

WINTER 2014

BGU & YOU

NEWSLETTER OF BEN-GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV

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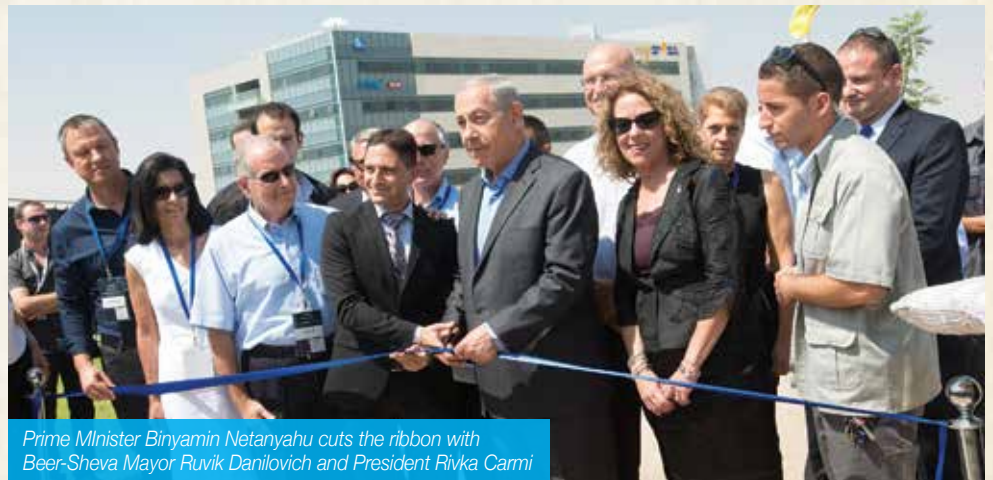


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Advanced Technologies Park Inaugurated Adjacent to BGU



Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu cuts the ribbon with Beer-Sheva Mayor Ruvik Danilovich and President Rivka Carmi

"This is a day that will change the history of the State of Israel and we are doing it here in Beer-Sheva!" Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu proclaimed at the launch of the Advanced Technologies Park (ATP) this September. Netanyahu was accompanied by Energy and Water, Regional Cooperation and Negev and Galilee Development Minister Silvan Shalom, and Transportation, National Infrastructures and Road Safety Minister Yaakov Katz. MKs Prof. Avishay Braverman and Erel Margalit and leaders of the business community from around the world were also in attendance.

"Today we are launching the economic anchor that will turn Beer-Sheva into a national and international center for cybernetics and cyber security," the Prime Minister declared.

The original brainchild of former University President Prof. Avishay Braverman, the ATP is a public-private partnership of BGU, the Beer-Sheva Municipality, KUD International LLC and Gav-Yam Negev.

University President Rivka Carmi noted that, "The opening of the ATP in Beer-Sheva will be remembered as the turning point in the development of the Negev. We have always been at the geographical heart of Israel. Now we are on our way to becoming the true center for innovation and growth."

"This is a project that took courage and vision to implement," said KUD International President and CEO Marvin J. Suomi.

International corporations such as Deutsche Telekom, EMC² RSA, Dalet, dbMotion, Ness and Oracle have already moved in. New incubators such as Elbit Incubit and JVP's CyberLabs have eagerly arrived. BGN Technologies, the University's technology transfer company, has also moved in to their new offices. The second building is already under construction.

"My dream that Ben-Gurion University will do for Beer-Sheva what Stanford University did for Silicon Valley begins," Braverman said.



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Celebrating **the Spirit of David Ben-Gurion**



L-R: Alona Barkat, David Tartakover, Prof. Ofer Bar-Yosef, Lea Koenig Stolper, Maxine Fassberg, Prof. Raphael Mechoulam

The University awarded honorary doctorates to five outstanding individuals and the Ben-Gurion Negev Award in a ceremony on Ben-Gurion Day that marks the yartzheit of Israel's first prime minister.

Prof. Rivka Carmi noted that today, on the 40th anniversary of his death, "David Ben-Gurion's vision for the future of the State of Israel in the Negev is more true now than it has ever been before. Our University is committed to realizing this vision through science and technology, health and welfare, in humanities and culture, and especially by educating the next generation to leadership, responsibility and social sensitivity, in any field in which they choose to work."

She acknowledged the contribution of the Honorary Doctorate recipients and the Ben-Gurion Negev Award honoree and thanked them for their visionary work.

