

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2024

OUR
TIME to be
TOGETHER

אוניברסיטת בן-גוריון בנגב
جامعة بن غوريون في النقب
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev



An illustration of three stylized human figures in a circular arrangement, holding hands. The figures are depicted from the waist up, with their arms extended to form a circle. The figure on the left has blue hair and wears a white shirt with orange sleeves. The figure on the top right has brown hair and wears a white shirt with blue sleeves. The figure on the bottom left has orange hair and wears a white shirt with orange sleeves. They are all holding hands, forming a continuous loop. The background is a dark blue with white, swirling, brushstroke-like patterns that create a sense of motion and depth.

OUR TIME to be TOGETHER

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April 2024

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In Memoriam:
BGU's Fallen



from THE PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

"Strong and broken" has been a recurring refrain since that awful morning of October 7.

Considering the scope of the tragedy we faced, the natural instinct might have been to withdraw, to become immobilized by the sheer magnitude of grief and fear. Yet, the spirit of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) remained strong, galvanizing into action rather than succumbing to despair. Our community's response was not of defeat but of mobilization, embodying a profound sense of responsibility not just within our campus but across the entire region.

Ironically, on the eve of these attacks, BGU was at the cusp of what promised to be one of our most triumphant years. Fueled by the strategic vision aimed at enhancing our research impact and academic excellence that has guided us over the past four years, we had secured increased support from the Israeli Council of Higher Education. Indeed, this was to be the year we reaped the fruits of our efforts, enabling us to expand our activities and reach throughout our campuses.

In the months since the Hamas attack, I have reflected on the essence of BGU, clear that our foundational commitment to transformative education and pioneering research remains as crucial as ever. Yet the new circumstances we find ourselves in necessitate a broader scope. Now, more than ever, we must look towards facilitating the post-conflict reconstruction of the Negev. This means leveraging our extensive networks across multiple sectors to contribute effectively to the rebuilding process.

These two approaches are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary, forming the core of our university's strength. If we embrace the two, the sky is the limit!

At BGU, we've long been aligned with the vision of a "fifth wave university," a concept championed by Prof. Michael Crow, president of Arizona State University, who will be awarded an honorary doctorate this year. This ethos, which positions universities as key drivers of community growth and prosperity, was evident in our founding vision. When David Ben-Gurion envisioned a Hebrew Oxford in the Negev

back in 1955, he prophesized that this future university would "play a key role in turning the Negev into a flourishing region through scientific research and technological advancements" while building a more just and inclusive society. This has been our guiding mission for the past 54 years.

Today, as we navigate the complexities of the ongoing conflict, our mission expands. We are called to integrate more deeply into the fabric of our surrounding community, asking ourselves how we can enhance our impact. Reconstruction is about more than just rebuilding; it's an opportunity to improve the standard of living across the Negev. Our University is poised to make significant contributions in several key areas: *research and global solutions*, where our interdisciplinary strengths position us to address global challenges effectively; *education and access*, where our goals include nurturing the untapped potential inherent in the youth of the Negev; *economic development and innovation*, where we aim to cultivate an entrepreneurial culture that can transform ideas into tangible social and economic opportunities; and *social embeddedness and empowerment*, where we strive to deepen our engagement with the Negev community, utilizing our resources and expertise to foster societal advancement.

As we move forward, BGU is set to become an even more integral force in the Negev's development. Our goal extends beyond mere recovery; we envision a future where the region thrives, buoyed by the myriad activities emanating from BGU. Our dedication to this cause is unwavering. This vision of balance—between enhancing our academic excellence while embracing our societal responsibilities—will guide our efforts.

Here's to a future of meaningful progress, healing, and unity.

I remain eternally grateful for your support,

Prof. Daniel Chamovitz



from **THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Dear friends,

This has been an extraordinary year by all accounts. Without belaboring the shock and trauma of the October 7 attacks in Israel and their extensive reverberations around the world, we are all experiencing deep uncertainties and insecurity in our own communities. Thankfully, we have our BGU family to share those feelings with. Now, more than ever, it is time for us to come together, to support each other, and to work together to forge a different, better future.

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev is the agent of change through which we can make this future a reality. It must be the lynchpin in reimagining and rebuilding the Negev, thereby ensuring the future of the State of Israel and the Jewish people worldwide.

Collectively, the Board of Governors (BOG) of the University can play an important role in this process, and I urge all members of the Board to become more involved in our work. One of the most effective ways to do so is by joining our BOG committees, which were relaunched at last year's BOG Meeting. The committees are there to oversee, advise and guide the University's administration, a way to enlist our extensive, diverse, and invaluable experience for the benefit of the University, the people of the Negev, and humankind as a whole.

I am happy to report that the BOG committees are already making a difference. The war may have transformed the context, and perhaps also the focus of their work, but their goals remain the same; to support the university in every way possible. For example, the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion is lending its full support to Vice President Prof. Sarab Abu-Rabia Queder in developing an effective program for shaping a shared space on campus. Similarly, we are doing everything we can to help the Dean of Student's office and the Student Union ease our students' transition back to campus, especially those who served in the reserves.

The Global Development Committee is also moving forward with its ambitious goals. After a brief delay and refocus due to the war, the Committee had a very productive meeting in Monaco in January.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for each and every one of the hundreds of friends and supporters who gave to the Emergency Response Campaign. We raised over \$12 million, which allowed the University to take care of staff and students affected by the attacks, to assist those students enlisted for reserve duty, and support initiatives benefitting society as a whole. Thank you!

These are undoubtedly challenging times for everyone, making your support more critical than ever. Support for BGU is no longer just support for a strong academia, democratic values, or inclusiveness. Support for BGU today means playing a part in ensuring the future of the State of Israel, in rebuilding a better society, and in continuing to conduct transformative cutting-edge research.

We are grateful to all our friends, supporters and partners. Thank you for standing by us.

Yours in friendship,

Lloyd Goldman



BGU WAR BULLETINS FROM THE PRESIDENT

From that very first Saturday of the barbaric Hamas attack, BGU President Prof. Daniel Chamovitz reached out to the University's global family with online updates, explaining the situation on the ground and how it affected the BGU community – students, faculty, staff, and their families – and the nation as a whole.

Below are a few excerpts from those letters encapsulating their spirit. The messages in their entirety can be found on the [BGU website](#).

OCTOBER 7, 2023

As many of you are aware from the media, early this morning, on Simchat Torah and Shabbat, Hamas initiated a comprehensive attack on Israel.

As the situation continues to evolve, it is with a heavy heart that we note the significant casualties, particularly in the Sderot region and its surroundings.

We recognize the anguish of being distant from Israel during these testing times. Please be assured that Ben-Gurion University of the Negev is in continuous contact with security authorities to coordinate and ensure the utmost protection for our faculty and students. We commit to keeping you informed as events progress.

← *President Chamovitz looks at the "Every Hostage Has a Story" installation in the Zlotowski Student Center*

➤ *Barak Dvir, Chair of the Student Union, wore a t-shirt with Noa Argamani's image for the event marking the hostages' 100 days in captivity*

OCTOBER 12, 2023

What do you say to parents whose daughter was kidnapped by the terrorists to Gaza?

Noa Argamani is a BGU student in the Department of Software and Information Systems Engineering. She was, unknown to her parents, at the rave (an open dance party) that was overrun by a blood-thirsty band of terrorists early Saturday morning. We now know that at least 250 were murdered and mutilated at point-blank range. Some were taken hostage, and Noa was filmed pleading for her life, while being carted off to Gaza on a motorbike. The terrorists grotesquely turned it into a TikTok post.

I sat today with her parents Liora and Yaakov. Yaakov retold the horror of Saturday, how with the early morning sirens, he saw Noa wasn't home, but assumed she went back to her campus housing. How he tried to call but got no answer. How after two hours he got her boyfriend Avinatan on the phone, who said "We're ok, I'll call back in 10 minutes," a call which never came. How he ran, and then got a ride, to Soroka to see if she was injured. How he was even relieved that she wasn't there. Until a friend showed him the video, at which point he fainted.

Throughout our conversation, this was the only time his voice started breaking, "She looked so scared, so horrified! She was trying to reach out, maybe to Avinatan, and then I hear her crying, 'Don't kill me!' My baby girl!"

Today, October 12, is Noa's 26th birthday. Her friends were at the house, celebrating for her. Noa's absence filled the room with a solemnity that words cannot describe. In that space of sorrow, the best we can offer is the assurance of our unwavering support and love for Noa and her family.

