive MBA program has brought together scores of businesspeople – Israelis from all socio-cultural sectors as well as Palestinians – in an intensive study program and alumni activities. The Graduate Business School is also seeking to launch an innovative MBA Program for the Management of Educational Institutions to enable senior educators to attain needed business skills to complement their pedagogical knowledge and experience.

**Student Enrichment and Community Development**

Although parts of Israel's north have long been considered disadvantaged, diverse communities from these areas are expressing a growing interest in higher education. Twenty percent of the University of Haifa's undergraduates are Arab citizens of the state of Israel and another quarter are recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union, Ethiopia and Latin America. A significant proportion of students have modest economic means, and many are the first members of their families to seek a higher education. To assure these young adults the best possible opportunity to succeed, the University has established academic preparatory programs which include enrichment courses, seminars, counseling, individual tutoring and financial aid.

The university is also building on the momentum of the success of community leadership programs which have drawn hundreds of students in recent years. Additional students will be enrolled in the Open Apartments Program, in which students devote weekly hours to community service in exchange for modest scholarships and rent-free apartments in the neighborhoods they serve, and a highly regarded Arab Student Leadership Program is now being adapted to engage Arab and Jewish students in shared training and projects.

The University of Haifa is taking an active role in helping Ethiopian students bridge the gap between their traditional backgrounds and modern life in the State of Israel. An affirmative action program admits students with academic potential, and supports their studies with tutoring. An innovative dance troupe (which has recently become an independent performing group), Eskesta, was developed and launched in the mid-1990s at The University of Haifa, where Ethiopian students gave contemporary expression to dance and music heritages of Africa.
**Academic Forums for Addressing the Issues of Israel's Arab Minority**

The faculty of the University of Haifa includes Jewish and Arab scholars with research interests in issues including conflict resolution, social change, multiculturalism and specific aspects of the complexity of Jewish-Arab relations. Many of these topics find expression in projects under the auspices of the University's Jewish-Arab Center, led by Dr. Faisal Azaiza, as well as public forums such as conferences, student seminars and academic events which advance meaningful dialogue on Arab-Jewish coexistence. Recent conferences examined the potential for coexistence in holy places in light of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, *Empowerment, Leadership, and Social Change Among Arab Women*. Four months after the war, a conference on *Minority-Majority Relations in Israel in Times of Peace and War* was organized by the university’s Multicultural and Education Research Center, featuring Arab and Jewish speakers, including Arab Member of Knesset (Parliament) Mohammed Baraka and Meretz MK Zahava Galon.

**Cultural and Intellectual Inspiration**

The university values cultural accomplishments as well as scientific achievements. Leading musical composers Professor Oded Zahavi and Boaz Ben Moshe, and well known literary figures A.B. Yehoshua and Natan Zach hold academic posts at the University of Haifa. Their engagement with life on campus provides inspiration for students of the arts and enriches the cultural atmosphere of the university. The university has awarded honorary doctoral degrees to prominent international leaders and individuals who have contributed significantly to scientific and humanitarian progress. Among them are Professor Moshe Bar-Asher, President, Israel's Academy of the Hebrew Language; Boutros Boutros-Ghali, United Nations Secretary General; Swiss President Ruth Dreifuss; neurologist and psychologist Viktor Frankel; Joschka Fischer, German Minister of Foreign Affairs; Vaclav Havel, first president of the Czech Republic; and Professor of Social Ecology Elizabeth Loftus.

More information about The University of Haifa may be found at: http://www.haifa.ac.il/index_eng.html