



אוניברסיטת חיפה
UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA
جامعة حيفا

2026 PRESIDENT'S IMPACT REPORT



SHAPING NORTHERN ISRAEL

Through Research, Education, and Community Impact

Perched atop Mount Carmel, the University of Haifa has served Israel's North for over 55 years and has grown into the region's leading comprehensive research university. Rooted in diversity and social responsibility, our campus brings together students and researchers from Israel's rich social tapestry to learn, collaborate, and help shape the country's future. Through academic excellence and interdisciplinary research, we lead in advancing solutions in brain and mental health, as well as marine and environmental science, while preparing students for careers in high-tech. Our growing network of research centers and global partnerships expands opportunities for underserved populations and drives regional and national growth.



Cover Photo: Avenue Studio and University of Haifa Archives

2026 PRESIDENT'S IMPACT REPORT
Produced by the University of Haifa Global
Resource Development Division

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LEADERSHIP 2025-2026



Dr. Michal Amir Salkin
Chair of the Board of
Governors



Adv. Dov Weissglas
Chairman of the
Executive Committee



Ms. Orna Wolens
Vice Chair of the Board
of Governors

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION



Prof. Gur Alroey
President



Prof. Mouna Maroun
Rector



Sharon Zaid
VP and CEO



Prof. Oren Gazal-Ayal
VP and Dean of Research
& Development



Ms. Anat Baron, CPA
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VP for Global
Engagement



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Sustainability



Adv. Roni Fantanesh Malkai
Head, Communication &
Media Relations Division



Dr. Vardit Gerber
Vice Rector for Academic
Administration and
Academic Secretary



Aviva Peer
Director of the Division
of the Presidency

FACULTY DEANS

Prof. Daphna Canetti
Herta and Paul Amir Faculty
of Social Sciences

Prof. Efrat Dagan
Faculty of Social Welfare and
Health Sciences

Prof. Roza Leikin
Faculty of Education

Prof. Rita Osadchy
Faculty of Computer and
Information Science

Prof. Zohar Segev
Faculty of Humanities

Prof. Shlomo Wagner
Faculty of Natural Sciences

Prof. Tal Zarsky
Faculty of Law

DEANS

Prof. Irit Akirav
Dean of Graduate Studies
Authority I Head, Bloom
School of Graduate Studies

Prof. Haim Bitterman
Dean, Herta and Paul Amir
School of Medicine

Prof. Batya Engel-Yeger
Dean of Students

Prof. Shay S. Tzafrir
Dean of Teaching and
Learning

Prof. Leah Peretz
Dean, School of Design

Prof. Dan Tchernov
Dean, Charney School of
Marine Sciences

Message from the Chairman of the Executive Committee

Dear Friends,

As the University of the North, our campus stands not just as a center of learning, but as a strategic anchor overlooking a landscape currently defined by the shadows of war. As the State of Israel defends itself against the aggression of Iran and the immediate threats along our northern borders, our proximity to the front lines deepens our sense of duty. Here in Haifa, our pursuit of excellence is an act of daily defiance. By maintaining our academic rigor amidst the echoes of conflict, our community provides the intellectual and moral fortitude necessary to sustain the nation's northern heartland, proving that our resolve is as unshakable as the mountain we call home.

The mission of the University of Haifa has always been intertwined with the security and prosperity of the State of Israel, but never has that bond been more tested than in this struggle against Iran and the proxies seeking to destabilize our Galilee and northern frontiers. As the leading institution of the North, we bear a unique responsibility to cultivate the excellence that will rebuild and lead this region toward a future of peace. Our community is the living embodiment of Israeli resilience: a diverse, brilliant tapestry of minds that refuses to be silenced by the drums of war. Your support on this Board ensures that the North remains a powerhouse of innovation and a beacon of hope, safeguarding the vital spirit of Israel from the heights of Haifa to the borders beyond.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I offer our deepest gratitude for your enduring commitment to our institution during these trying times. As the University of the North, your support enables our community to remain a bastion of stability and growth. Together, we are cultivating the leadership and excellence essential to building a peaceful, thriving, and secure life for all of Israel's citizens.

