



Dear academic and administrative staff members,

With the conclusion of the first semester, we would like to update you on a number of current topics and programs.

1. **New members and faculty members.** So far, we have taken on 42 new researchers for the 2025–2026 academic year. We would like to welcome the new members of our academic staff, who should feel free to contact us with any questions or issues they may have.
2. **Student numbers.** The 2025–2026 academic year began with a moderate increase in the number of students. The number of first-year undergraduate students stands at 4,149, and the number of new master's students is 1,894. Relative to 2024–2025, this represents an increase of around 100 undergraduate students, reflected in a rise in the number of students in the majority of departments and faculties. Among the more notable increases are those in the departments of nursing, psychology, social work, biomedical sciences, economics, computer science, accounting and more. The number of master's students remained relatively stable. We are now busy with preparations for the opening of the 2026–2027 academic year.
3. **International cooperation and the struggle against boycotts.** The end of the war has helped us to continue to expand and strengthen our scientific ties with leading international institutions around the world. Recently, strategic agreements have been reached with Harvard, Caltech, and other leading institutions. On the other hand, we are facing continued efforts to impose boycotts on Israeli academia and academics. We are maintaining our efforts to address this issue, and the HUJI Academic Freedom Initiative taskforce—which includes Prof. Yuval Shany (chair); Prof. Oron Shagrir, University rector; Prof. Guy Harpaz, vice president for international affairs; Yossi Gal, vice president for advancement and external relations; and Prof. Netta Bara-Corren—is continuing its work of documenting and monitoring boycott incidents, offering help and advice on dealing with academic boycotts and with all forms of harassment of Israeli faculty members and students, responding to questions and to criticism of the University, and more. The Academic Freedom Initiative is available to you if you need assistance; in our experience, working together often leads to success. More information can be found here: [https://international.huji.ac.il/academic\\_freedom](https://international.huji.ac.il/academic_freedom). Please forward any



information regarding academic boycotts, as well as any questions you may have, to the taskforce team via Alma Lessing, the taskforce coordinator: [almal@savion.huji.ac.il](mailto:almal@savion.huji.ac.il).

- 4. Infrastructure and computer systems.** Over the past year, we have implemented a new student system called Orbit, and we have made significant updates to the Moodle system. The required upgrades to our computer systems have been accompanied by considerable difficulties, and we are working hard to complete the implementation processes successfully. We are convinced that ultimately, these changes constitute a significant improvement of the University's teaching systems. In addition, we are completing the deployment of more advanced wi-fi network infrastructure in order to better serve the members of our academic and administrative faculties, and especially, our students. The final stage of the deployment will be on the Mount Scopus campus and will be completed in the coming months. Even then, the wi-fi provision will not be perfect, and we are discussing long-term solutions.
- 5. Budget management by units.** We are currently examining a change in budget management, which will enable faculties and independent academic units to manage additional aspects and components of their budgets, such as salaries. The aim is to increase transparency and managerial responsibility on the one hand, and on the other hand, to increase the faculties' managerial flexibility, subject to various constraints. We will provide updates on this issue as we progress, in full cooperation with the faculties.

One of the challenges facing us is that of budget restrictions in the coming years, stemming (among other things) from the effects of the global geopolitical situation on the cost of key components of our budget, as well as from a decline in revenues from various sources, including government cuts to the higher education budget. The good news is that the University's financial outlook in the longer term remains promising, due to an increase in additional sources of income that will become available to us in a few years' time, mainly thanks to real estate deals.

In the coming years, we will continue to do everything possible to protect the university's academic and research activities, which are our *raison d'être*, and also our main source of income. Despite budgetary restrictions, we will advance various projects, some of which depend on raising significant philanthropic funds. These initiatives are designed to create new engines of growth, improve our academic capabilities, and adapt the University to the changes that are taking place around us,



in Israel and throughout the world. Below, we present some of the initiatives and changes that we are advancing:

1. **Medical studies.** We are working to expand the School of Medicine, with the aim of increasing the number of students from around 200 first-year students today to 270 in the 2026–2027 academic year, and eventually to 360 students in each cohort. Increasing the number of medical students is a national priority due to a severe shortage of doctors in Israel, especially in the country's periphery. Our expansion is being carried out along with in-depth changes to study methods and content, so as to place an emphasis on required skills, and with the establishment of a center for digital teaching in the Faculty of Medicine, which will also support the use of advanced simulations and thus reduce the dependence of the number of students on the number of teaching beds in hospitals.
2. **Artificial Intelligence (AI).** Artificial intelligence poses great challenges for universities, but also offers major opportunities. To address the challenges and create new opportunities, we are launching a broad AI process that will include new curricula and learning content, RFPs to implement AI-based tools in research, teaching, and administration, and more. This is being done in parallel with the establishment of a national infrastructure center for advanced AI processors (GPUs) that will support AI-based research. The University project is headed by Prof. Omri Abend of the School of Computer Science and the Department of Cognitive and Brain Sciences.
3. **Faculty of Engineering.** For years, the University has refrained from significant development in the fields of engineering. The centrality of the engineering professions in today's research, along with the national need for many more engineers, requires us to rethink our approach to the engineering professions. Therefore, we are examining the possibility of significant expansion in this regard, and even the opening of a new Faculty of Engineering, which will be based in part on existing infrastructures and study programs (in software engineering, electrical engineering, and applied physics) and will develop other engineering fields based on existing research strengths at the University, such as materials science, nanotechnology, and the medical professions. The development team is being headed by Prof. Uriel Levy of the Applied Physics Institute.
4. **Academia 360.** In 2024–2025, 21 departments at the University began operating the Academia 360 program, the goal of which is to examine and



update the curricula in each department, so that these will impart the skills that the department members believe are important for their graduates. As part of the program, department members identify the skills that they believe are important for each course, examine the extent to which they are indeed delivered in the curriculum, and accordingly implement changes to the curriculum and to their teaching methods. The project is headed by Prof. Lilach Sagiv, vice rector for academic affairs. We plan to expand these activities in the coming years, and to add a new program called Humanities 360 (which is supported by the Planning and Budgeting Council and Yad Hanadiv), which will facilitate the integration into department curricula of subject clusters such as languages, culture, society, democracy, and others.

5. **The International School of Dentistry.** In parallel with the expansion of the School of Medicine, we are currently pursuing an accreditation process for our degree program in dentistry that will allow us to increase the number of students, including taking in international students. The accreditation process is based on predefined standards and principles of efficiency and continuous improvement, and encompasses not only research and teaching, but also ethics and professionalism, the quality of the services provided to students, and the infrastructure and resources available to the faculty.
6. **School for research students.** For many years, we have recognized the need to implement frameworks that will enable better care and conditions for our research students. Establishing such frameworks, which also guarantee optimal funding for students, requires expenditure of hundreds of millions of shekels a year. However, we have established a team to prepare a plan for the full operation of a school for doctoral students (that will possibly also serve master's students), including the setting of milestones for the completion of tasks through to full implementation of these frameworks, to the extent permitted by budgetary conditions. The team is headed by Prof. Yehuda Neumark and Prof. Uzi Rebhun, joint chairs of the Authority for Research Students, and includes Prof. Meital Reches (vice rector for research), Prof. Josh Goldberg (of the Department of Medical Neurobiology), Prof. Keren Tenenboim-Weinblatt (of the Department of Communication and Journalism), Elena Birman (head of the Academic Administration), and Neta Weiss (director of the Authority for Research Students).
7. **Impact and community.** Increasing the University's impact on Israeli society is a central part of our mission. To advance this goal, Prof. Lilach Sagiv will be



appointed next year to the position of vice president for impact, and charged with overseeing a unit for advancing community relations, both on campus and beyond. The unit was established this year, and is directed by Prof. Nilly Mor, in collaboration with Prof. Lilach Sagiv and Prof. Mona Khoury.

8. **The Authority for Academia-Industry Relations.** The new Authority for Academia-Industry Relations has recently begun operations, overseen by the vice president for research and development and in cooperation with Yissum, the University's technology transfer and IP company. The Authority, headed by Dr. Anat Iosub-Amir (appointed jointly by the University and Yissum), is planning a comprehensive response to the challenges and opportunities related to integration with the business sector in order to increase the applied activity of the University's researchers, and complements the strategic plan prepared by the vice president for strategy and diversity. We anticipate that strengthening cooperation with industry will improve research excellence and increase the University's relevance to broader society and to our students.
9. **The Innovation Lab for National Challenges.** We are currently exploring an initiative aimed at identifying urgent national applied challenges and creating innovative solutions for them within a short period of time. The Lab will operate under a unique University entrepreneurship model that supports rapid transition from the concept stage to proof of feasibility and implementation in the field.
10. **Quality control.** As of 2026–2027, there will be changes in national quality control processes, with responsibility for these processes (except in the medical and paramedical professions) being transferred from the Council for Higher Education to universities. We will also make alterations to assessment methods, with greater emphasis on research infrastructures, quality, and outputs in the various University units, alongside assessment of content related to teaching and curricula. The changes will be led by Prof. Meital Reches, vice rector for research. We believe that better oversight and evaluation of the state of research in the units will also contribute in the long run to improved research quality and output.
11. **Websites.** We have recently begun a redesign of the University's websites, with the aim of ensuring a uniform, up-to-date look across all sites, along with a simple, convenient, and flexible operating system supporting use in three languages (Hebrew, Arabic, and English). This process combines innovative design with advanced technological infrastructure, efficient content