The recipients were as follows:

Prof. Ofer Bar-Yosef, a scholar, archaeologist and researcher of the prehistory of the Land of Israel, an outstanding scientist who exposed and documented important facets of the spread of humanity from its birthplace in Africa.

Maxine Fassberg, a dynamic leader and one of the pioneers of the Israeli hi-tech sector, the general manager of Intel Israel and vice president of the Intel Technology and Manufacturing Group.

Lea Koenig Stolper, an outstanding actress and pillar of the Israeli theater, an actress who followed in her parents' professional footsteps and began performing at a young age and who has continued for more than 50 years.

Prof. Rafael Mechoulam, an eminent scientist who studies the chemistry of plant-derived materials and their medicinal functions, and whose ground-breaking research has laid the foundation for cannabinoid research globally.

David Tartakover, a creative artist, collector, researcher and curator of Israeli visual art, who has left his mark on contemporary Hebrew culture and an eminent creator who has given unique expression to the history of Zionism and the State of Israel.

The Ben-Gurion Negev Award was bestowed on **Alona Barkat**, a businesswoman who brought her skills, time and energy to the world of soccer and led the local team to excellence and remarkable achievements.

Deutsche Telekom Innovation Laboratories at BGU Dedicates Expanded Offices

The Deutsche Telekom Innovation Laboratories at BGU were dedicated in the presence of both the outgoing and incoming CEOs of the German Telecommunications giant Deutsche Telekom AG in November. The new facility is located in the first building of the Advanced Technologies Park adjacent to the University.

“We don’t take your support for granted,” said University President Prof. Rivka Carmi, acknowledging the successful research collaboration that will soon be entering its tenth year. She welcomed CEO René Obermann and the new CEO Timotheus Höttges and thanked them both for their show of support and commitment to BGU by coming together to see the new expanded Laboratories.

The Laboratories are the company’s only research and development facility outside of Germany and include some 100 members: university researchers, master’s and PhD students and programmers. The original collaboration began in 2004 and was expanded with the launch of Telekom Innovation Laboratories in 2006 and a continuing investment of millions of dollars.

Obermann noted that, “The history of partnership between this university and our Telekom Innovation Laboratories is a history of success — not only in terms of output, but also in terms of collaboration. The cooperation of our own Laboratories with BGU is clearly outstanding within the international partnership network of research institutes, universities, industrial partners and start-ups we have created,” he said.

After the ceremony, the two CEOs toured the facilities and learned about the current projects underway. “With their [T-Labs@BGU] focus on major industry issues like



L-R: BGU President Rivka Carmi, DT incoming CEO Timotheus Höttges, DT outgoing CEO René Obermann, BGU VP and Dean for R&D Prof. Moti Herskowitz dedicate the expanded Telekom Innovation Labs at BGU as EMC’s Dr. Orna Berry looks on

Big Data and, above all, cyber security, they contribute to sharpening the competitive edge of our company,” said incoming CEO Timotheus Höttges, who was making his first visit to BGU. “The T-Labs@BGU have contributed to creating a cyber security ecosystem here, creating a SiliconWadi as their presence has worked like a magnet for other companies in the same field,” he added.

The Deutsche Telekom Innovation Labs at BGU engage in the areas of network security, recommender systems and analysis of Big Data in real time. Directed by Prof. Yuval Elovici of the Department of Information Systems Engineering, the

Labs have maintained their place at the cutting-edge of innovation thanks to the involvement and support of Deutsche Telekom.

Dr. Orna Berry, Corporate VP and general manager of EMC’s Centers of Excellence in Israel, praised Deutsche Telekom’s collaboration with BGU. “You have made the right choice. The future industry will rely on paradigm shifts in computer technology like Big Data. The top ten percent will get their education at this university and their experience at Telekom Innovation Labs,” she declared. EMC’s Center of Excellence is housed in the same building in the new ATP in Beer-Sheva.



Unique Student Support Center Inaugurated on Ben-Gurion Day

President Rivka Carmi and National Insurance Institute of Israel Director-General Prof. Shlomo Mor-Yosef inaugurated a unique Student Support Center in the Zlotowski Student Center on Ben-Gurion Day that will offer ongoing support for students with special needs. BGU is the first university in Israel to open such a facility.