Sincerely,

Adv. Dov Weissglas
*Chairman of the
Executive Committee*



President's Message

Dear Friends,

When I opened last year's report, I wrote about a country facing a multi-front war. It is a sobering reality that, one year later, we remain deeply entrenched in these hostilities, with no clear end in sight. The past year has placed a profound toll on our community. And yet, once again, the University of Haifa has risen to the challenge.

Our resilience has been evident in the faculty and student reservists who answered the call to serve, in students who adapted to remote learning, and in faculty who sustained our academic mission in an uncertain and volatile environment.

Since October 7, our task has not simply been to endure. It has been about propelling ourselves forward and ensuring that our mission is realized through every action we take. Nothing reflects this commitment more clearly than the first cohort of the Herta and Paul Amir School of Medicine, who are taking their first steps toward becoming compassionate physicians dedicated to the needs of our northern communities.

Our "Third Mission," as I call it, is to strengthen Israel's northern periphery, which has been deeply affected in recent years – a mission rooted in social impact. As the region's largest comprehensive research university, we have a responsibility to serve as a catalyst for social mobility and economic growth. This work complements our core roles of world-class teaching and pioneering research.

In this report, you will find examples of that commitment – from legal clinics serving vulnerable populations to groundbreaking research addressing PTSD, a challenge that has become increasingly urgent. I am also proud to highlight the establishment of the Faculty of Computer and Information Science, launched in the 2025-26 academic year, an initiative already reshaping our academic landscape. The Faculty is becoming a hub for innovation, driving economic and intellectual growth for our students, the city of Haifa, and the broader northern region.

It is important to acknowledge that, since the start of the war, we continue to navigate a complex global academic environment in which Israeli researchers are often regarded as *persona non grata* in many academic circles. These academic boycotts place increasing pressure on international research collaborations and conferences. We remain committed to maintaining and strengthening these partnerships, grounded in the belief that scientific progress depends on open exchanges across borders. Without it, we are all diminished. We value your partnership in helping to amplify this message.

Friends, thank you for your continued support and generosity. We hope you take pride in these achievements – they belong to you as much as they do to us. As ever, I look forward with confidence and optimism to what lies ahead for our beloved institution.

Sincerely,

Prof. Gur Alroey
President



Message from the Chair of the Board of Governors

Dear Governors,

In my first year as Chair of the Board of Governors, I had the opportunity to get to know many members of the University's administration, staff, and faculty. While each person is an inspiring leader in his or her own right, they are united by a shared vision. This sense of purpose makes the University of Haifa special – an institution with a powerful vision for the future and the determination to bring that vision to fruition.

The leadership's vision has three foci: the University, the students, and the North of Israel. Our fundamental focus is on building a world-class university. This year, the University took an important step forward in its investment in science and technology with the opening of the Herta & Paul Amir School of Medicine. The administration is working to further expand our academic offerings.

The next key concern is our students' success, both in their education and in their lives. Long-term war has taken a tremendous toll on everyone, but most seriously on students in active military service. The University of Haifa is taking steps to support them, financially, educationally, and emotionally. As President Alroey has said: "They protect the nation; we protect their future."

Finally, the University looks outward to the surrounding region and its people, putting academia in service to society. We have the knowledge and power to uplift the North of Israel and aid in its recovery. For example, our first-year medical students are helping with patient care to support the severely strained medical system. Similarly, the Frieze Center for Shared Society, established last year, promotes collaboration among academia, public institutions, and communities. This center exemplifies our commitment to fostering dialogue and building connections across Israel's diverse society.

The University of Haifa is creating a brilliant future for our university, for Israel, and for the world. Thank you for being part of this work.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michal Amir Salkin
*Chair, Board of
Governors*



Rector's Message

Dear Governors,

Last month, a paper from my laboratory was accepted by a leading journal ranked in the top 10% in its field. This was the work of one of my PhD students, and I found myself genuinely moved – not only by the scientific achievement itself, but by what it represents. In a year so intensely devoted to institutional leadership, I was reminded that I remain, at my core, a scientist and a mentor. The ability to continue contributing to research excellence while advancing the University of Haifa's broader agenda fills me with deep pride. It is precisely this integration, between personal academic commitment and institutional vision, that I believe defines who we are and what we aspire to be as a university.