So, what do you say to parents whose daughter was kidnapped by the terrorists to Gaza?

OCTOBER 16, 2023

[...] While the initial shock of the devastating attacks on October 7th is giving way to a sobering understanding of our current reality, the University has stood strong as a beacon of resilience in the Negev. What began as an immediate response from our medical and paramedical staff and students in Ashkelon, Beer-Sheva, and Ashdod hospitals has now evolved into a plethora of organized, impactful activities. Indeed, we go boldly in all we do.

We have initiated a designated resilience center to offer emotional and mental support, boosting resilience amid these traumatic times. Recognizing the challenges that our new and continuing students are facing, we have initiated phone contact with each of our 18,000 students to assess their needs and offer any assistance they might need.

Our commitment to crisis preparedness includes the implementation of crisis management workshops and ongoing staff training. On the volunteering front, we've achieved significant strides. For instance, we've set up a hub and a logistics center for the Lev Ehad organization in the Zlotowski Student Center building. Students lead these operations, and we are seeing an inspiring turnout of staff and volunteers pitching in.

Moreover, we are providing housing for medical staff, families of the wounded, soldiers, and volunteer teams, ensuring we play our part in bolstering the Negev's resilience during these unparalleled times.



This conflict is unlike anything we've ever faced. However, as we've demonstrated in past crises, including the pandemic, the indomitable BGU Spirit shows us that anything is possible. Fueled by our shared belief in the Power of Together, it is guiding us through this challenging period.

OCTOBER 21, 2023

It has been two torturous weeks since we all woke up to the unthinkable devastation wrought by the Hamas-led terror attack, resulting in 1,400 lives lost, over 200 people kidnapped, and tens of thousands turned into refugees.

Our BGU community did not escape unscathed. While statistics can never capture the magnitude of human suffering, it is essential that you know the impact on our community: 16 students and staff, both academic and administrative, were taken from us. Additionally, 33 family members of our staff were killed, and four remain missing or kidnapped. Families of over 200 of our employees have been displaced, now residing in repurposed hotels serving as refugee camps. A significant, yet undisclosed, number of our students have been called up for reserve duty. Nearly every family in the BGU community, including my own, has loved ones who have been called up for reserve duty, or if not, knows families whose children have been.

As we contend with these immense challenges, our hearts and prayers are with our soldiers and reservists, for their safe and speedy return.

NOVEMBER 22, 2023

Now, six weeks into the Gaza War, the soundscape has shifted. The sirens sound less frequently, only once every few days. Remarkably, I've become so accustomed to them that my pulse barely quickens when I hear them. But from my office in Beer-Sheva, a new and more foreboding sound instills a sense of dread: the rhythmic thumping of helicopter blades.

Just 400 meters from my office lies the helicopter landing pad of BGU's affiliated Soroka University Medical Center. The flight path of military medevac helicopters from Gaza, a mere 40 km away, passes directly overhead. So, when we hear the helicopters, we know they carry Israeli soldiers who have been seriously wounded. Each approaching and departing helicopter is a reminder, a marker of time and lives impacted.

Whenever these helicopters approach, I momentarily pause any meeting I'm in. It's a brief moment for us all



↑ Sahar Gavish of the Field Family Foundation Medical Simulation Center helped train IDF medical teams

↓ The BGU community marked the delayed launch of the academic school year with a solemn ceremony rather than a party





to acknowledge the heavy price of this war. The Hamas attack on October 7 was just the beginning; the death toll of 1,200 and the kidnapping of 240 were only part of its devastating impact. Their ongoing terror must be stopped if there is ever to be hope for peace, and this has an awful human price. Hamas, with its declared aim of obliterating Israel and killing Jews, is not a mere rhetorical threat, but a harsh reality that we must acknowledge, and defeat.

Ben-Gurion University is not spared in this war. Earlier this week we buried our student, Captain (reserves) Roi Biber z"l, who was waiting to start his second year in mechanical engineering. Both his parents are BGU alumni. We are sacrificing some of our best and brightest in the fight to ensure the safety of all Israelis, regardless of their faith. This battle is not just for the Negev but for the entirety of Israel.

As I write, I hear another helicopter approaching, each beat a stark reminder of the price we pay for our freedom.

DECEMBER 1, 2023

On Wednesday I attended the military funeral of Sergeant Tomer Ahimas z"l, the beloved grandson of our

long-time member of the Board of Governors, Prof. Zvi Livne [...] I extend my heartfelt condolences to Zvi and his family during this time of indescribable loss, and I know you join me in this. May Tomer's memory forever be a blessing and may all our brave soldiers return home safely.

This constant pendulum swing between grief and relief has become the new normal for us, shaping our emotional landscape each day. While the events of October 7 were unprecedented in their scale of disaster and sorrow, they also remind us of our capacity for resilience. It's during times like these that we must harness our patience, wisdom, and the boundless capacity of the human spirit not just for survival, but for productivity, creativity, and empathy.

DECEMBER 8, 2023

In Hebrew, we have a term – שגרה (shigra) – roughly translating to 'routine.' We talk about returning to shigra. But this routine is far from ordinary. It's a routine where the daily news brings word of another soldier's sacrifice, another tragic discovery among the kidnapped. It's a routine where our conversations invariably turn to our children serving in the reserves.

Yet, it's also a routine where life's simpler joys and frustrations resume, the infuriating traffic of Israel, the mundane and the everyday. This duality is striking. It's a testament to our resilience. As we prepare to resume classes in two weeks, we are stepping into another kind of routine – academic rigor mixed with the ongoing reality of conflict.

Our return to campus is not about returning to 'normal.' We are acutely aware that while some students will be back in classrooms, engaging in research and academia, others will continue to serve on the frontlines.

In anticipation of our campus reopening, we have pondered over various contingencies and issues. We recognize that our entire University community has undergone a collective trauma, and we are committed to easing this transition from trauma back to academic life. Our team has developed resources and tools to support our lecturers in handling the diverse and potentially challenging dynamics on campus. Above all, we are striving to create a campus environment that provides a routine of academic rigor alongside the feeling of a warm embrace. A routine that acknowledges our extraordinary circumstances yet fosters a sense of stability and progress.



← Prof. Oded Farago teaching Ronen Deitchman's physics class at Eshel Hanasi Regional High School

COLLEAGUES COMPLETE

In the wake of the devastating losses suffered by the Ben-Gurion University community in the October 7 attack and subsequent conflict, colleagues have stepped forward to ensure that the work of their fallen peers is completed. These individuals, who included students, staff, and faculty members, were in the midst of their research or nearing completion of their doctoral studies.

"It was so important for mothers and fathers to see their children receive their degrees, even after they died, and their research papers completed and published. This is one of the best ways to commemorate them, because it is the work that will live on after their deaths. Research is timeless," remarked Ben-Gurion University President Prof. Daniel Chamovitz.

Among the individuals whose work will be carried forward is **Dr. Ronit Tal Sultan** z"l, who was tragically murdered in Kibbutz Holit at the age of 55. Just days before the attack, Ronit had received approval for her doctoral thesis, researching subversive art in Argentina during the reign of the junta in the 1970s and 1980s, and marking the culmination of over five years of dedicated effort. Her advisor, Dr. Ronit Milano, recalled the joy

that she expressed upon learning of the approval, highlighting her perseverance and commitment to her research. Adam and Tom, Ronit's two sons, will receive their mother's posthumous doctorate at the next academic degree ceremony.

"THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO COMMEMORATE THEM, BECAUSE IT IS THE WORK THAT WILL LIVE ON AFTER THEIR DEATHS. RESEARCH IS TIMELESS."

Another promising student, **Gideon Ilani** z"l, 35, was pursuing a doctorate in astrophysics and was preparing to submit several papers for publication before his untimely death in combat in Gaza. His advisor, Prof. Uri Keshet, intends to submit at least two of these papers under Ilani's name and has petitioned the University Senate to grant him his doctorate posthumously. Ilani's dream was to publish his research, complete his doctorate, and join the defense industry. If approved, his wife Esther, who is pregnant with their seventh child, and their other six children will accept the degree in his memory.