"The center offers personal tutoring, courses, workshops, personal targeted emotional support, a resource library of assistive technologies, mentors, a program to prevent dropping out, and career advisement services for students in their last year before entering the job market. The goal is for the center to make studies accessible to special needs students and serve as an incentive to attract more students and increase their numbers among the student population," said Merav Yosef-Solomon, chief of administration in the Office of the Dean of Students.

Prof. Rivka Carmi noted, "This is a project that fits us like a glove. We want to give true equal opportunity. We have also embarked on a process of making our buildings more accessible, with the Student Center slated to be first."

"This is a revolution. It is the realization of a vision. Twenty years ago no one would have even talked about this, let alone created such a center. This is the beginning of a long-term collaboration," said Prof. Mor-Yosef. "This is an initiative to spark growth not charity."

The center's staff includes coordinators, psychologists, a social worker and an expert in learning processes. The coordinators build a work plan for students with learning disabilities, attention deficit disorders, and physical and



Prof. Shlomo Mor-Yosef

emotional disabilities and assist students in their adjustment to their studies, both emotionally and socially.

Ruth and Heinz-Horst Deichmann Classroom and Computer Laboratory Building Opened

The 6,000 sq.m. Ruth and Heinz-Horst Deichmann Classroom and Computer Laboratory Building opened this October for the new academic year, ending the classroom shortage of the past few years. The building will be formally dedicated at the 44th Board of Governors Meeting in May 2014.

"Dr. Heinz-Horst Deichmann is one of our most generous donors and not just financially. He understands our needs and he is willing to meet them. As soon as I said we needed a classroom building, he offered the funding," President Rivka Carmi said at the opening ceremony, which was held in the presence of his daughter Prof. Ute Deichmann and her husband Daniel Lachish.

With nearly 1,500 seats in the building, three large auditoriums, state-of-the-art computer labs and various sized classrooms, the new building provides the University with much needed space to meet both current and future needs, she added.



Ruth and Heinz-Horst Deichmann Classroom and Computer Laboratory Building

Defense Minister Moshe (Bogie) Ya'alon: Beer-Sheva will become National Cyber Capital

"Moving the IDF's bases to the Negev is an historic move in terms of development of the Negev and the engine of growth in the area. It is a victory for all who are involved in the move. There isn't a single government ministry that isn't involved in the process, which can already be felt in terms of the building and infrastructure which has already been put in place.

International companies realize that there is an international opportunity here. They're lining up on our doorstep already," Defense Minister Moshe (Bogie) Ya'alon said at a conference focused on Moving the IDF to the Negev, a collaboration of the Israel Defense Forces, the Defense Ministry and BGU.

"As defense minister, I see the exquisite potential to the state and the Negev of realizing Ben-Gurion's dream. Geographically, Beer-Sheva is the center of the country and that is how we should think about it. Beer-Sheva is going to be the national cyber capital. From our perspective – BGU is the center. In effect, this is a winning move for everyone," he said.

BGU Rector Prof. Zvi HaCohen, Deputy Vice-President & Dean for Research & Development Prof. Dan Blumberg, one of the initiators of the conference, Beer-Sheva Mayor Ruvik Danilovich, IDF C4I Head Maj.-Gen. Uzi Moskovitch and many others were among the participants.

Danilovich also addressed the importance of the IDF's move South. "They're not doing us a favor. The state is finally doing what is right," he declared.

According to the Gen. Uzi Moskovitch, Hizbullah is not just a guerilla, terror or military organization. "Its strategy is very challenging and in order to deal with it we need to adopt a wide spectral approach that demands a transition from actions between branch networks and information systems to shared information systems which will enable the realization of operational processes and maximize our abilities in intelligence, communications and cyber."

Taking the **Cyber Initiative**



EMC²-RSA Chairman and CEO Joseph M. Tucci (far right) meets with (L-R) Netta Cohen and Prof. Dan Blumberg, accompanied by EMC Managing Director Israel Danny Neuberger and Corporate Vice President and General Manager Dr. Orna Berry

EMC²-RSA Chairman and CEO Joseph M. Tucci announced during a recent visit to Israel that his company would be joining the initiative to create a national cyber campus in the Negev.

At a meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Tucci praised Israel as a

global cyber leader and stressed EMC's pioneering role in establishing its research and development center in Beer-Sheva. He visited the EMC offices in Beer-Sheva, where he was met by Prof. Dan Blumberg, BGU's Deputy VP and Dean for R&D, and Netta Cohen, CEO of BGN Technologies, the University's technology

transfer company, among others. EMC and BGU have developed a strong research partnership and are currently conducting multiple collaborative projects.

