Teaching

This year, the OUI continued to invest extensive efforts to improve teaching and to reach out to special populations. In addition, new programs of study and courses were offered. Particular attention was given to strengthening student perseverance and returning students who dropped out to the OUI

Programs Approved by the Council for Higher Education (CHE)

- B.A. in Sociology
- B.A. in Sociology with a Division of Studies in an Additional Field
- B.Sc. in Computer Science
- B.Sc. in Information Systems Engineering. The 4-year program requires additional development and is not yet being offered.

Decisions of the Academic Committee

Programs of study and divisions that were approved by the Committee

- B.A. in Sciences: Emphasis on Field Studies
- B.A. in Management with a Division of Studies in Industrial Relations (to be offered in 2008)

New combinations of approved programs that were offered for the first time this year

- B.A. in Sociology and Computer Science – Systems and Applications
- B.Sc. in Computer Science and Life Sciences
- B.Sc. in Mathematics and Chemistry
- B.Sc. in Computer Science and Chemistry

Decisions regarding studies in Russian

The Academic Committee decided that students will be entitled to study courses taught in Russian from among the courses offered by the OUI in this language in accordance with the student's specific degree requirements (B.A. in Social Sciences and Humanities or B.A. in Humanities and Social Sciences – Focus on History of the Jewish

People). To receive a degree, students who took only courses in Russian will be required to demonstrate Hebrew proficiency through an exemption exam or by successfully completing the relevant course. The diploma of students who accumulated fewer than 48 credits in courses in Hebrew will indicate that their studies were in the Russian language. The Committee set down guidelines for teaching and for the academic and administrative operation of studies in both Israel and the CIS.

Additional decisions

- Students with a Bachelor's degree from an accredited academic institution who wish to study toward a degree from the OUI will be required to accumulate at least 84 credits in their program of study in order to be eligible for a Bachelor's degree from the OUI.
- Students with a Bachelor's degree from an accredited academic institution who wish to study an additional discipline at the OUI will be required to accumulate at least 48 credits in that discipline in order to be eligible for a certificate indicating that they completed studies in the discipline.

Certificate studies approved by the Committee

- Teaching Certificate in Rabbinics and Jewish Thought (offered this year)
- Teaching Certificate in Civics for students with a Bachelor's degree (offered this year)
- Teaching Certificate in History (to be offered in 2008)

Courses taught for the first time this year

Graduate level

Computer Science Division

Research Seminar: Algorithms and Theory
Research Seminar: Database and Data Mining

Dept. of Education and Psychology

Organizational Change in Learning Systems

Dept. of Management and Economics

Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice

Dept. of Natural Sciences

Sociobiology and Its Offshoots: Science in Controver

Undergraduate level

Dept. of Literature, Language and the Arts

The Classical Style
Palestinian Cinema
Israeli Theater: Change and Conflicts
Not by Word Alone: Fundamental Issues in Translation

Dept. of History, Philosophy and Judaic Studies

Archeological Field Work - Tel Eton
Pilgrimage: Jews, Christians, Muslims

Dept. of Natural Sciences

Organic Chemistry
Physics Preparatory Workshop (non-credit course)

Computer Science Division

Computability and Introduction to Complexity
Workshop: Object-Oriented Programming

Dept. of Sociology, Political Science and Communication

The Arab Community in Israel
Human Rights in International Relations
Introduction to Gender Studies

Dept. of Management and Economics

Social Preference and Choice
Managerial Economics
Computer Integrated Manufacturing Systems
Non-Linear Optimization Methods

Dept. of Education and Psychology

Honors Research Seminar in Psychology
Psychology of the Holocaust
Sleep and Sleep Disorders in Childhood

Teaching English as a Foreign Language

In all English proficiency courses students can choose between face-to-face tutorials (regular or intensive) or entirely online instruction. Online courses are based on written materials, and in B, C and D level courses, students also receive courseware. Students in these courses submit weekly online assignments. E level online courses and "Bridging the Gap in English" are taught via InterWise.

The Teaching Committee and Forum of Heads of Departments

In the past, the Teaching Committee included all academic department heads as well as representatives of the academic teaching staff. To increase the Committee's efficiency and in light of current needs, it was decided to create two separate forums: a forum of heads of academic departments that will deal primarily with issues related to department management, and a teaching committee, composed of representatives of department heads, the academic teaching staff and teaching support departments, that will focus on pedagogic and didactic issues.