Shani Kupervaser z"l, 28, had just begun her doctoral studies in game theory in the Department of Economics when she was murdered at the Nova party in Re'im. Together with her advisor, Dr. David Lagziel, she was studying the

impact of extreme beliefs in the media and on social media, and they had already developed a mathematical model for their research. Dr. Lagziel has pledged to continue their work in her honor, emphasizing her dedication and intellectual curiosity. "At the moment, her work already has computational results from which to draw conclusions. At the shiva, I informed her family that we would continue the research on her behalf," says Dr. Lagziel.

Yasmin Zohar z"l, 49, was pursuing a master's degree in the School of Education, focusing on teachers' emotional responses to parents. Her advisor, Prof. Dana Vedder-Weiss, described her as a talented and thorough researcher who was committed to her work. "The decision to continue her research was pretty clear. A group of students and researchers wanted to



↑ *Ronen Deitchman z"l.*
Photo: courtesy

↗ *Ronit Tal Sultan z"l.*
Photo: Rachel Yonayov

→ *Shani Kupervaser z"l.*
Photo: Courtesy



THE WORK OF BGU'S FALLEN

participate in the effort, and each received a transcript of one session and instruction on how to analyze the data. The next stage is to extract more insights from them, which will contribute to the professional development of teachers. That is what was important to Yasmin," says Prof. Vedder-Weiss.

Ronen Deitchman z"l, 49, a faculty member at BGU's Center for Pre-Academic Studies and a revered physics teacher at Eshel Hanasi High School, will also be remembered through the dedication of his colleagues. Professors Oded Farago and Erez Gilad, along with physics graduate student Gal Cohen, have taken over Deitchman's

teaching responsibilities to ensure that his high school students are prepared for their matriculation exams. "The person who inspired me to study physics at university was my own teacher in high school, and I realized that Ronen Deitchman, who was murdered at the (Nova) party, was also the kind of charismatic teacher who instilled in the students a love of the subject," says Prof. Farago, chair of BGU's Department of Biomedical Engineering.

In carrying on the unfinished work of these individuals, the Ben-Gurion University community is not only honoring their memories, but also ensuring that their legacies endure.



← *Yasmin Zohar z"l.*
Photo: Liron Motero

← *Gideon Ilani z"l.*
Photo: Courtesy



NOTEWORTHY NEWS

NOTEWORTHY NEWS



← Sylvan Adams announced a transformative gift to BGU at the Negev Strong Gala in Toronto, in December 2023. Photo: Liora Kogan

↓ President Prof. Chamovitz speaks at the Global Summit. Photo: Ekaterina Popova

ENSURING THE FUTURE

Canadian-Israeli philanthropist **Sylvan Adams** announced a **\$100 million donation** to BGU as part of the University's global campaign. The funds are allocated for advancing education and campus life at BGU, while rebuilding and strengthening the south.

BGU's **Emergency Response Campaign** in support of BGU students and staff affected by the war was extremely successful. Our friends and supporters around the world raised over **\$12 million** on behalf of BGU's emergency response efforts.

The University's ten-year **\$1 billion Way Forward fundraising campaign** officially launched at the Global Summit meeting in Monte Carlo in January 2024.



NOTEWORTHY NEWS

→ The official launch of the Department of Occupational Therapy in January

↓ Tamar Zandberg

↘ Dovi Frances



ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT



BGU founded the **National Institute for Climate Policy Research** headed by former Minister of Environmental Protection Tamar Zandberg. The Institute aims to pioneer evidence-based policy solutions, ensuring sustainability and prosperity across all levels of governance and industry.

BGU, together with venture capitalist **Dovi Frances**, is partnering with leading entities in the field of artificial intelligence to establish an initiative in Beer-Sheva called

The INSTITUTE (The Institute for Excellence in Cyber and Artificial Intelligence). The initiative will focus on four main areas: cybersecurity, healthcare, economy, and education.

The first cohort of students the in BGU's new **Department of Occupational Therapy** began their studies this year and are expected to help rectify a severe shortage of professionals in the field across the country, and especially in the Negev.



EXCELLENCE RECOGNIZED

Prof. Sarab Abu-Rabia Queder, VP for Diversity and Inclusion and a member of the School of Education, will receive an honorary doctoral degree from the Weizmann Institute of Science in May 2024.

Prof. Menny Shalom won a prestigious 2023 Climate Solutions Prize, which awards \$1 million to a maximum of four researchers annually, in recognition of their work on promising solutions to our climate crisis. The Prize is awarded by JNF Canada, Startup Nation Central, and KKL-JNF.

Dr. Odeya Cohen of the Department of Nursing and **Dr. Ortal Slobodin** of the School of Education, were jointly awarded the William Berelson Prize for the Promotion of Jewish-Arab Understanding in Memory of Yitzhak Rabin. The two researchers developed an online, interactive, and effective platform to provide emergency teams with tools that help them deliver a professional and sensitive response to diverse populations.

Prof. Bracha Shapira of the Department of Software and Information Systems Engineering, was elected to the Planning and Budgeting Committee of the Council for Higher Education.

↓ *Prof. Sarab Abu-Rabia Queder at the hackathon on coexistence on campus in May 2023*



➤ *Prof. Menny Shalom.
Photo: Hadar Shalom*

⬆ *Prof. Bracha Shapira*

⬅ *Dr. Odeya Cohen (L)
and Dr. Ortal Slobodin*

→ Graduation ceremony of the 10th cohort of the Windows onto Campus Dreams program for prisoners.
Photo: Herzal Netanel



APPOINTMENTS



Adv. Avi Nissenkorn

Adv. Avi Nissenkorn, a former MK and Minister of Justice, was elected Chairman of the University's Executive Committee at the 2023 Board of Governors Meeting in May.

Prof. Michal Bar-Asher Siegal, a Talmud scholar from the Goldstein-Goren Department of Jewish Thought,

was appointed Vice President for Global Engagement in January 2024.

Prof. Yael Hashiloni-Dolev of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology was appointed the President's Advisor for Gender Equity in August 2023.

Prof. Orna Braun-Lewensohn of the Conflict Management and Resolution Program was appointed Dean of the Kreitman School of Advanced Graduate Studies.



Prof. Michal Bar-Asher Siegal



Prof. Yael Hashiloni-Dolev



Prof. Orna Braun-Lewensohn

IN THE COMMUNITY

The 10th cohort of the **Windows onto Campus Dreams** program successfully completed their course of studies at the Marcus Family Campus. Over the past decade, 132 prisoners have completed the groundbreaking program jointly led by the Community Action Department, headed by Adv. Vered Sarussi-Katz, and the Israel Prison Service.

BGU, in collaboration with the **Joseph S. & Caroline Gruss Life Monument Fund**, launched the **First Generation in the Academy** program, aimed at making higher education more accessible to students who are the first generation in their families to pursue academic degrees. Every year, 40 students will receive a full three-

year scholarship and will be supported personally, socially, and academically by the Office of the Dean of Students.