During his visit, he announced that the company's activities in Beer-Sheva will be expanded significantly over the next two years and will deal with – inter alia – the development of specific solutions for the Defense Ministry and IDF units, which are among the company's customers in Israel. He also publicized EMC²-RSA's decision to establish and lead Israel's National Cyber Center Development Organization that will represent the cyber agencies and organizations at the campus and will serve as the University and the Israel National Cyber Bureau's partners in developing it.

EMC will also invest the necessary resources and know-how to establish Cyber-Gate – the National Israeli Cyber Teaching and Demonstration Center.



BGU Launches first ever **Joint Israel-Germany Degree Program**



L-R: Dr. Paula Kabalo, Prof. Johannes Heil, Prof. Zvi HaCohen, Prof. Steven Rosen

BGU and Die Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg signed an agreement to launch the first ever joint Israel-Germany academic program. The Israel Studies

program with a specialization in Modern Jewish Life and Culture will be held on the Sede Boqer campus and in Heidelberg and is open to Israeli and German students.

Rector Prof. Zvi HaCohen, incumbent of Maks and Rachele Etingin Chair in Desert Research, signed on behalf of BGU while Prof. Johannes Heil signed the agreement on behalf of Die Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg. Deputy Rector Prof. Steven Rosen and Dr. Paula Kabalo, director of the Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism and director of the Israel Studies Program and the Israel Studies International MA Program (ISIP) were also present.

"Next year, we will mark 50 years since the resumption of diplomatic relations between Israel and Germany. There is a lot of symbolism in the fact that the university which bears David Ben-Gurion's name is establishing the first bilateral degree program between Israel and Germany," Kabalo said.

The program will be launched in time for the academic year of 2014-2015 and is a result of the collaboration between the Hochschule and BGU established by Prof. Birgit Klein from Heidelberg.

Sixty BGU Moshal Scholars Attend the Annual Moshal Event



Sixty BGU Moshal scholars attended the annual Moshal event, where they met with Martin Moshal and their fellow Moshal scholars from the Technion, Hebrew U, Ort Braude and Kemach College. For its presentation, the BGU team donned pioneer gear, danced the hora and paid tribute to our namesake, David Ben-Gurion. They proudly announced on stage: "We are living Ben-Gurion's vision and making his dream a reality – every single day!"

Researchers Invent **Green Alternative to Crude Oil**



A replacement for oil has become a burning need in the 21st century. Prof. Moti Herskowitz, Prof. Miron Landau, Dr. Roxana Vidruk and the team at BGU's Blechner Center for Industrial Catalysis and Process Development have invented a process to make a green feed alternative for crude oil out of two of the most common substances on Earth – water and carbon dioxide, which is a greenhouse gas detrimental to the environment.

The advantage of their system is that the green feed can be converted using well-established technologies into liquid fuel and delivered via existing infrastructure to gas stations. Herskowitz, the incumbent of the Israel Cohen Chair in Chemical Engineering, is also the VP & Dean for R&D at BGU.

The process is patent pending, "and we are ready to take off, demonstrate and commercialize it," asserts Herskowitz. Bench experiments have been conducted and scale-up should be relatively simple, he says.

"It is envisaged that the short-term implementation of the process will combine synthetic gas produced from various renewable and alternative sources with

carbon dioxide and hydrogen. Since there are no foreseeable technological barriers, the new process should become a reality within five to ten years," he says.

The Blechner Center for Industrial Catalysis and Process Development has a proven track record of commercializing applications from its basic research. Founded in 1995, it has developed the infrastructure and expertise required to deal with a wide variety of challenging topics related to basic and applied aspects of catalysis and catalytic processes.

It played a key role in the Center of Excellence funded by the Israel Science Foundation, participated in three different programs of the European Framework Programs and is part of the I-CORE program in renewable fuels. Researchers at the Blechner Center have developed novel processes for converting vegetable and algae oils into advanced green diesel and jet fuels and for producing zero-sulfur diesel.

This project is partially supported by I-SAEF (Israel Strategic Alternative Energy Foundation).

New Dean of Students



Prof. Moshe Kaspi of the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management

has been confirmed by the University Senate as the new Dean of Students. He replaces Yaakov Affek who retired after close to 35 years in the position.