Systemic Effort to Increase Student Retention at the OUI

Since its establishment the OUI has contended with the challenge of increasing student retention while maintaining high academic standards. Many measures were implemented over the years in an effort to address the issue and its implications. In January 2006, the President established a steering committee to formulate recommendations for a systemic approach to the issue. Following the committee's recommendations, a process was set in motion with the participation of about 100 employees – senior faculty members, academic teaching staff (course coordinators), members of teaching-support departments, and administrative personnel. The process included two symposia for all OUI employees and the establishment of six think tanks that focused on specific issues. Action recommendations addressing several issues were submitted: review and rewriting of study material, expanding academic counseling, supporting socialization processes at the OUI, teaching introductory and "high risk" courses (courses with low perseverance and success rates), a proposal to change the structure of seminar courses, improving students' learning skills, integrating technologies, and various issues related to tutoring.

The recommendations were submitted to eight task teams that will formulate operational work plans, some of which will be implemented as pilot projects beginning in the 2008 spring semester. The task teams will address the

following issues: complete a program for a two-stage seminar course in the Humanities and the Social Sciences; reexamine student counseling; student registration for an academic year rather than individual course enrollment; socialization to the OUI; review of course development and rewriting processes, particularly as regarding introductory and "high risk" courses; prepare a spiral program for developing students' academic learning skills and examine the feasibility of establishing preparatory courses at the OUI; plan a pilot project for examining unique tutoring models in introductory and "high risk" courses; examine issues related to assignments – design a system that will automatically remind students to submit assignments and examine the number of assignments and their nature. Another pilot project will focus on encouraging students to enroll in English proficiency courses at an early stage of their studies.

Two projects aimed at increasing student perseverance at the OUI are already underway: *Hetchel* and **Back to Studies**.

Hetchel (an acronym for guidance, support, mentoring and accompaniment) began in 2006-2007 with the aim of exploring the option of veteran students mentoring new students, and the effectiveness of such mentoring. The pilot project, which is computer supported, is currently being implemented in three courses ("Introduction to Psychology," "Introduction to Microeconomics" and "Introduction to Statistics for Students of Social Sciences I"). The pilot is assessed to help the University design activities while the project is underway. The participants' initial response has been encouraging. Recommendations as to continuing the project will be available at the end of the second year of activity.

Back to Studies examines the effectiveness of contacting students who discontinued their studies directly by phone compared to the effectiveness of contacting them in writing or not contacting them at all. This project is also accompanied by assessment processes. To date, hundreds of inquiries were received from students who submitted special requests after being contacted. These requests are handled by the Dean of Academic Studies (not the academic departments) to ensure uniformity in handling them and to enable the University to gain a comprehensive perspective of the process. It will be possible to gauge the effectiveness of the project at the end of 2007-2008, after accumulating data over several semesters.

Improving the Process Regarding Opening Study Groups

With the aim of improving the process of opening study groups, two major changes were implemented: first, the use of a computerized support system to help control and monitor decisions regarding the number of groups that are opened at any given time so as not to deviate from the pre-defined quota; second, after a trial spanning several semesters, an "averages method" was implemented this year in all study centers throughout the country. For each study center, the average number of students in a group is defined, thus enabling the University to open small groups with few students in several courses, provided that large groups are opened in other courses. The minimum number of students per group was also set for every study center.

New Study Centers

New study centers were opened in Tira, in Taibe, in two Bedouin districts, in Ramle and in Shoham this year, as well as in educational institutions including the Netanya Academic College, Muzik - School of Creation and Production, and in the Ginat school, part of the College of Management in Tel Aviv.

Evaluation of Teaching

Grade Website: A grade website was designed to help academic teaching staff and senior faculty improve teaching and exams by relating to data regarding previous exam items. The grade website can be used to learn about students' grades immediately after they are entered into the system. The site provides teaching teams and department heads with an immediate and comprehensible display that they can utilize to improve teaching and exam preparation. The system provides information about students' grades by department, course, study center, study group and student for each semester and exam date, as well as comparative information by semester and different exam dates for the same course. The system also shows mean grades on assignments and exams, average final course grades, the correlation between the assignment grades and the exam grade and any discrepancies between them.

In addition, a system for managing assignment and exam items will be operational in 2008. The system is a user-friendly version of the "question bank" and will enable the academic teaching staff to effectively manage and improve the preparation of assignments and exams.

