

External Relations



Mr. Dov Lautman, Honorary President of the Israeli Friends with Chairperson, Attorney Meli Polishook



President of the American Friends of the Open University, Ms. Ingeborg Rennert (left) with the President of the Open University, Prof. Hagit Messer-Yaron

Donations

The focus this year was on raising funds for scholarships, and assistance in setting up the Open University's Russian-language study programs. Great effort was also invested in nurturing contacts and obtaining donations to expand the globalization of OUI studies.

A donor relationship management system was installed to help administer contacts with donors and establish an organizational database. OUI activity is examined according to projects that are eligible for help from various funds. The projects are prioritized and applications for support submitted accordingly. A designated manager has been employed to implement the new strategy, responsible for contacts with appropriate foundations.

Friends of the Open University

The Friends of the Open University associations act to promote the goals of the Open University by mobilizing supporters, resources and donations. This year, organizational changes were made in the various Friends of the Open University associations, with a view to more efficient operation and strengthening ties with the University.

Friends of the Open University in Israel

All activities of the Israeli Friends of the Open University are dedicated to fundraising, and aimed primarily for student scholarships. The chapter maintains regular contact with members through social and cultural events. This year, organizational and strategic changes were made to help the Friends Association operate more independently: it has been decided to separate the Association's activities from those of the University itself and to prepare a new work program. In addition, new leadership has taken over: Mr. Dov Lautman, who devotes much of his time and energy to the University's interests, was elected Honorary President of the Israeli Friends. The newly elected Chairperson, Attorney Meli Polishook, is working to strengthen the Friends Association and has already introduced new projects to forge stronger links between Israel's business sector, the Friends Association, and the University:

"A Salute to Reservists" Project: This year the Israeli Friends joined the initiative of the Student Union to raise scholarships for students who are obliged to serve long periods on IDF reserve duty. Funds were donated by commercial companies and individuals, as well as from the sale of original sculptures by artist David Gerstein, who donated his works to help realize the goals of the initiative. The scholarships were awarded at a ceremony held on National Reservists' Day.

American Friends of the Open University

This year, we continued to strengthen the ties between the University and the American Friends. The Association's President, Ms. Ingeborg Rennert, was active in introducing the Open University to donors and others potentially interested, and did a superb job of organizing the annual gala. Indeed, this year's gala was well attended and raised an impressive sum of money.

The Chairman of the American Friends, Dr. Malcolm Thomson, spearheaded a new strategy for fundraising in the US. New members were recruited from many different communities, and as a result, the Association's social network expanded. Dr. Thomson headed a visit to San Francisco to examine collaborations with local foundations and donors. Together with other leaders of the American Friends, he established a series of high-end events targeting specific groups, such as directors of philanthropic foundations specializing in investment and finance, and young businessmen specializing in art collection.

Brazilian Friends of the Open University

During the past year, the Brazilian Friends focused on promoting collaborative efforts with the University of São Paulo, the largest and most prestigious university in the country, as part of the increasing globalization of OUI studies. After looking into various alternatives, a decision was made to begin with a course in Spanish on Israeli Society, to be taught online by an Open University lecturer. This collaboration was made possible by a local donation.

Activities for the benefit of the OUI in Canada

The fruitful cooperation with "Yedidut Toronto" and the Friedberg Fund continues. Leaders of the economic sector and of the government have expressed great interest in the scholarship program that Dr. Dov Friedberg established in 2006 to assist students from the Haredi community. At a symposium held this year dealing with the ultra-Orthodox in academia, with the participation of students and scholars in the field, government leaders praised the project and emphasized its importance to Israeli society.

OUI Activity in London and Cambridge

OUI President Hagit Messer-Yaron visited both London and Cambridge during the year in order to investigate possible cooperation with British academic institutions. Lord Harry Woolf, Chancellor of the Open University, hosted the visiting delegation at a luncheon in the presence of donors and

public opinion leaders, who were introduced to the OUI's work and showed an interest in potential contributions.

Visits and Guests

The University was visited during the year by donors, representatives of various foundations and other guests from Israel and abroad. The visitors were impressed with OUI study methods and its activities among unique populations.

Last spring, the Chancellor, together with the Chairs of the American Friends and of the Israeli Friends, paid a visit to *Beit Daniel* and the Givat Haviva study center (for Arabic speakers). The visitors were able to observe at first hand the various OUI activities taking place at both venues, as well as gaining a greater understanding of the special problems and challenges faced by Arabic-speaking students.

Marketing and Publicity

- Online advertising is increasingly replacing the more traditional forms of publicity in the press or on billboards. There is wider use of search engines and websites and initial steps have been taken toward advertising on cellular media.
- In addition to the traditional Open Days, this year we launched two virtual Open Days, during which all relevant information was available online.
- Public relations websites were launched on Facebook in Hebrew and Arabic. The Hebrew site already has close to 10,000 friends: <http://www.facebook.com/openuniversity>.
- OUI studies are also now being advertised in Russian on Russian-language search engines.



Dr. Dov Albert Friedberg (left), of "Yedidut Toronto," which funds the scholarships for Haredi students, with Prof. Amiram Gonen (right), who initiated the project.