Over the past year, we have translated this vision into tangible achievements. Chief among them is the launch of the Herta and Paul Amir School of Medicine, an ambitious and transformative milestone. Interest in the program was exceptionally strong, allowing us to select an outstanding cohort of students. From the outset, they are being immersed in clinical experience, working with patients in local hospitals and community clinics. The School reflects our commitment to combining scientific innovation with a deeply humanistic approach to medicine, grounded in the needs of the diverse communities we serve.

We have also continued to strengthen our strategic areas of growth, particularly through the launch of a new Faculty of Computer and Information Science, located in the Technological Campus in downtown Haifa. This initiative advances our leadership in computer science, artificial intelligence, and interdisciplinary research, while reinforcing our commitment to a diverse student body and meaningful social impact.

This year included moments that highlighted the broader reach and responsibility of our work, particularly in advancing our founding mission of shared society. A recent meeting with His Holiness Pope Leo XIV offered a powerful reminder of the importance of dialogue, humility, and the role of institutions like ours in fostering understanding, especially in times of conflict.

The University's growing visibility was also reflected in a recent feature in *Science*, tracing my journey at the University of Haifa – from student to academic faculty and leadership. While deeply personal, the story also reflects the broader theme of social mobility through education, a central pillar of our mission, as well as the collective strength and resilience of our academic community.

All of this has taken place within a complex and evolving reality – regionally, nationally, and globally. Yet our faculty, staff, and students continue to demonstrate extraordinary dedication. Their commitment enables us not only to endure, but to move forward with purpose and clarity.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to each of you. Your support and partnership in our mission are essential to everything we have achieved – and to what lies ahead.

We move forward with confidence and determination to build a university that exemplifies excellence in research and teaching, while serving as a model of leadership, responsibility, and shared purpose.

With deep appreciation and warm regards,

Prof. Mouna Maroun
Rector



ESTABLISHED IN 1972

UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA

IN NUMBERS



7 FACULTIES

- Computer and Information Science | OPENED 2025
- Social Welfare and Health Sciences
- Herta & Paul Amir Faculty of Social Sciences
- Natural Sciences
- Education
- Humanities
- Law



3 SCHOOLS

- Leon H. Charney School of Marine Sciences
- Herta and Paul Amir School of Medicine | OPENED 2025
- School of Design | OPENED 2024



3 CAMPUSES

- Mt. Carmel Campus
- Lorry I. Lokey City Campus
- German Colony Campus



29
DEPARTMENTS
& UNITS

19
INTERNATIONAL
MA PROGRAMS

53
INTERDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH CENTERS

+530
INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS
FROM 50 COUNTRIES

+2,100
ACADEMIC FACULTY

+19,000
STUDENT BODY

COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING AWARDED



\$ 38M
(NIS 125M)

Supporting a diverse range of fields
and interdisciplinary collaborations
addressing real-world challenges.

COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

MAY 2025-2026 | FUNDING BY FACULTY

Faculty of Natural Sciences/Charney School of Marine Sciences

\$ 17M (NIS 55.5M)

Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences

\$ 6.4M (NIS 21M)

Faculty of Education

\$ 3.45M (NIS 11.3M)

Faculty of Humanities

\$ 3.36 M (NIS 11M)

Herta and Paul Amir Faculty of Social Sciences

\$ 2.9M (NIS 9.5M)

Faculty of Law

\$ 2.7M (NIS 8.8M)

Faculty of Computer and Information Science

\$ 2.4M (NIS 8M)