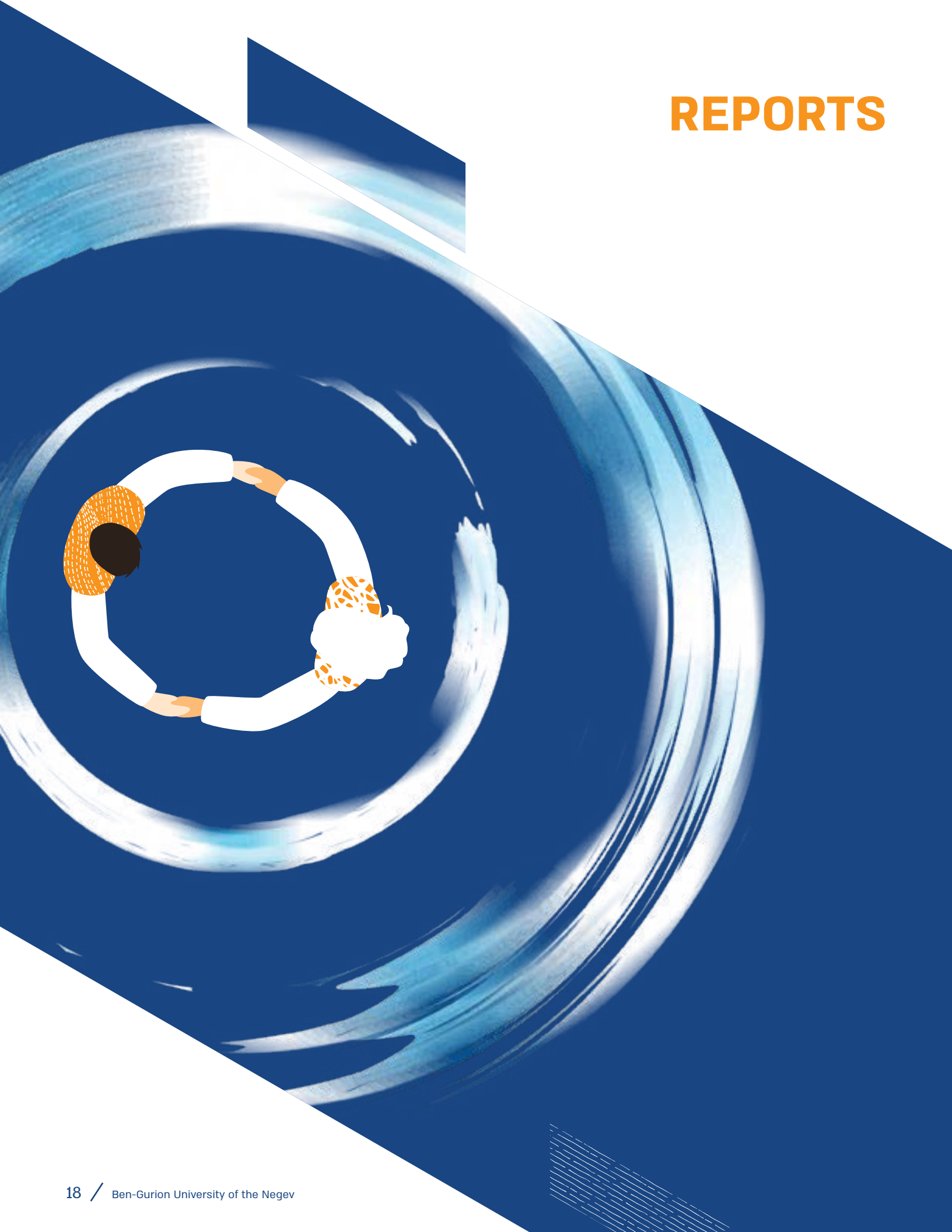
The first cohort of the **Aliyah to Academia** program, which enables Russian-speaking olim to begin their studies immediately by offering their first year courses in Russian, completed their prep year successfully.

Ben-Gurion University is addressing the shortage in quality high school teachers by awarding scholarships that will fund 50% of the tuition fees for bachelor's or master's degree students simultaneously studying for a teaching certificate.

↓ *The first cohort of the Aliyah to Academia program at the Tuviyahu Campus.*
Photo: Tal Refaeli



REPORTS





Prof. **CHAIM**
HAMES RECTOR



SNIPPETS FROM THE RECTOR'S DIARY (APRIL 2023 - MARCH 2024)

23 April 2023

For a long time, we have been thinking about how to change the way our faculties are funded in order to provide the deans with more funds to encourage research, to incentivize departments to increase the numbers of students and the quality of the teaching, to encourage interdisciplinary teaching and research, and to better utilize our tenure-track positions. Following much discussion and preparatory work, we have a new model, and I am now working with each of the deans to fully understand the implications for their faculties and plan on how we are going to implement the change. In the long term, the model will give more freedom and flexibility to the deans, but, as with any change in the way things have been done, there is a lot of concern about the ramifications.

3 May 2023

A meeting with the heads of schools and departments. This is something that I instigated after being invited to the concluding session of a leadership training program that we organized for new heads of departments. I understood that there was a need for a forum where heads of departments could meet and get to know each other, exchange ideas, ask questions and get information. These meetings are well attended, and I enjoy the give

and take, along with hearing criticism, and dispelling "myths". Being a head of an academic department is one of the most difficult administrative and leadership jobs in the University, and it is important to give them as much knowledge, support, tools, and leadership skills as possible, because they are on the frontlines with our students and with the faculty.

18 May 2023

The Board of Governors has just finished, and we are now starting the process of electing five deans. Some will be running for a second term; some will be entirely new. We pride ourselves on our democratic system of governance in the University, so there will be search committees who will approve the candidates, who will then campaign in their respective faculties, and the academic faculty councils will then vote to choose their next dean. Looking at the list of candidates, I am delighted to see that a considerable number of women are running, and I hope that some of them will be elected *[look at the current list of deans and you will see that the faculties chose well!]*.

5 June 2023

The nationwide senior faculty strike over a wage agreement has just come to an end and we have to inform faculty and students how we are going to catch up with the teaching missed. The dispute has been going on for years, and along with everything else,

reached boiling point while the country is in strife over the government's proposed legislation to undermine our democracy. The students are demanding that we do not extend the semester into the summer. The faculty, together with the students, will have to arrange additional classes to teach the materials not covered. There is goodwill on both sides, so hopefully this will work out.

8 October 2023

A missive to the university community from Danny, Tal, and I:

These are difficult times for the State of Israel.

In the coming days, we will bury dozens of soldiers alongside civilians, elderly, men, women, and children. Our hearts go out to the communities and the families affected. We pray for the recovery of the hundreds of physically and spiritually injured in hospitals across the country and for the speedy return of the kidnapped and the missing. There will be difficult days ahead, accompanied by the grim images of civilians and soldiers held captive by Hamas.

The murdered, the wounded, the missing and the abducted include relatives and friends of BGU community members. We will support them lovingly, in any way needed, physically and emotionally.

This is the time for unity, for focusing on the primary goal, and this is the time to support the IDF commanders and soldiers, along with members of Israel's security and rescue forces who are waging war to restore security for us all.

Our hearts are with them. Strong and united - we will prevail.

The 2023-24 academic year was supposed to start on October 15. The rectors of all the universities met on zoom tonight and have agreed to postpone the start of the academic year till the 22nd of October. We may have to postpone even longer, but we will see how things develop. We are concerned about the loss of life, the hostages, our employees and students in the line of fire, and we pray that they will return safely to their families, lives and studies.

[Little did we know that this would be the first of several postponements as the extent of the massacre became clearer and the military response started. The academic year finally started on the 31 December 2023].

12 October 2023

Today is Noa Argamani's 26th birthday. She is being held hostage by Hamas in Gaza along with hundreds of other women, men and children. She is a student in the Department of Software and Information Systems Engineering at BGU. We pray for her release along with all the other hostages.

2 November 2023

A few university rectors have arranged to go to the area close to Gaza where the massacre took place. It is a war zone and entry is allowed only with permission of the IDF. The purpose is to see firsthand what happened and I want to record a message that will be sent to university leaders abroad, many of whom seem incapable of distinguishing between fact and fake, between truth and lies. The fact of the matter is that we have become so infatuated with "narratives" and "all truth is relative", "different perspectives", that when THE truth is right there in front of our eyes, we still look for ways to avoid having to deal with its implications if they go against our conceptions.

While at Kibbutz Re'im, I record the message that I hope will be viewed by academics around the world. I hope it will be a small contribution to the ongoing effort to explain what really happened here and why Israel has no choice but to defend itself.



↑ Prof. Hames toured the carnage at Kibbutz Be'eri with other university rectors and recorded a message to colleagues abroad

NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

- The Department of Health Policy & Management is offering a new multidisciplinary undergraduate track that will train clinical research associates to manage and coordinate clinical trials.
- As part of its five-year plan, BGU submitted to the Council for Higher Education a range of new programs that aim to better utilize areas of strength at the University, increase interdisciplinarity, and attract international students. They include BSc degree programs in science for hi-tech and sea-tech, as well as BSc/BA programs in sustainability and environmental conservation and human-technology interaction. An international English language BSc program in renewable natural resources will also be offered soon at the Sde Boker campus. The University is also planning to launch an MA program in European studies, in collaboration with the Open University, and offer a new multidisciplinary MSc/MA degree in Smart cities and infrastructure systems. The infrastructures systems track will be taught in English and is already attracting interest in collaborations and exchanges from abroad. All are expected to be approved shortly.
- The Department of Bible Studies, Archeology and the Ancient Near East is offering a new undergraduate track in digital archaeology. Students in this track will receive training in the newest digital tools currently



↑ A BGU marine biology student collects data on Eilat's reefs.
Photo: Nadav Shashar

revolutionizing the field, such as GIS, remote sensing, and 3D documentation.

- A new dual-degree program in marine biotechnology is preparing graduates for careers in oceanography, biogeology, marine biotechnology and more through applied coursework, and hands-on experience in marine labs, diving and more. Students will spend three years in Beer-Sheva and the new research station in Ashkelon, and a final year at the Eilat campus, and receive two degrees, in life sciences and earth and environmental sciences.

