

# Promoting the OUI's Mission and Goals

## **Donations**

This year, donations were overshadowed by the global economic crisis and its adverse effect on the funds that support higher education. Nevertheless, approximately 3,700 scholarships were granted and a variety of different projects in research, technology and improvements in teaching were initiated.

To improve its efficiency, a project has begun to consolidate all existing databases of donors, into one database that will contain all information relating to contributions, in Israel and abroad. Furthermore, a new strategic program has been structured to cope with the economic crisis and its effect on donations. The program will consolidate a diverse foundation for long term sources of income.

## **Friends of the Open University in Israel**

The Friends of the Open University Association acts to promote the goals of the Open University and works towards recruiting supporters, resources and donations. The Association maintains on-going contacts with its members through extensive social and cultural activities. Despite the economic-financial crisis, donations from about 50 different parties have been raised, mainly directed towards scholarships to assist soldiers and underprivileged students.

## **"Opening the Door to the Future"**

Through this project, which takes place twice a year during the holiday seasons, the University raises funds earmarked for scholarships for students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds who have difficulty financing their studies, as well as for soldiers studying at the University during and after their compulsory military service.

## **"Adopt a Student"**

This year, several companies participated in this project. Based on geographic and financial criteria, they adopted OUI students and financed their studies for periods ranging from one year to an entire degree.

## **The American Friends of the Open University of Israel**

This year, relations with the American Friends of the Open University of Israel were greatly enhanced. A strategic program was prepared to promote the name of the OUI by means of social events, recruiting new members and increasing the number of younger members active in the association's activities.

Last year, energetic new members joined the management of the American Friends of the Open University of Israel and active Open University graduates joined the association, providing first-hand examples of the OUI's achievements. New members were appointed to the University Council from among active members of the American Friends of the Open University of Israel. Despite the economic crisis in the New York community, a most impressive gala event was held and donations were made by purchasing expensive tickets for the event. A considerable number of American foundations have continued to support OUI endeavors, particularly study scholarships and grants for absorbing young researchers at the OUI.

## **Friends of the Open University in Brazil**

Activities of the Friends of the Open University in Brazil have expanded, focusing on Sao Paulo. This year, emphasis was placed on strengthening the ties with the Jewish community and with educational organizations in the city. The possibility was explored of training teachers and community employees by offering OUI academic courses on Israel and Judaism.

Contributions raised by this community are continually increasing. Donations are designated for scholarships to soldiers and to the ultra-orthodox.



"The future is open", gala of the American Friends of the Open University of Israel. Left to right: Malcolm Thomson, Ingeborg Rennert, former ambassador Dore Gold, former ambassador John R. Bolton, Malcolm Hoenlein.

### **Friends of the OUI in Canada**

This year, the Canada Revenue Agency approved a non-profit status for the Friends of the Open University in Canada, thus allowing tax deductions for donations to the Open University. Donations held back due to the need to direct them through the United Israel Appeal of Canada can now be transferred directly to the OUI.

The in-depth cooperation with the Friedberg Foundation of Toronto, Canada, in reference to scholarships for academic studies for the ultra-orthodox through "Project 120" has been very successful. The students taking part in this project are diligent, fulfill their tasks and receive high grades. Some have made the President's Honors List. The Fund has decided to increase its support for each student, has withdrawn its request for OUI's matching funds and has made the project accessible to any ultra-orthodox individual meeting the required criteria. This cooperation opens the gate to dozens of ultra-orthodox of low socioeconomic status who are interested in higher education concurrent with their yeshiva studies, without the obstacle of matriculation certificates or psychometric exams.

### **Opening of the "Russkiy Mir" Center**

The "Russkiy Mir" Foundation (The Russian World) was established in 2007 in response to a call from Russian President Vladimir Putin to nurture and spread the history of Russian culture and language. The Foundation, financed cooperatively by Russian private and government funds, set the goal of establishing Russian Culture Centers worldwide. In Israel the Open University was selected by the Foundation as the academic institute for the establishment of the Russian Culture Center, due to its activities in the Russian language through Project Russia and also its technological capabilities to broadcast events to different locations throughout Israel. Thus, In September 2009, the "Russkiy Mir" Center was inaugurated. The Foundation supplied to the OUI library a thousand books in Russian as well as videos of classic Russian movies, art albums and dictionaries. The Open University has undertaken to offer the general public courses for learning the Russian language and to organize, with the funding of the Foundation, events and workshops on issues concerning Russian culture, such as commemorating the bicentennial of Nikolai Gogol's birth.

## **Guests**

During the course of the year, many donors, representatives of funds and other concerned parties visited the Open University of Israel and were very impressed with its activities.

To promote cooperation with the Jewish Community in Sao Paulo, the OUI hosted donors and influential members of the community as well as the Ambassador of Brazil in Israel. During the visit, the Ambassador was interviewed about the Open University for the Brazilian media.

## **Marketing and Advertising**

This year, the Marketing and Advertising department was separated from the Resources department and the advertising agency employed by the OUI was replaced. "Geller-Nessis" was chosen as the new advertising agency. As a result, a new advertising strategy was adopted. This is directed more toward employers, depicting the OUI graduate as an ideal employee: an OUI student studies independently with self-discipline and responsibility, has command of information technology and has a quality academic degree.

A variety of media channels is used to advertise registration for academic studies at the OUI: printed media, internet, radio, billboards and more. During registration periods, orientation sessions were held throughout the country to clarify the basic aspects of the OUI study method and the various study programs. Most of the potential new students expressing interest in studies at the OUI became interested due to advertising on the internet. Thus, the proportion of the publicity budget allocated for internet advertising was increased this year. Most of the internet advertising is done on niche sites that focus on studies, and through Google's search engine.

## **Public Relations**

The Open University replaced its public relations office this year. The new public relations office, "Ben Horin – Alexandrovitz, Strategic and Media Solutions Management" handles both current and strategic issues.

## **The *Openet* Website**

*Openet* presents to the public comprehensive information about the OUI in Hebrew and in English. Information on courses and programs of study is updated at the beginning of the year in accordance with the printed information guide and course catalog. The site's search facility has been upgraded. New websites have been launched for the different units of the OUI and existing sections of the site have been improved and rewritten.

This year, the website of the Dean of Academic Studies was launched, with some content available to the public. The site presents detailed information about the Office of the Dean of Academic Studies, its departments and useful information for various student populations.

A new internet site was built, in Russian, for the Project Russia, with content designed for the public as well as textual, audio and visual material for the courses.

The site for OUI suppliers is designed to allow them efficient and continuous contact with the Planning and Finance Administration of the Open University. The suppliers are provided with updated and current information concerning payments and liabilities, which should reduce the number of query calls to the University.