Leading Funding Sources

Research grants were awarded through highly competitive national and international funding bodies, including: Israel Science Foundation (ISF) | Council for Higher Education (CHE) | Israel Innovation Authority | Ministry of Education | Ministry of Defense | European Research Council (ERC) | Binational Science Foundation (BSF) USA–Israel | Volkswagen Foundation | Mortimer B. Zuckerman Institute | The Trump Foundation | The Schmidt Family Foundation | Jewish National Fund (JNF)

Source: The Research Authority

*USD figures were calculated using the average exchange rate for the reporting period (May 2025–May 2026):
NIS 3.275 = USD 1

SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT

+4,500

Students Supported

\$ 7.87M

In Scholarships Awarded in
2024–25 Academic Year

Source: Dean of Students Office

*Approximately NIS 28M.

USD figures were calculated using the average
exchange rate for the reporting period (2024–
25 Academic Year): NIS 3.56 = USD 1

EMERGENCY RESPONSE & STUDENT SUPPORT

24/7

Emergency Hotline

+400

Inquiries Supported

Operating continuously
since October 7

Source: Office of the Dean of Students

SHARED SOCIETY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

+500

Undergraduate Students

+56,000

Hours of Community Service through
the Unit for Social Involvement and
Future Leaders programs

2024–25 Academic Year

Source: Dean of Students Office

PREPARING TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE

ACADEMIA 360

Redefining Undergraduate Education

Academia 360 is a multi-year initiative, developed with the Council for Higher Education, to transform undergraduate education and prepare students for a rapidly changing world.

Through three new interdisciplinary tracks* (30 credits each) that combine academic depth with career-ready skills, the program places a strong focus on employment outcomes and plans for significant growth in the coming years.

*Three Interdisciplinary tracks: AI, Human Resources, and Social Leadership

Sources: Office of the Rector; Dean of Teaching and Learning

+400

Students

participated in experiential
skills courses

+50

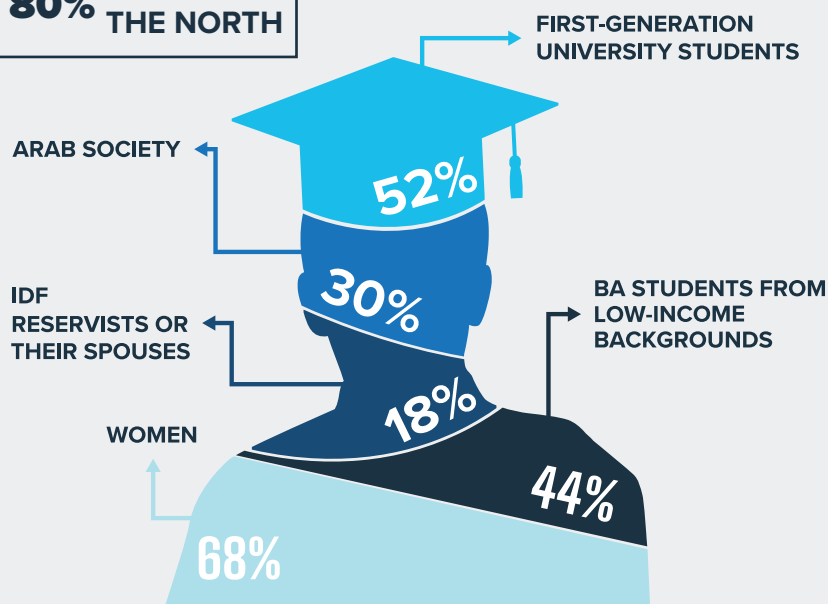
Students Placed

into permanent roles through
the "Talents" program.

MEET OUR STUDENT COMMUNITY

ENROLLMENT

80% RESIDE IN
THE NORTH



Source: Office of the Rector, 2025–26 Academic Year

11,000

UNDERGRADUATE

6,500

MASTERS

1,400

PhD

200

TEACHING CERTIFICATE

*Post-doctoral fellows
not included

Philanthropy

Vice-President of Philanthropy



Dear Friends,

Philanthropy can be construed as the act of contributing to a worthwhile cause. However, a closer look at the Greek root of the term tells a deeper story: “philos” means love, and “anthropos” means humanity. At the University of Haifa, the origins of “philo-anthropy” come to life through friends like you. It is your support for our mission that strengthens our students, faculty, and the future of northern Israel.