7 November 2023

I sent the following missive to the University faculty this morning:

For some time, I have been debating whether to write, and if so, then what to write, since in these dark times, we are overwhelmed by so many things and feelings. I thought it appropriate to write today, exactly one month since that cursed day when our world changed completely and what was before will no longer be the same. Beyond the national trauma and the ongoing war, we, as a community, have also experienced loss, and there are also those from our community who today are refugees in their own country. Many of us have been called up for the war effort and others are volunteering

in civilian settings. There are quite a few of us whose children or other family members are also enlisted, and the concern for their safety and their safe return home is at the forefront of our minds. Unfortunately, we know about the son of one of our faculty members who was injured in combat, and we wish him a full and speedy recovery.

Our student community has also mobilized for the national effort, whether in combat or through various kinds of volunteering. There are concerns about the academic year and more than that, there is apprehension about returning to our heterogeneous campus, about meeting the other and being able to deal with things that may surface with greater intensity than before. All

of us, in one way or another, have experienced and are experiencing the difficult events that have happened and the process of returning to normal will be long and with challenges that we will have to overcome together as a community. But above all, the university is a space that allows and encourages open and respectful discourse, and I hope that we will be able to face the challenges of returning to campus.

On October 16th, I attended the funeral of Shahar and Shlomi, the daughter and son-in-law of Prof. (emeritus) Ilan Troen, who were murdered in Kibbutz Holit on that terrible Sabbath. Among those giving eulogies was a representative of the kibbutz and his words still echo in my ears: "The image of our victory over Hamas will be our return to the kibbutz and re-building it in the vision of Shahar and Shlomi and all the others murdered in the kibbutz" (among them, another graduate of ours, the late Dr. Hayim Katsman whose sister is a student in the Eitan program). In contrast, our victory, as an academic community, is an immediate return to our research laboratories, libraries, and offices on campus, and engaging in research that will contribute to humanity and to improving the quality of life and the environment, the opposite of what the murderers sought to achieve. They wanted to uproot everything that we have sown, but we will plant new ideas that will benefit those who value human life. With all the difficulty it entails, we must make every effort to restore as much of the routine that has been lost from our lives as possible, so as not to give murderers the pleasure of preventing us from doing what gives meaning to our lives and our chosen profession.

A month after October 7, 2023, and it is still unclear how and when the war will end. We have promised that we will hold a full school year even if it requires teaching deep into the summer, and even, if need be, change the schedule for the next academic year. We are committed to doing this for our students who are fighting so that we can live safely and securely in our country.

Best wishes for a speedy return of all the hostages from Gaza to their families, that our soldiers will return home safely, that our displaced community members will be able to return safely to their homes, and a speedy recovery for all those injured in body and soul.

Take care and see you on the university campuses.

31 December 2023

The first day of the academic year – a rollercoaster of feelings as the campus comes to life for the first time since October 7th. Last week, there were already more people on campus than the week before as we geared up for the academic year, but today, it felt again like a university campus. But it is a bittersweet feeling, as many people who should have been here today are on the frontlines in Gaza and on the northern border, and while students are sitting on the grass, talking, rushing to classes, meeting friends, there is no music or alcohol that normally accompanies the first day of studies and the joy is muted.

Well over a thousand students and faculty gather in and around the Cummings Plaza for a short memorial, and opening of the academic year ceremony. A minute of silence, speeches that were short but to the point, somber music, and the singing of Hatikvah. I spoke about the soldiers, the wounded, the hostages and the refugees, especially mentioning Noa Argamani and the challenge of studying while our friends and classmates are still fighting.

We have some 4,000 students still on reserve military duty, but we have organized the academic year to ensure that they will have the opportunity to make up the materials they missed and finish the academic year. Much, however, depends on how the war evolves and what happens in the north.

27 February 2024

Three weeks away from the end of the first semester and we still have over 2,000 students in the military with no end in sight to the war. Noa Argamani, along with over 130 others, is still being held hostage in Gaza although there are rumors of a deal to release some of them. Although the academic year is going pretty well, there is a lot of frustration amongst the students still serving in the army and a growing comprehension that some of them might not be able to complete this academic year. We are doing our best to provide solutions for them, but there is a limit to what we can do.

These past months have again shown our resilience as a country and university. Though we are living through very dark times, there is room for optimism. We will prevail and BGU will do its part in rebuilding the Negev.



TAL BEN-HAIM DIRECTOR- GENERAL



We began the 2022-23 academic year with the overarching goal to increase the University's financial resilience. We envisioned this happening along three complementary tracks: Increasing BGU's share of state funding derived from the "research model," developing additional independent revenue streams, and increasing the number of students.

THE NUMBER OF NEW STUDENTS GREW BY 13%, DESPITE THE DISRUPTION OF THE OCTOBER 7 WAR.

One of our greatest concerns in the past three years has been a decline in student enrollment. This decline is a result of several general trends, including an overall global decline in demand for the social sciences and humanities, as well as a drastic decline in demand for certain professional tracks such as nursing and education. We are also facing increasing competition from new colleges and universities, and finally, the Covid pandemic disrupted the life trajectories of an entire generation and caused them to rethink their higher education plans.

The decline in enrollment has significant implications for the University budget, since a large part of our government funding is derived from student numbers – what is known as the "teaching model." Thus, one of our main goals for the 2023-24 academic year was to reverse this trend.

I am very proud to report that our efforts were successful beyond our imagination. The number of new students grew by 13%, despite the disruption of the war.

We were able to achieve this growth through a concerted effort along many different fronts, involving partners across the University – Human Resources, the Academic Secretariat and academic faculties and departments, Marketing, the Operations Division, the Technologies, Innovation and Digital Division, and others. All these partners worked together to improve our services to students and the student experience overall, from the very moment candidates indicate an interest in the University. Thus, much effort was invested in focused marketing campaigns, pursuing leads and convincing interested students to register, and overhauling online interfaces with prospective students. This was possible thanks to a generous grant from the A4BGU reserve fund.



↑ Open Day for prospective students at the Marcus Family Campus, March 2024

CHANGING TACK AFTER OCTOBER 7

After October 7, we moved quickly to support our students through grants and dorm fee relief; additional scholarships and financial support; psychological support; and tutoring and mentoring. We expanded the Reservists Support Office. We created a detailed plan for supporting our students who are serving in the reserves to ensure they are not left behind by repeating courses in the spring, adding a summer semester, various dispensations, guidance, and more.

The University also mobilized to support employees affected by the events of October 7 and the ensuing war: We established a support fund and gave grants to displaced employees, and in some cases housed them in our dorms. We allowed employees to work remotely at first and, later, ran a daycare center so that employees with young children could return to campus.

We funded nineteen student, staff, and alumni initiatives in support of the war efforts. Our students

were everywhere, volunteering in almost every capacity imaginable, as were many staff members. The University supported employee volunteering by absorbing the cost of one day's absence volunteering per employee.

Likewise, we did not forget our obligation to the Negev, and, indeed, were reminded of just how important BGU is to the welfare and resilience of this region. We hosted a civilian relief logistics center on campus; our campuses in Eilat and Beer-Sheva opened their classrooms to entire schools from displaced communities, or those that weren't protected from missile attacks. The Eilat campus housed and fed families displaced from their homes. Both the Eilat and Beer-Sheva campuses hosted soldiers and medical personnel in dorms and classrooms.

The \$12 million we were able to raise from our friends and supporters through the Emergency Response Campaign made all this possible.