In recent years, Kaspi served as chairman of the Studies Committees for undergraduate and master's degrees in the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management, having had responsibility for faculty teaching assignments for a department of a thousand students. Most recently, he served as Vice Dean of the Faculty of Engineering Sciences. He has also served as a member of the Committee for Advanced Research, and as a member of the University Senate.

His research deals with several issues related to production and operations management. The topics include: models of inventory and supply chains, scheduling problems and combinatorial optimization, graph theory, and heuristic search methods in graphs.



Snapshots

A glance at BGU events

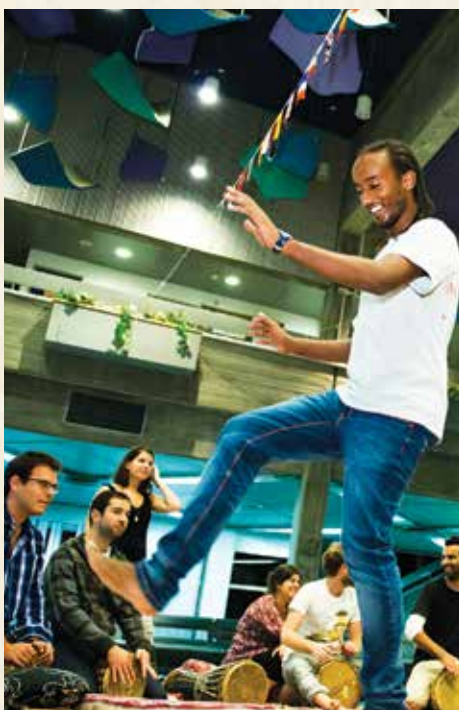


From L-R: Kesem Dai, Tasneem Hriesh, Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, Nofar Duani, Prof. Amos Drory, Kristen Jansen

Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish presented three under-graduates with this year's Daughters for Life Foundation Award as "a living memorial to his daughters," in the presence of Kristen Jansen, First Secretary at the Canadian Embassy in Tel Aviv and Vice President for External Affairs Prof. Amos Drory.



Some 40 Indian graduate students mark the Diwali Festival of Lights



The Student Union marked International Week with a series of events, including African dancing



This year's annual Science Night attracted families from around the area who came to experience the fun of learning



Global Entrepreneurship Week Attracts more than 2,000 Participants in Series of Special Events



Financial journalist Tali Heruti-Sover at the panel on advancing women's entrepreneurship

There was something for everyone during the Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW). More than 2,000 people participated in the week-long activities that were designed to support original business initiatives, encourage professional networking and connect mentors – and even potential investors – with local entrepreneurs.

Organized by the Bengis Center for Entrepreneurship and Hi-Tech Management at the Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business and Management, this year's GEW covered topics such as entrepreneurship and innovation in education, social entrepreneurship and Jewish heritage and encouraging women entrepreneurs.

The highlight of the week was the global developers "Hackathon." For the first time ever, BGU collaborated with the Google Developers Group (GDG) in a two-day marathon to develop applications that contribute to regional development. Some 100 developers, designers, hi-tech

entrepreneurs and students divided into 15 groups and worked around the clock transforming their ideas into working applications. The three winning teams each received \$20,000 worth of prizes from Google. Additionally, the winning projects are given the privilege to be part of Incubit's Technology Ventures business incubator.

Two "Entrepreneurship at the Bar" evenings took place in local pubs. "Starting a Business in Israel's 'Opportunity Capital': Beer-Sheva," was organized in cooperation with Keren Shemesh and Young Entrepreneurs. The evening dedicated to "Social Entrepreneurship and Jewish Heritage" connected Jewish poetry with entrepreneurship and innovation.

The awards ceremony of the "From an Idea to a Business: Writing a Business Plan" competition of the Bengis center, marked the conclusion of the year-long competition in which 250 students competed. The Innovation and Hi-tech Track which aims to

encourage students to initiate and develop innovative ideas into businesses and The Socio-Economic Track which aims to advance organizations and businesses in the Negev. The 2014 contest was launched together with the addition of a new clean-tech initiatives, organized with the Negev Funding Coalition Fellows.

The range of events included a panel on entrepreneurial educational initiatives to mark a new collaboration between the Bengis Center and BGU's Department of Education and a conference on advancing women's entrepreneurship in Israel and abroad, organized together with the US Embassy in Israel. Other events involved high school students and members of young business groups.