New course evaluation: In accordance with a decision by OUI management, ten new undergraduate courses were evaluated in the second semester in which they were taught. The evaluation reports were submitted to department heads and course coordinators.

Reaching Out to Special Sectors

Expanding access to Arabic-speaking students: Initial measures were taken this year to establish a website in Arabic, and new study centers were opened in the Arab sector: in Tira, in the Al-Manar College in Taibe, and two Bedouin centers in the Central Negev College and the Beer Sheva Arab College. We also increased the number of courses that can be studied in Arabic.

The ultra-orthodox sector: The number of students from the ultra-orthodox sector studying at the Jerusalem study center grew this year. Students receive increased academic and administrative assistance and accompaniment adapted to their needs.

Overseas students: To date, students abroad could not enroll in undergraduate courses in the summer semester. This year the University decided to change its policy and to enable summer semester enrollment in all courses that can be studied abroad. The decision is expected to be implemented in summer 2008.

Expanded prisoner access to studies: In the past, there were cases in which prisoner-students found out only after the beginning of the academic year that they could not fulfill all course requirements due to limitations stemming from their imprisonment. Consequently, a table specifying the courses with mandatory requirements was prepared and forwarded to all education officers in the various prisons. Furthermore, a non-computerized program was designed for prisoner-students enabling them to complete bibliographic training to demonstrate the required knowledge in this field.

Outstanding Students

This year, the President's List includes 260 students (of whom 46 are graduate students) who completed their studies in 2006 with an average grade of 95 or above and who were awarded scholarships. About 5% are students with learning disabilities. The Dean's List includes 1,071 students whose average was 90-94. One-fifth of these students were on the President's List in the past, and about one-quarter were on the Dean's List in the past.

Increased Involvement of Department Heads in Formulating the Course Offering

This year the University initiated a process to increase the involvement of academic department heads in formulating the course offering in study centers throughout the country. The new process enables the department heads, in coordination with the Dean of Academic Studies, to decide on the basic course offering of their department for each study center. The list of courses is forwarded to the directors of the study center who revise it based on constraints and needs of the study center and then submitted to the department for final approval.

Change in Catalog Format

The structure of the academic catalog was changed this year: The Information Guide was separated from the Course Catalog and many sections were rewritten to increase their clarity and ease of use.

Open Day for Undergraduate and Graduate Students

A joint "Open Day" for undergraduate and graduate students was held this year for the second time. The experience gained is being examined to determine the format for the Open Day in 2008.

Library Innovations and Improvements

Significant bequests and donations enabled us to enrich the library collection this year. Among others, the library received a rich and comprehensive collection of books in Philosophy from the library of the late Prof. Aryeh L. Motzkin, and from the estate of the late Dr. Hagar Hillel, an OUI employee and a researcher of Judaism in Islamic countries. With the help of a donation from the National Estate, the library acquired important basic books in Judaic Studies. The OUI renewed most of its subscriptions to databases and electronic periodicals, giving priority to full-text periodicals, and also purchased subscriptions to additional databases.

This year we finished moving books and periodicals that had been kept in storage (due to lack of space in Ramat Aviv) into the new library. They are now available to readers on an open shelf.

Library computerization improvements: After upgrading the library catalog to a more advanced version, we began the process of improving it. We also arranged for ongoing updating of the Israel Union Catalog and the Union List of Serials, so that the OUI library collections are fully represented in these databases. We continued development of the electronic library, including posting MBA textbooks.

The bibliographic training courseware was upgraded to an SQL environment in order to contend with the heavy user load. This year, 4,831 students successfully completed the four online bibliographic training programs on conducting searches in catalogs and information databases. Successful completion of these programs is a prerequisite for enrollment in advanced courses.

Teaching in the OUI Academic Program in the Russian Language

More than 7,000 students in over 300 cities and towns in the CIS studied in Project Russia this year. As in previous years, we conducted a seminar for tutors and met with students in various locations. This year, for the first time, the University offered the following courses in Russian: "History of Zionism: 1881-1914," "From 'National Home' to a 'State in the Making': The Jewish Community in Palestine between the World Wars" and the second part of the course "Introduction to Oral Law."