The past year marks an unprecedented period both in terms of the breadth and scope of needs and opportunities on campus, and the increased numbers of new and longtime supporters who stood in solidarity with our students and faculty. Your generosity is helping write the University’s next chapter in health and medical studies, cutting-edge research in fields including trauma, shared society, marine sciences, and beyond. Together, we are helping shape not only our University, but the entire Northern region of Israel, as the University’s applied research initiatives partner with institutions and communities across the North to aid in data-driven rehabilitation efforts. Thank you for your love of humanity and your generous spirit.

Sincerely,

Gideon Herscher

Philanthropy in Action

\$60M

**SECURED IN THE
2024-25
ACADEMIC YEAR**

ALLOCATION BY FOCUS AREA

Health and Medical Innovation

\$28M

Campus Infrastructure, Capital, and Renovation

\$13M

Financial Aid and Scholarships

\$8.5M

Cutting Edge Research

\$5.5M

Shared Society Initiatives

\$5M

In addition to the above, the University has secured over \$110M in multiyear commitments that will advance core priorities of the University.

Global Engagement

Vice-President for Global Engagement



Dear Friends,

As we complete the first year of the Global Engagement Unit, we are pleased to share a snapshot of our key activities, supported by over \$400,000 (NIS 1.2 million) in global engagement initiatives. This progress has been achieved within a complex and strained international environment for Israeli academia.

Together, these efforts reflect the growing scale of our global engagement and lay the foundation for continued expansion in the years ahead.

Sincerely,
Prof. Tally Katz-Gerro

Global Engagement in Numbers

12 Research Grants

Research partnership grants across North America and Europe

60 Sabbatical Exchanges

Faculty sabbatical exchanges worldwide

12 International Conference Support

International conferences supported, held on campus

17 Academic Delegations

Diplomatic and academic delegations hosted from North America and Europe

26 Graduate Students Support

Graduate students supported in global academic activities, including research initiatives, competitions, conferences, and workshops

17 HAI Fellow Program

International experts hosted through the HAI Fellow program (North America and Europe)

2025 Recipients of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy *Honoris Causa*

The University of Haifa proudly awarded its highest honor to individuals whose work reflects our core values of inclusion, innovation, and impact.



Dr. Neri Oxman

Hailed as Nature's Architect, Neri Oxman is a designer, inventor, and researcher. Her design philosophy, Material Ecology, lies at the intersection of culture and nature, calling for the unification of the made and the grown across scales and species. A multidisciplinary designer, Oxman founded The Mediated Matter Group at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2010, pioneering the field of Material Ecology by fusing technology and biology to advance ecological sustainability. She became a tenured professor at MIT in 2017. Oxman received her PhD in Design Computation at MIT. She holds a diploma from the Architectural Association in London, complemented by studies at the Technion Israel Institute of Technology and training at the Hebrew University's Department of Medical Sciences. She was an architect and research consultant at Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates in London and served as Visiting Associate and Evaluator for the SmartGeometry Group. With over 150 scientific publications and inventions, her work is included in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Centre Pompidou, MAK Museum of Applied Arts, FRAC Collection for Art and Architecture, and the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum. Recognitions include being named a Cultural Leader by the World Economic Forum (2016), the Cooper Hewitt National Design Award and London Design Innovation Medal (2018), and an Honorary Fellowship from the Royal Institute of British Architects (2019). Neri Oxman is the Founder and CEO of OXMAN, a design lab that blends nature, technology, biology and chemistry to create eco-friendly materials and products.