Summing up the week, Head of the Bengis Center Prof. Dafna Schwartz noted that, "The energy and momentum created is just part of our yearlong program to encourage and support would-be innovators."



Winners of the Hackathon celebrate their success with the representatives of Google and members of the Bengis Center

Excellence recognized



Prof. Pedro Berliner with HE Patrick Maisonnave

Prof. Pedro Berliner Receives French National Order of Agricultural Merit

Director of the Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research Prof. Pedro Berliner received the French Ordre National du Mérite Agricole (National Order of Agricultural Merit) for his innovative work in desert agriculture. The French Ambassador to Israel HE Patrick Maisonnave presented the decoration in the presence of the Israeli Minister of Agriculture Yair Shamir in late November.

Berliner is a member of the French Associates Institute for Agriculture and Biotechnology of Drylands at the BIDR. His research in the field of agro-hydrology is to promote the production of food for the benefit of people living in desert regions around the world. Among his projects is the grove at Wadi Mashash, where he is experimenting with irrigating olive trees solely through flood waters and inter-planting with other crops.

The National Order of Agricultural Merit is an order of merit established in France in 1883 to reward services to agriculture awarded by

the Minister of Agriculture Stéphane Le Foll. Its ribbon is green with a red-orange stripe down each side — the stripes symbolize the prestigious institution of the “Ordre National de la Légion d’Honneur”

Dr. Haim Permuter Receives ERC Grant

Dr. Haim Permuter from the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering has received a prestigious ERC starting grant. The €1.2 million five-year grant will be directed towards Permuter’s study “Investigating Directed Information.” He leads a group in information and communication theory and its application to wireless communication.

His research investigates a new measure that arises in information theory called directed information. Using this measure it is possible to find the fundamental limits of bidirectional communication, such as communication systems with feedback.

He is a recipient of several awards including the Eshkol Fellowship, Wolf Award, Fulbright Fellowship, Stanford Graduate Fellowship, Allon Fellowship and Toronto Prize.

Dr. Niv Papo Honored by Prostate Cancer Foundation

Dr. Niv Papo received the Young Investigator Award from the Prostate Cancer Foundation in November. A member of the Avram and Stella Goldstein-Goren Department of Biotechnology Engineering and the National Institute for Biotechnology in the Negev, Papo is also a recipient of a European Research Council (ERC) grant this fall, Europe’s most prestigious scientific grant.

According to the Prostate Cancer Foundation, the Young Investigator Awards identify a cohort of future research leaders who will keep the field of prostate cancer research vibrant with new ideas.

Papo’s research group promotes the development of the next generation of prostate cancer therapeutics, including molecular imaging agents and targeted drug delivery agents, specifically, multifunctional proteins with a wide variety of biomedical applications for prostate cancer, ranging from imaging to therapy.

In the past year and a half, six foundations have awarded his group funding, including the Israel Science Foundation, the Prostate Cancer Foundation and the Israel Cancer Fund.

Researchers Win Grant to Study Memory and Brain Disorders

Drs. Israel Sekler, Ilya A. Fleidervish and Michal Hershinkel of the Department of Physiology and Cell Biology; Hilmar Bading of the Department of Neurobiology, University of Heidelberg and Michael Bader MDC, Charité have been awarded a grant to study “The Interplay of Mitochondrial and Nuclear Ca₂₊ signaling and its Implication for Memory and Brain Disorders” by the DIP — German-Israeli Project-Cooperation. The grant will enable the researchers to expand upon their breakthroughs in research mitochondria to as yet unprecedented depth.

Only four Israeli researchers are awarded the grant annually. This project was also the leading project in a unique new Faculty of Health Sciences start-up initiative to promote interdisciplinary studies, reinforcing the success of the program.

The cooperating laboratories will also take advantage of a new and exciting approach whose feasibility was recently established in Dr. Sekler's lab — to control the mitochondrial function by genetic targeting channel rhodopsins (CHR) to the mitochondrial membrane.

Teva Award for Excellence Received by **Prof. Ashraf Brik**

Prof. Ashraf Brik, a member of the Department of Chemistry and the Edmond J. Safra Center for the Design and Engineering of Functional Biopolymers has been awarded the 2012 Teva Award for Excellence in Memory of Eli Hurvitz. Brik shared the award with Prof. Dan S. Tawfik from the Weizmann Institute of Science.