Implementation of the Decision to Expand Teaching in Russian in Israel: Following the decision of OUI institutions to enable students to take in courses in Russian towards a degree, this option is now offered in study centers throughout the country. Students can take all courses toward a degree in the Russian language or include courses taught in Russian into their program of study. The requirements for students studying toward a degree taught in Russian are identical to those of an OUI degree taught in Hebrew. To receive an OUI degree, students who took all their courses in Russian are required to demonstrate Hebrew proficiency.
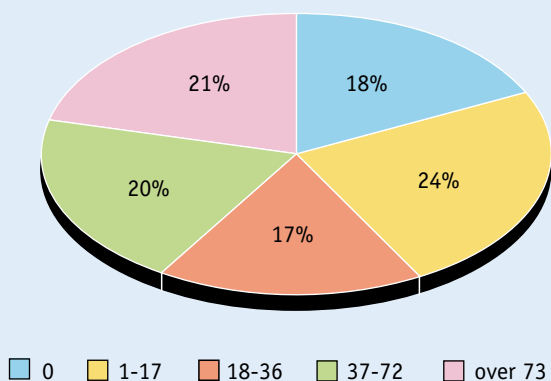
Improvements in the Teaching-Assistance Computer Systems

Improved access and performance: In light of continued growth in the use of computer systems like the online assignment system and course websites, the University took steps to ensure their function. Measures included replacing and reinforcing existing server hardware, creating redundancy in computer systems in order to enhance system survivability in case of system malfunctions or failure, and installing upgraded versions of operating systems and infrastructure applications.

Increased information security: OUI information systems are exposed to many information security risks. In addressing them, the OUI installed specialized security solutions and commissioned consulting services from a company specializing in information system security on the Internet. A Network Access Control system was acquired to monitor connections of end user computers at network nodes on campus and to deal with access attempts of unauthorized users.

Support to tutors: Support and training was offered to OUI tutors in academic courses for the following systems: the online assignment system, Opus (course websites) and MathType (a word processor for mathematics texts). About 30 training sessions for tutors using the online assignment system were conducted in 2006-2007.

Undergraduate students, by number of credits (including accredited prior studies)*

| | 0 | | 1-17 | | 18-36 | | 37-72 | | over 73 |

* At least 108 credits are required for a degree.

Enrollment Data

"Course enrollment" refers to a student registered for one academic course. Thus, a student taking two courses is listed as two course enrollments. In the 2006-2007 academic year, there were 116,170 undergraduate course enrollments (compared with 110,584 last year) and 8,782 graduate course enrollments, including qualifying courses (compared with 8,700 last year).

Enrollment in undergraduate courses, by department

Department	Course enrollments	%
History, Philosophy and Judaic Studies	5,658	4.9
Literature, Language and the Arts	6,052	5.2
Education and Psychology	31,482	27.1
Sociology, Political Science and Communication	17,665	15.2
Management and Economics	35,623	30.7
Natural Sciences	3,381	2.9
Mathematics	6,985	6.0
Computer Science	7,000	6.0
English Unit *	2,324	2.0
Total	**116,170**	**100.0**

* The data refer only to A-level (academic) courses. In non-academic preparatory courses, there were 3,938 enrollments.

Enrollment in graduate courses, by degree (including qualifying courses)

Degree	Course enrollments	%
Computer Science	499	5.7
Democracy Studies - Interdisciplinary	683	7.8
Biological Thought	162	1.8
Business Administration	6,506	74.1
Education, 'Learning Technologies' and 'Learning Systems'	932	10.6
Total	**8,782**	**100.0**

Regional distribution of enrollments and study groups in academic* and EFL courses

Region	Course enrollments	Number of Groups
North	13,935	668
Sharon	11,828	507
Central	73,502	2,894
Jerusalem	9,621	403
Coastal Plain	5,871	289
South	6,640	341
Special tutorials	7,533	–
Total	**128,930**	**5,102**

* Including 42 enrollments in certificate studies and toward teaching certificates.

Number of courses, study groups, enrollments and students in OUI-run study centers

Study Center	Courses	Study groups	Enrollments	Students
Tiberias	21	21	295	174
Kiryat-Haim	25	28	650	405
Afula	22	24	394	239
Nazareth	39	44	701	323
Carmiel	35	38	564	332
Haifa – Beit Biram	181	326	7,642	3,328
Wadi Ara – Givat Haviva	51	70	1,326	581
Jerusalem – Technological Park	167	387	9,421	3,791
Tel Aviv – Ramat-Aviv	249	689	16,728	10,161
Beer Sheva – Beit Yatsiv	143	217	4,415	1,817
Eilat	17	17	264	126