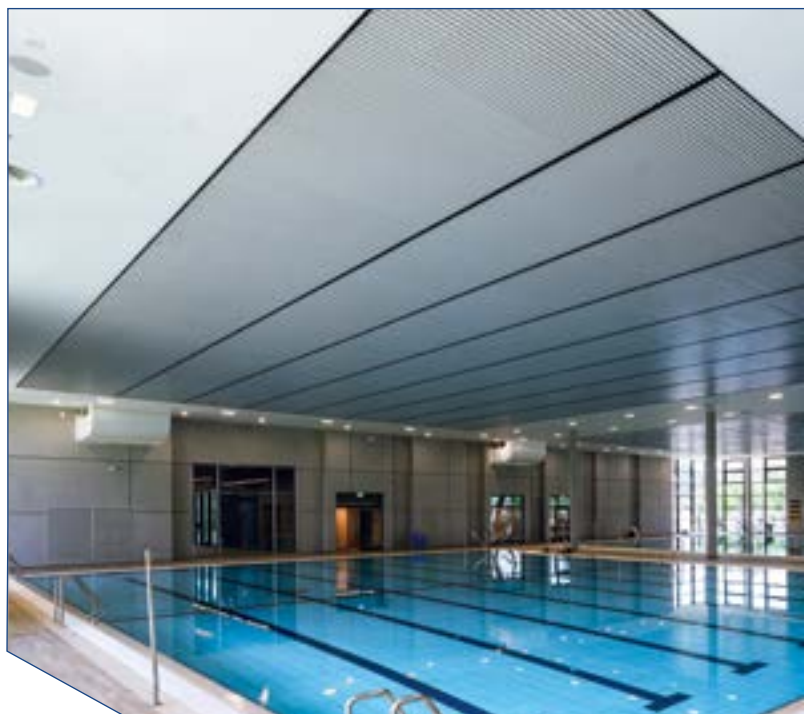
To improve the overall student experience, we invested in improving the campus environment in terms of security, dining experience, classrooms and learning spaces, and more. We revamped public spaces and created numerous seating areas across campus, and improved the dorm living experience. Thanks to the generosity of Sylvan Adams, the renovated and expanded sports center improves the student experience as well.

More broadly, we initiated the improvement of organizational service-related processes across the University and set ourselves the goal of improving employee satisfaction and investment in the University, to be able to attract the best researchers and support staff. This included establishing a new organizational communications unit, investing in new digital platforms to streamline bureaucratic and other organizational processes that improve the work environment.

We redoubled our efforts to make BGU more attractive to researchers: We invested in artificial intelligence infrastructure that places the University at the field's vanguard; we established the Guzik Center for Advanced Microscopy at the Ilse Katz Institute for Nanoscale Science & Technology; and developed a new comprehensive one-stop portal for researchers, where they can manage research budgets and everything else they need.

I am happy to report that the University was also successful in increasing government income derived

from the "research model," which is based on research outcomes. BGU's share of government research funding has increased from 12.3% in 2022-23 to 13.5% in 2023-24, despite the addition of another university to the pool. Efforts to increase grant submissions overall and improve those submissions are also beginning to bear fruit.



→ Director-General Tal Ben-Haim presents his vision at the annual meeting of the technical and administrative staff

↓ Renovations of the now state-of-the-art Sylvan Adams Sports Center were completed in August 2023



WE CREATED A DETAILED PLAN FOR SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS WHO ARE SERVING IN THE RESERVES TO ENSURE THEY ARE NOT LEFT BEHIND

As noted, we are developing additional revenue streams and strengthening existing ones. We have seen a growth in income from marketable services such as pre-academic programs and the Medical School for International Health. We will continue to develop similar potential revenue sources such as continuing education

programs, international programs, and special academic programs such as the bachelor's degree for the IDF pilot training program, and executive management programs.

We are also working to increase revenue from research and development activities by, for example, merging BGN Technologies and the National Institute for Biotechnology in the Negev and establishing a new economic entity that will be charged with finding ways to maximize income from other University assets.



CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION

COMPLETED THIS YEAR

- Sylvan Adams Sports Center expansion

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

- North Campus utilities tunnels and underground infrastructure
- North Campus Infrastructure Center
- André Deloro Medical Research Institute – joint BGU-Soroka translational research building
- Drahi Innovation and Entrepreneurship Building, North Campus
- Helmsley Computer Science Building, North Campus

IN PLANNING

- Diane and Guilford Glazer Foundation Future Technologies Building, North Campus
- Ernest Scheller, Jr. Gate of Innovation, North Campus
- Civil and Environmental Engineering Building, North Campus
- Culture and Convention Center, North Campus
- Sde Boker Campus dormitories
- Sde Boker Campus gate
- Eilat Campus dormitories
- North Campus development



**Prof. DAN
BLUMBERG** VICE PRESIDENT
FOR REGIONAL
AND INDUSTRIAL
DEVELOPMENT



The Office of the Vice President for Regional and Industrial Development, under the leadership of Prof. Dan Blumberg, is responsible for developing and maintaining the University's strategic role in the technological ecosystem emerging in Beer-Sheva and the Negev. It focuses on building and strengthening ties between the University and industry, with an emphasis on fostering innovation and entrepreneurship, thus positioning the University as a leader and spearheading development in this ecosystem.

Over the past year, we continued our collaboration with the Ministry of Defense regarding the relocation of the IDF to the South. Two study programs for elite IDF units that will move south were approved. Additionally, in partnership with the Intelligence Division and the 8200 Alumni Association, we launched the **iMtech Training Center** to meet the employment demands of high-tech industries in the Negev. The first cohort of young people from the region began this training and placement program in February 2024.

Our efforts are focused on advancing the Beer-Sheva Innovation District in collaboration with key partners: the Beer-Sheva Municipality, Soroka University Medical Center, the Ministry of Defense, and the National Economic Council at the Prime Minister's Office. The issue of placemaking was recently resolved, and very soon we will witness a transformation of the space along Ben-Gurion Boulevard. We are currently in the process

of recruiting a CEO for the Innovation District, tasked with promoting the district nationally and internationally, attracting investors, and persuading companies and startups to relocate to the District and join the developing ecosystem.

Furthermore, under Government Resolution No. 625, we are leading an unprecedented partnership with the Shamoon College of Engineering and multiple government ministries to establish a branch of the **City Science Lab at MIT Media Lab** within the Beer-Sheva Innovation District, in a building located on Rager Boulevard, between the University, the hospital, and the surrounding neighborhoods. Despite the challenges posed by the war, we have recruited a lab manager and a technology manager who are developing a business plan and familiarizing themselves with the ecosystem.

**OVER THE PAST YEAR WE CONTINUED OUR
COLLABORATION WITH THE MINISTRY OF
DEFENSE REGARDING THE RELOCATION OF
THE IDF TO THE SOUTH.**

Advancing the regional ecosystem remains a key focus for our office. Prof. Blumberg also recently facilitated a partnership between the global Ralco company and the Blechner Center for Industrial Catalysis and Process Development at BGU, resulting in the establishment of a joint company called CarboNGV.

BGN

In 2023, BGN Technologies, BGU's technology transfer company, redefined and solidified its role in supporting applied research and commercializing the University's intellectual property. Over the course of the year, BGN implemented strategic changes to better fulfill this mission:

First, it established the Bio-Innovation Unit to assist researchers engaged in applied bio-related research. This unit identifies opportunities and develops strategies to transition from ideation to pre-commercial technologies. The unit also promotes multi-disciplinary research between BGU's bio-related researchers and researchers from other fields with the aim of generating cutting-edge technologies.

In July 2023, the National Institute for Biotechnology in the Negev (NIBN) underwent a strategic reorganization, integrating its activities with BGN to enhance the commercialization potential of the University's technologies. Operating under a new, comprehensive model, the NIBN functions as an R&D accelerator specializing in bio-related projects. These projects are selected through a process involving the new Bio-Innovation Unit, the NIBN, and BGN's IP and Business Development teams, which provide support throughout the acceleration process to maximize the potential for eventual commercialization.

BGN, in collaboration with the Merage Foundation Israel, Soroka University Medical Center, Dell Computers, and Elbit Systems, established Synergy 7, a company that secured a NIS 25 million government tender to establish an innovation hub which will develop three new technological infrastructure projects aimed at attracting startups and multinational companies to Beer-Sheva.

Furthermore, the University is poised to play a pivotal role in two regional innovation centers recently selected as part of a NIS 100 million investment program by various government ministries. These centers aim to foster entrepreneurship and high-tech employment across the periphery. BGN will lead the University's participation in two centers: Synnovation Eilat-Eilot, a partnership focused on biotechnology and aquaculture driving innovation and growth in the Eilat region, and the DesertTech and Climate Innovation Center in Beer-Sheva, focusing on climate and desert technologies.



102
new patent applications filed



56
research agreements
with Israeli and international companies



60
grant applications submitted to Israel
Innovation Authority

with over **70%** success rate



3
new startups launched

A consortium comprising approximately 500 companies and entities, operating under the French organization Bioeconomy for Change (B4C), has chosen BGN as its partner for a strategic collaboration to develop advanced technologies in synthetic biology. The consortium unites stakeholders from various sectors of the economy under a shared objective: maximizing the use of renewable resources in diverse fields such as cosmetics, agriculture, disease diagnosis, and therapy. The collaboration agreement will facilitate investment in joint ventures and technology-based startups developed at BGU.