Bill Ackman

Bill Ackman has served as the Chief Executive Officer of Pershing Square Capital Management, L.P. ("Pershing Square") since its inception in 2003. He has served as Executive Chairman of the board of directors of Howard Hughes Holdings Inc. ("HHH") since May 2025. Mr. Ackman also serves as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Pershing Square SPARC Holdings, Ltd. He is co-trustee of The Pershing Square Foundation, part of Pershing Square Philanthropies, which he founded in 2006 to bet on innovative leaders solving humanity's big societal, environmental, and health challenges. Mr. Ackman previously served as Chairman of the Board of HHH, as Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of Pershing Square Tontine Holdings, Ltd and as a member of the board of directors of Universal Music Group N.V. In addition, he served as a member of the Investor Advisory Committee on Financial Markets of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and the Board of Dean's Advisors of Harvard Business School. Prior to founding Pershing Square, Mr. Ackman co-founded and co-managed Gotham Partners Management Co., LLC, an investment adviser that managed public and private equity hedge fund portfolios, until 2003. Mr. Ackman received a Master in Business Administration from the Harvard Business School and a Bachelor of Arts magna cum laude from Harvard College.



Bradley M. Bloom

Bradley M. Bloom is the co-founder and former Managing Director of Berkshire Partners LLC, a leading private equity firm based in Boston.

A lifelong advocate for education and Jewish life, he has held prominent leadership roles including Chairman of Combined Jewish Philanthropies, co-founder of the Boston-Haifa Connection, President of the Board of Trustees at Milton Academy, and member of key strategic and financial oversight committees at Harvard University.

From 2019 to 2025, he served as Chairman of the University of Haifa's Board of Governors. During his tenure, some of the most difficult years in the State of Israel's history, the University established two transformative institutions—the Bloom School for Graduate Studies and the Herta and Paul Amir School of Medicine—strengthening its academic reach and global standing. Brad received his AB and MBA degrees from Harvard University.



Prof. Eugene V. Koonin

Prof. Eugene V. Koonin is a renowned evolutionary biologist and Distinguished Investigator at the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), where he leads the Evolutionary Genomics Group at the National Library of Medicine. He is best known for introducing the foundational concept of Clusters of Orthologous Genes, a cornerstone of comparative and evolutionary genomics. His extensive research focuses on genome evolution in microbes and viruses, host-parasite coevolution, antiviral defense systems such as CRISPR-Cas, and mathematical models of evolutionary processes. Prof. Koonin has authored over 1,100 research and review articles, cited hundreds of thousands of times. He is the author of *The Logic of Chance* and a member of the US National Academies of Sciences and Medicine, and a foreign associate of the European Molecular Biology Organization and the Academy of Europe. Koonin holds honorary doctorates from leading universities across Europe and Israel, including Université Aix-Marseille, Wageningen University, the University of St Andrews, and the Weizmann Institute of Science.



Ronny Someck

Ronny Someck is one of Israel's most celebrated contemporary poets, known for his vivid blend of street realism, literary elegance, humor, and social critique. Born in Baghdad in 1951 and raised in Israel, his work draws deeply on his Mizrahi heritage and explores themes of identity, memory, and justice.

His artistic reach extends from literature to visual and musical collaborations, including joint exhibitions with composer Elliott Sharp and five solo exhibitions at the Museum of Israeli Art in Ramat Gan. He has authored 11 poetry books, most recently *Horse Power*, and two children's books co-written with his daughter Shirly. His poetry has been translated into over 40 languages and awarded honors in France, Poland, the Netherlands, and North Macedonia. Beyond his writing, he is a longtime mentor to at-risk youth and young writers through creative writing workshops. Through poetry, art, and public advocacy, he gives voice to the diverse narratives of Israeli society.

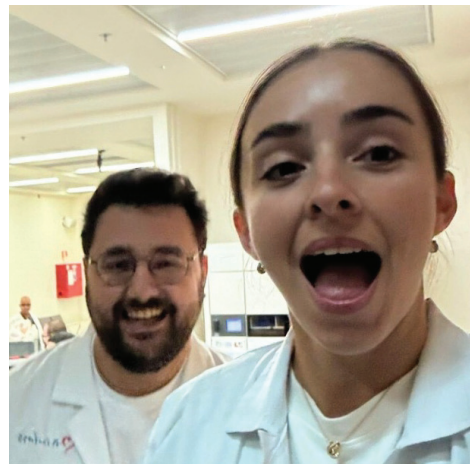
Student Spotlights:

Shanny Aya Bittom: Serving, Studying, and Leading Under Pressure

At 26, Shanny Aya Bittom is completing her first year at the University of Haifa's medical school while continuing to serve in reserve duty (miluim)—a demanding balance that reflects both discipline and a deep sense of purpose. “One day I am in uniform, and the next I am in a white coat,” she says. “The transition can be difficult, but also meaningful.”

