

External Relations

Friends of the Open University

Friends of the Open University act to promote the goals of the Open University by recruiting supporters, resources and donations, through the Friends associations or individually. This year the OUI continued to work towards organizational changes in the different associations, with a view to improving activities and reinforcing links with the University.

Friends of the Open University in Israel

The Israeli Friends of the Open University focused on fundraising, aimed primarily at student scholarships, mainly by organizing an extensive schedule of social and cultural events. Every year, the OUI invests in the Association's activities. To help to analyze these activities, the University asked to promote a multi-year business plan, aimed at enabling the Association to raise donations within a few years that would significantly exceed the University's support of the Association. The management of the Friends Association chose not to take up the challenge and decided to dismantle the Friends Association as a separate legal entity.

Fundraising activity in Israel was transferred to the University's Resource and Development Department, and the OUI is simultaneously taking steps to renew and reinforce the Friends' activity, in the framework of a Friends' forum, within the Resource and Development Department and through the Events Department.

During the year, the OUI management hosted a large number of businesspeople and candidates for activity on the Friends' forum. Some of those meetings led to cooperative projects and the visitors expressed their willingness to take part in the forum.



Mrs. Inge Rennert, President of the American Friends, at an event honoring OUI alumni

American Friends of the Open University

This year, we continued to strengthen mutual confidence and good relations between the University and the American Friends. After a complex transition period, Ms. Lori Posin was appointed the new director of the New York office. Members of the organization became involved in the activities of the various task forces. The American Friends' Chairman, Dr. Malcolm Thomson, led a process of dividing responsibilities among the lay leaders and organizing the different tasks.

A delegation of senior representatives of the American Friends, headed by its President, Mrs. Inge Rennert and Chairman, Dr. Malcolm Thomson, visited Israel. The delegates attended the event honoring OUI alumni and the graduation ceremony. They also toured the campuses

in Raanana, Givat Haviva and Ramat Aviv, met with senior Open University position holders and researchers, and learned about major OUI projects.

The American Friends raised funds for the globalization project, for the establishment of a scholarship fund to commemorate the nine OUI students who died in the Carmel fire tragedy, and for continued support of the Entrepreneurs Club and graduates of the MBA program, among others.

During the year, the American Friends organized a number of highly successful events attended by heads of the University, which acquainted various publics with the work of the OUI. These included: a lunch at the Rennert home and a breakfast at the Fifth Avenue Synagogue; an event at the home of Board member Dr. Ken Brookler, and another at the home of Board member Ms. Nina Rosenfeld, where Open University President, Prof. Hagit Messer-Yaron met members of the leadership of the prestigious Hudson Institute.



The American Friends' delegation at the automated warehouse on their visit to Israel



The ceremony at which Prof. Hagit Messer-Yaron awarded scholarships donated by the American Friends to commemorate the nine OUI students who died in the Carmel fire tragedy

Open University Activities in Great Britain

Thanks to the initiative of OUI Chancellor, Lord Woolf involving his friends and colleagues, a donation was raised in Britain for scholarships. Cooperation with the Woolf Institute at Cambridge University continues and focused on preparations for a joint international conference in June 2012. To advance this project, meetings were held in London concerning a pilot project for friends' activities and fundraising in London. To this end, a fundraiser, Ms. Wendy Pollecoff, has been employed in London.