According to the Award Committee, "Prof. Ashraf Brik is awarded the prize for innovative and groundbreaking research. He is a promising young scholar who has quickly established a worldwide reputation in the field of biochemistry. His laboratory develops novel methods to synthesize homogenous proteins for a variety of structural and functional studies. Brik's research is both innovative and groundbreaking, and has become a focus of global interest. His work has the potential to lead to significant new contributions in research."

Brik has received many grants and awards, from the Wolfson Foundation, the Israel Science Foundation, the Edmund Safra Foundation, Marie Curie International Re-Integration Grants, Ma'of Fellowship, German-Israeli Foundation for Scientific Research and Development (GIF), United States-Israel Binational Science Foundation (BSF) and the Human Frontier

Canadian University Salutes President Rivka Carmi

President Rivka Carmi received an honorary doctorate from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia during the installation of their 11th president Richard Florizone. To mark the event, the university honored presidents from leading universities around the world.

Among the other honorees were presidents of an array of universities, including University of Botswana; Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil; Peking University, China; University of the Sorbonne Nouvelle (Paris 3), France; Christian-Albrechts-University at Kiel, Germany; Qatar University; and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA.

Earlier that day, the university heads participated in a panel, "The Future of



Photo: Daniel Abriel

President Rivka Carmi

Universities." Carmi discussed the tension that all universities are undergoing as they try to balance their mission of creating and expanding new knowledge while trying to make a difference in their communities.

of Science Program (HFSP). He has also been named in BGU's Dean's Honors List of the Faculty of Natural Sciences as an Excellent Researcher and is the recipient of the 2011 Israel Chemical Society Prize for Outstanding Young Chemist, the 2012 Toronto Prize and the Tetrahedron Young Investigator Award — Bioorganic & Medicinal Chemistry for 2013.

Former BIDR Head **Elected** **Chair of UN Desertification** **Scientific Committee**

Prof. Uriel N. Safriel has been elected chair of the UN Convention for Combating

Desertification's (UNCCD) Committee on Science and Technology (CST). Safriel was the director of the Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research (BIDR) from 1995-2001 and helped make it an internationally recognized research institute on desertification and related issues. He is currently a consultant the Center of Environmental Conventions at the BIDR. He is also an Emeritus Professor of Ecology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The CST provides information and advice on scientific and technological matters relating to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought to the UNCCD's Conference of the Parties (COP).



BGU to Help Create **Kubuqi Desert Research Institute** in Mongolia



Elion Resources Group of China Chairman and President Mr. Wang Wenbiao (right) at the signing ceremony with BGU VP for External Affairs Prof. Amos Drory (center) and Rector Prof. Zvi HaCohen (left)

BGU recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Elion Resources Group of China to create a desert institute and parlay BGU's expertise. Mr. Wang Wenbiao, the chairman and president of the multi-billion dollar construction and development company visited the University with ten of his senior executives. After visiting the Sede Boqer and Marcus Family campuses, they were so impressed with the quality of desert research that they pushed for an immediate MoU. A delegation from the University's Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research will travel to China in the near future to help found the new institute and decide on specific collaborative projects.

The goal of the new Kubuqi Desert Research Institute is to develop China's desert economy. The Elion Resources Group has vast construction and development projects in Mongolia and is

dedicated to combating desertification. BGU is a world leader in combating desertification and is recognized for its research in desert agriculture, alternative energy and water technologies.

Elion's Chinese partners in the creation of the new institute include the Chinese Academy of Science, the Chinese Academy of Forestry, Inner Mongolia University, and Inner Mongolia Agricultural University. The Agriculture Research Organization of Israel will be an additional Israeli partner. BGU and Elion will cooperate in water saving irrigation, waste water treatment, microalgae selection and production, solar energy utilization and other related fields.

"BGU welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with the Elion company. The scientific and technological knowledge and expertise which we have developed at the Blaustein Institutes could be of

great value to the Chinese in their efforts to combat desertification in Mongolia's desert," declared Prof. Amos Drory, Vice President for External Affairs, Incumbent of the Ernest Scheller, Jr. Chair in Innovative Management.

"The faculty of the Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research is looking forward with excitement to collaborate in the establishment of the research institute in the Kubuqi desert. It is a great challenge for our staff members to be a part of such an important endeavor," said Prof. Pedro Berliner, the Director of the Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research.

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