Shanny began her medical studies after seven years of military service, including a role as a **Company Commander in the Search and Rescue Unit**, where she led male and female combat soldiers and took part in the Swords of Iron war. Today, she serves in the reserves as an **Operations Officer in the IDF General Staff operations room**.

She chose to study medicine out of a strong sense of responsibility and a desire to make a real difference. She was also drawn to the opportunity to join the University of Haifa's inaugural medical class and help shape the future of physician training in northern Israel.



She emphasizes that the University's support has been essential. “Faculty offer individualized make-up sessions, access to mental health support, and flexibility with exams and deadlines,” she says. “You feel it every day. We have a strong sense that every student is seen, valued, and not alone. They really have our backs.” Nearly half (48%) of the School of Medicine's inaugural cohort of 74 students are currently serving in reserve duty.

Looking ahead, Shanny hopes to become an excellent physician and to continue serving in the reserves as a doctor in a combat unit. “Although the path is long and complex, especially in the current reality, I take pride in what I am doing every single day.”

Shachar Eden: From the Front Lines to the Legal Front

At 25, Shachar Eden is no stranger to adversity—or to service. A second-year law student, Shachar brings a sense of purpose to his studies, shaped by the realities he faced as an IDF tank commander.

While patrolling the Israeli-Egyptian border during his regular army service, Shachar's unit thwarted an attempted infiltration. Amid the fighting, an explosion left him with significant hearing loss in his left ear. After months of treatment, most of his hearing returned—but the experience left a lasting impression. As Shachar explains, "When you've faced adversity yourself, you internalize the need to help others."

After completing his army service, Shachar enrolled in the Faculty of Law, determined to continue serving his country in a new capacity. When the Swords of Iron War broke out, he was unable to return to reserve duty due to his injury, but he was determined to contribute in any way he could. He found his calling volunteering with the Legal Aid Clinic in Times of War.



"The Legal Clinic fulfills a dual mandate – giving law students practical, hands-on experience while helping war victims who have nowhere else to turn for help." He is especially proud of his work with a Nova music festival survivor, who struggled with PTSD and faced pressure from his employer to quit. Thanks to Shachar's dedication and the clinic's support, the survivor received full severance benefits, providing crucial financial stability during his recovery.

Your support enables students like Shachar to transform their compassion and expertise into real-world impact, providing hope and justice to those who need it most.

Research Highlights:

The Memory Mechanism Behind a New Startup: A New Approach to PTSD Treatment

Post-traumatic stress disorder affects an estimated 300 million people worldwide, yet most existing treatments focus on managing symptoms rather than targeting the underlying neurological mechanisms of trauma. Researchers at the University of Haifa, led by Professors Edi Barkai and Iris Reuveni, have identified a previously unknown brain mechanism that may explain why traumatic memories become so intense and persistent.

Their findings suggest that traumatic memories, unlike ordinary ones, can become abnormally strengthened in the brain. This mechanism appears to be specific to trauma-related memories, raising the possibility of reducing

their emotional intensity without erasing the memory itself. Through its technology transfer company, Carmel Economic Corporation Ltd., the University has partnered with NGT Healthcare II to establish Kailo Pharma. The company is developing a treatment based on a small engineered protein, delivered as a nasal spray to reach the brain directly.

The research is still in its early stages. If it succeeds, the treatment could offer something current therapies don't – a way to loosen the grip of a traumatic memory without erasing it, with potential implications for millions of people worldwide.