↑ A delegation from Bioeconomy for Change met with BGN at the Marcus Family Campus. Photo: Ira Golub

YAZAMUT 360°

Established in 2018, the Yazamut 360° Center for Entrepreneurship was charged with transforming BGU into a key academic catalyst for regional entrepreneurial activity. Yazamut 360° seeks to bridge academic expertise with the dynamic needs of the business world, recognizing that startups often emerge from real-world experience, exposure to commerce, and a supportive network.

YAZAMUT 360° HAS SUCCESSFULLY POSITIONED BGU AS A LEADING HUB OF ISRAELI ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY.

Five years later, Yazamut 360° has successfully positioned BGU as a leading hub of Israeli entrepreneurial activity. Moreover, it has ignited a spark on campus, spurring students and researchers from all disciplines to think bigger and bolder about solving the world's most intractable problems. The following programs exemplify the transformative impact Yazamut 360° is having on BGU and the Negev.

Our flagship program, **Cactus Capital**, continues to inspire entrepreneurship education at universities worldwide and boasts a portfolio of 30 companies. In 2023, Cactus Capital received over 100 investment applications. Over 1,400 students applied for just 36 slots in the Cactus Academy course!

The **Leaders** program offers coursework, workshops, mentorship, guest lectures, and training in cutting-edge technology. It equips participants with skills in building business models and teams, communicating ideas, raising seed funding, and connecting the dots required for entrepreneurial success. This program received 800 applicants for 35 slots in 2023, with the cohort comprising 50% women.

Oazis is a venture builder and accelerator founded in collaboration with BGN which identifies BGU technologies with the potential to solve significant scientific, engineering, and business challenges, then matches the research group with entrepreneurs to establish companies. To date, Oazis has provided nearly 20 graduate students and 10 undergraduates annually with invaluable career-building opportunities. It has established 28 companies based on BGU researchers' technologies, raising over \$20 million in funding. Recently, Israel's Ministry of Science and Technology awarded the Oazis Lab Experience a competitive NIS 13.2 million grant to support more BGU researchers.



↑ Graduation of the third cohort of the Leaders Program, August 2023

Negev Prime is an eight-month e-commerce accelerator designed for individuals without technological training. Funded in part by Israel's largest bank and a leading asset-management company, Negev Prime combines practical experience in identifying lucrative products, vendor negotiation, global logistics, cash-flow management, and marketing with industry mentorships. In 2023, Negev Prime, which is open to all Negev residents, received 550 applications for 120 spots (60 BGU students and 60 Negev residents), with 30% from the Israeli-Arab community.



5

years



8,500

participants



230

startups/projects

Funded by the Rothschild Foundation and run by the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation, the **Starting Up Together** program aims to ensure equal representation of Israel's diverse population in the high-tech industry. As the program's academic partner, Yazamut 360° provides aspiring entrepreneurs from Israel's peripheries (50% Jewish and 50% Israeli-Arab) with knowledge and tools for building sustainable ventures, with an emphasis on transforming peripheral towns and cities into new centers of business, innovation, and technology.



**Prof. MICHAL
BAR-ASHER
SIEGAL** VICE PRESIDENT
FOR GLOBAL
ENGAGEMENT



The primary responsibility of the Office of the Vice President for Global Engagement at BGU, under the leadership of Prof. Michal Bar-Asher Siegal, is to cultivate and enhance academic partnerships with universities worldwide. This role involves strategizing and executing initiatives to facilitate collaborations, exchange programs, and joint research endeavors aimed at fostering a diverse and inclusive academic environment.

Additionally, the Vice President oversees the development of programs designed to attract international students to study at BGU and to provide opportunities for BGU students to engage in enriching educational experiences abroad. Moreover, a crucial aspect of this position involves charting, alongside President Chamovitz, the international trajectory of excellence for BGU, aligning its global engagement efforts with the University's overarching mission and values, while positioning BGU as a leader in higher education on the global stage. Consequently, we have forged new academic connections with prestigious institutions such as the University of Pennsylvania, Arizona State, University of Washington, MIT, Brandeis, Columbia, Oxford, and Edinburgh.

We also place a strong emphasis on fostering international relations and collaborations with key embassies in Israel, with the aim of creating a dynamic bridge for academic and cultural exchanges. In the past year we have hosted academic delegations, student and youth groups, ambassadors, diplomats, government ministers, and more. These collaborations also aim to enrich the academic

experience of our students by providing opportunities for cross-cultural learning, diverse perspectives, and exposure to cutting-edge research.

Two new initiatives at **BGU International** demonstrate our aims: In collaboration with Prof. Yael Hashiloni-Dolev, the President's Adviser for Gender Equity, we have established two significant grants aimed at empowering women in academia. The first grant is designed to support female MA students, offering them the opportunity to attend conferences, thereby exposing them to the broader academic community and enhancing their professional networks. This initiative not only fosters their academic growth but also contributes significantly to their professional development. The second grant focuses on female postdoctoral researchers in the humanities and social sciences, providing them with the necessary financial support to further their research and academic careers. This concerted effort underscores BGU's commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for women to thrive in their academic pursuits.

The Sandwich PhD grant is designed to attract exceptional doctoral students from top universities across Europe and North America for a one-year period at BGU during their doctoral studies. This innovative program aims to enhance BGU's visibility and reputation in the international academic community, showcasing the University's research capabilities, facilities, and vibrant academic environment. By offering these students an opportunity to engage in cutting-edge research at BGU,

the program seeks to foster collaboration and establish a robust network of future scholars. Moreover, it is strategically positioned to serve as a feeder channel, encouraging these talented individuals to consider returning to BGU for postdoctoral studies.

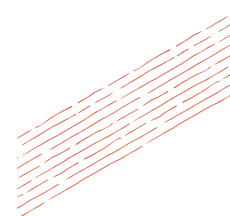
THE WELCOME CENTER AT BGU INTERNATIONAL IS ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN ENHANCING SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR OUR DIVERSE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

Our commitment to fostering global academic exchanges and providing exceptional student experiences is evident through a variety of initiatives and programs. Our internship programs offer opportunities for students year-round, including hosting specific groups during the summer, earning us the prestigious Gold Badge for the quality of care for students from the University of Oxford. Orientation days for all new incoming international students ensure a smooth transition into campus life, while introductions to outgoing student exchange programs open doors to exciting educational opportunities abroad. Informative workshops further prepare students and staff for their exchange experiences. Additionally, our organization and operation of summer programs, complete with activities, trips, and graduation ceremonies, enrich the academic journey for all participants.

The **Welcome Center** at BGU International has been actively engaged in enhancing services and support for our diverse international community. This includes the development and implementation of a new CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system, specifically tailored for new students embarking on full-degree programs on the Marcus Family Campus. Our recent

relocation to new offices signifies our commitment to providing a welcoming environment for all international students, researchers, and their families. Additionally, we have curated a "Welcome to BGU" kit for international students, facilitating their transition to university life. Our monthly activities calendar features a range of cultural and social events, from drum workshops to holiday celebrations and lectures, designed to enrich the student experience. Our Buddy System Program pairs new international students with Israeli mentors to provide guidance and support throughout their academic journey.