management, adaptation to changing needs, and an optimal user experience integrated with artificial intelligence.

The past few years have been and continue to be challenging for all of us, encompassing the COVID-19 pandemic, political upheavals, and an extended period of war. To widespread joy, the 2025–2026 academic year began after all the surviving hostages and most of the fallen hostages were brought home. Our hearts go out to the family of the last remaining fallen hostage, Ran Gvili. Despite the ceasefire, there are still very large numbers of students being called up for reserve duty for extended periods of time. We will continue to do our utmost to help the reservists and their spouses, the wounded, and those who have lost relatives and friends. Once again this year, guidelines similar to those used last year have been set, defining the concessions and accommodations to which reservists and others affected are entitled, as well as the various ways in which the academic units and the University as a whole provide academic and emotional support. We thank each and every one of you who personally contribute to this effort.

In addition to the students, the University and we personally are fully committed to assisting any faculty member who is negatively affected by the war, whether due to their own reserve duty or that of their spouse, to the injury of a family member, or to any other personal or family difficulty. If you have been affected, please contact us, either via your heads of departments or deans or directly, so that together we can examine how we can help.

Sincerely,

Tamir Sheafer, President  
Oron Shagrir, Rector  
Naama Kaufman-Fass, Director General

**נקלטים חדשים לשנת תשפ"ו**

שם הנקלט	יחידה
טלי אהרוני	תקשורת
רועי בהרד	משפטים
נדיה ביידר	חינוך
אביטל בייקוביץ	מנהל עסקים
שרגא ביק	מדע הדתות
יונתן בן-דנון	יחידת השפות
שנר בן-עובדיה	מתמטיקה
יוחאי בר סיני	מינוי משותף בפיסיקה ומדעי המחשב (סמס' ב')
אמיר ברודנר	מנהל עסקים
לנא ג'ריס-לולו	עבודה סוציאלית
צ'אד גולדברג	סוציולוגיה ואנתרופולוגיה (סמס' ב')
גיא גולן	מדעי הצמח וגנטיקה בחקלאות
יובל גרנות	חשבונאות
יהושע גרנט	ספרות עברית
קמי דה בסדלייבר	ארכיאולוגיה
חגי דיאמנדי	פיסיקה יישומית
שי זמיר	לימודי ספרד, פורטוגל ואמל"ט
עינב טייב-פליגלמן	מדעי החיים
אמיר טל	מינוי משותף בקוגניציה ובפסיכולוגיה
תומאסו טרילו	תקשורת
יעל לוי	יידיש
חנן מזא"ה	תלמוד והלכה
נופר מזורסקי	עבודה סוציאלית
יובל מלכא	המכון למחקר רפואי
בעז ניגן	מדעי החיים
ליונל סבג	רפואה וטרינרית
עידו סיוון סבילה	מינוי משותף במט"ר ומדיניות ציבורית
נועם סעדון-גרוסמן	מינוי משותף בריפוי בעיסוק ובקוגניציה
אמיר פדר	מדעי המחשב + מט"ר
אליסה קומסקי-אלבז	מדעי בעלי החיים
נטליה קוננוב	מנהל עסקים
ורד קורץ-דוד	כלכלה ופכ"מ
גל קלמר	רפואה וטרינרית
מנחם קרייף	פיסיקה
ערן רבני	כימיה
אפרת רגב-גביש	אנטומולוגיה
אורי רוזנשטיין	מתמטיקה
אסף רום	מנהל עסקים
ליאור רותם	מדעי המחשב
איתי רפאל	רוקחות
צבי שטיינר	מדעי כדור הארץ
אורלי שנר	אנטומולוגיה