Personalizing Mental Health Care

Award-Winning Research with Global Impact

A major challenge in mental health care is that even effective treatments often work for only a subset of patients. As a result, finding the right therapy can become a prolonged “trial-and-error” process, delaying recovery and increasing suffering for individuals coping with conditions such as PTSD and depression.

Professor Sigal Zilcha-Mano, Head of the Psychotherapy Research Lab, is leading groundbreaking work aimed at transforming mental health care through personalized treatment. Her research combines clinical expertise with advanced data-driven tools, including patterns gathered from smartphones such as sleep, movement, speech, and digital social activity.

By analyzing these signals, her team seeks to identify early signs of mental deterioration and help clinicians match patients with more effective treatments more quickly and accurately. Beyond its scientific significance, this work has the potential to meaningfully improve people’s lives, well-being, and quality of life around the world.

Prof. Zilcha-Mano recently received a European Research Council (ERC) Proof of Concept grant to develop SMARTH MDD, an innovative AI-based system designed to provide proactive, personalized mental health care on a global scale. She was also awarded the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Research Award, a distinguished international honor recognizing lifetime research achievement.



Honors & Recognition:

International Recognition for Leaders of the Azrieli ADVANCE Nursing Center

Professors Efrat Shadmi and Anna Zisberg of the Cheryl Spencer Department of Nursing have recently received prestigious international honors, reflecting the growing global impact of the Azrieli Advanced Nursing Center (ADVANCE). A first-of-its-kind initiative in Israel, ADVANCE integrates a human-centered approach to nursing education with simulation training, health-technology innovation, and research to prepare the next generation of compassionate, highly skilled nurses.

Professor Efrat Shadmi Honored with Johns Hopkins Distinguished Alumni Award

Professor Efrat Shadmi, Head of the Cheryl Spencer Department of Nursing and Founding Head of ADVANCE, received the Distinguished Alumni Award from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, recognizing exceptional achievement and international impact.

Her work focuses on improving care for high-risk populations, particularly through integrated and equitable healthcare systems that address both physical and mental health. Prof. Shadmi earned her doctorate from Johns Hopkins (Class of '05) with the support of Fulbright and Spencer scholarships.

Professor Anna Zisberg Inducted into International Nursing Research Hall of Fame

Professor Anna Zisberg, Head of the ADVANCE Research Unit, has been selected for inclusion in the International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame by Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing.

One of only 26 researchers selected worldwide for 2026, Prof. Zisberg was recognized for research that has influenced clinical practice and healthcare policy internationally. Her work focuses on improving care and health outcomes for older adults and contributed to a national initiative – developed in partnership with JDC and Israel's Ministry of Health – to reduce the impact of hospitalization on older adults' functioning.

She also founded the University of Haifa's "Age-Friendly University" initiative, the first university program of its kind in Israel.



Recoding Justice: AI, Criminal Law, and the Future of Justice

As artificial intelligence rapidly reshapes nearly every aspect of modern life, Professor Eldar Haber of the University of Haifa Faculty of Law is helping lead one of the most important legal and ethical conversations of our time: how artificial intelligence (AI) will transform criminal justice systems in Israel and around the world.

In 2025, Professor Haber, Head of the Haifa Center for Law & Technology (HCLT), was awarded a European Research Council (ERC) Consolidator Grant for Recoding Justice, a groundbreaking project examining how AI technologies are influencing criminal investigations, sentencing, incarceration, and rehabilitation. Beyond analyzing these changes, the research seeks to develop legal frameworks that ensure emerging technologies are used responsibly, transparently, and fairly, while safeguarding fundamental rights and principles of justice.



ERC Consolidator Grants are awarded to mid-career researchers with an independent research vision and a proven ability to push the boundaries of knowledge. The award places the University of Haifa and its Faculty of Law at the forefront of global research and highlights the important role of Israeli academia in shaping the future of law in a rapidly evolving technological era.

Prof. Haber's work on artificial intelligence, cyber law, privacy, and intellectual property has been widely cited in academic literature, government reports, major media outlets, and by U.S. federal court decisions.



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