BGU International's international marketing efforts are multifaceted and dynamic, aiming to attract top-tier talent from around the globe. Through adept social media management and strategic use of information portals, we ensure that candidates are seamlessly guided through their time to BGU. We also engage in strategic initiatives such as making videos, translating



↑ 2023 international summer courses closing ceremony

← A new Welcome Center for international students was opened this year



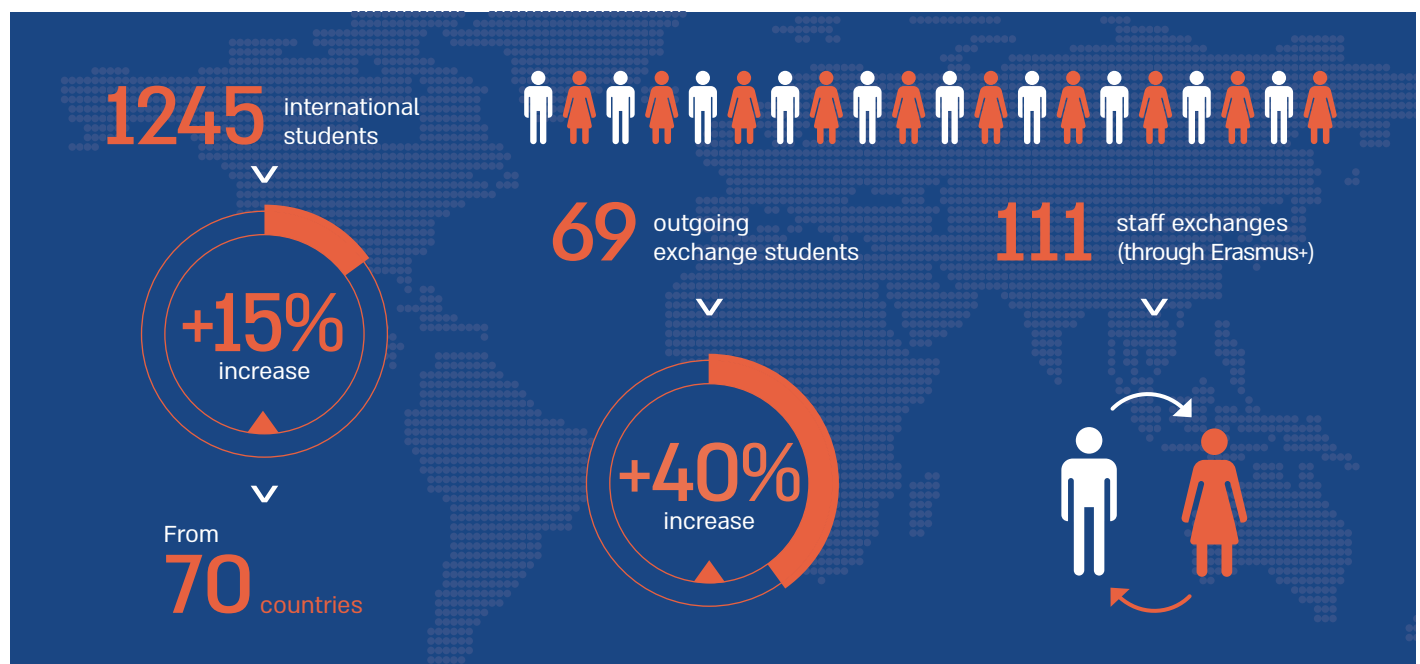
↑ Solidarity Mission from the University of Pennsylvania, January 2024

materials, and preparing plans for specific regions such as Latin America or India. We actively participate in or host various events to engage with our target audiences.

SPECIAL MEASURES DURING CONFLICT

During times of conflict, such as the war that followed the October 7 attack, the Welcome Center remains vigilant in ensuring the safety and well-being of our international students. We maintain regular communication with them to track their whereabouts and address urgent concerns, including providing accommodations for those without access to safe

spaces. Our efforts extended to coordinating with foreign embassies and Israeli authorities, and hosting Zoom meetings to offer support and assistance. For students abroad on exchanges during the conflict, we provided individual guidance and facilitated their return to Israel when feasible. We also organized online social activities and volunteer opportunities to foster a sense of community. Additionally, we assisted students who left the country due to the conflict with logistical matters such as shipping belongings. Through these efforts, we strive to ensure the continued safety and support of all our students during challenging times.





**Prof. RAZ
JELINEK** VICE PRESIDENT
AND DEAN FOR
RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT



The Office of the Vice President and Dean for Research and Development oversees and fosters research across all faculties and fields at the University, primarily through the Research and Development Authority. Over the past year, we have initiated several key programs aimed at enhancing the success of BGU researchers in securing research grants and funding. Below are details of our activities in support of these endeavors:

We have continued to support multidisciplinary research programs within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, including the digital humanities initiative.

Investment in advanced scientific equipment has also been a priority, with the acquisition of a scanning electron microscope, and other advanced analytical instrumentation for the Ilse Katz Institute for Nanoscale Science & Technology.

A contribution of NIS 20 million was made towards new faculty absorption packages, and we supported the establishment of a new BGN unit that will promote applied biomedical research.

In February 2024 we launched the ERC Success Hub, a program designed to encourage and support ERC (European Research Council) grant submissions. Our proactive approach has already yielded impressive results, with successful grants in the ERC Starting Grants and Synergy tracks.

To further increase research funding, we encouraged researchers and research groups to submit proposals

to the Council for Higher Education's (CHE) prestigious Research Centers program. We also incentivized submissions to the CHE's Individual Research Fellows program by committing to match funding. This effort was particularly successful, resulting in 9 out of 10 submissions receiving funding.

**OUR PROACTIVE SUPPORT OF ERC
SUBMISSIONS HAS PAID OFF WITH MULTIPLE
WINS IN THE ERC STARTING GRANTS AND
SYNERGY TRACKS.**

Additionally, the Office swiftly organized support for researchers and graduate students during the current conflict. This included funding continuing scholarships and fellowships for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows who returned from abroad, as well as covering their travel expenses returning to Israel.



↑ The ERC Success Hub introductory meeting, February 2024



Dr. Shira Chapman



Dr. Dan Bar Yaacov



Prof. Gonen Ashkenasy



Prof. Tomer Hertz

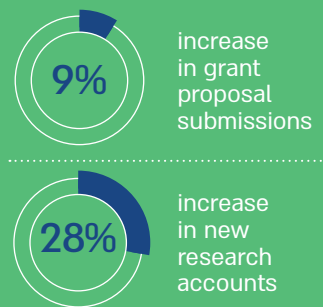


Prof. Ron Folman

NOTABLE GRANTS

- Dr. Shira Chapman of the Department of Physics and Dr. Dan Bar Yaacov of the Shraga Segal Department of Microbiology, Immunology and Genetics both received prestigious ERC Starting Grants. The grants provide up to 1.5 million euros and additional funding of up to 1 million euros for equipment over five years.
- Prof. Gonen Ashkenasy of the Department of Chemistry, together with three other research groups in Europe, won a prestigious ERC Synergy Grant for joint research. The project aims to understand new principles in the organization of biological systems and shed light on possible scenarios in the early stages of evolution. The grant is given for six years, and BGU's share is about 3.4 million euros.
- Prof. Ashkenasy was also selected to head a new Minerva Center for the Study of Planetary Emergence of Life. This center, a collaboration with the Hebrew University and Tel Aviv University, will be established at Ben-Gurion University for six years. Minerva Centers are established for innovative research topics in Israel and are funded by the Minerva Stiftung and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research.
- BGU was awarded a \$1.3 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Prof. Tomer Hertz of the Shraga Segal Department of Microbiology and Immunology and Genetics will develop and validate a novel and safe approach for measuring immune responses to polio viruses.
- Prof. Ron Folman will receive \$2.6 million from a collective fund created by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the Simons Foundation, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and the John Templeton Foundation to lead the development of a nanodiamond spatial interferometer that will help bridge the gap between quantum physics and Einstein's theory of relativity.

78
ISF grants awarded
▼
out of 252
submissions
▼
a 4%
improvement over last year



Total Investment in Research (US\$ M)*

	Competitive grants & contracts	Non-competitive grants & contracts	Donations	BGU research funding	Total
2020/21	50.1	39.0	33.2	8.6	108
2021/22	50.7	44.2	25.0	14.5	111.6
2022/23	48.2	55.0	21.3	9.8	134.3

Figures are based on full amounts of research grants or donor commitments, and not payments received.



Prof. SARAB ABU-RABIA QUEDER

VICE PRESIDENT
FOR DIVERSITY
AND INCLUSION



Ben-Gurion University of the Negev values diversity as a cornerstone of excellence. The University strives to maximize the talents of all segments of Israeli society, fostering diverse, inclusive, and dynamic research and educational environments. These environments not only create a common academic space but also preserve unique identities within the University. Ben-Gurion University is committed to ensuring that everyone feels a sense of belonging and partnership, fostering dialogue among diverse communities, and nurturing graduates who embody these values. These efforts are undertaken while upholding academic freedom, freedom of expression, and mutual respect, and actively opposing injustice, racism, and discrimination.

During 2023, the Office for Diversity and Inclusion continued its work in four key areas:

A. FOSTERING ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP AMONG RESEARCH STUDENTS FROM UNDERREPRESENTED POPULATIONS

Three grants were secured to cultivate emerging scientific leadership among Arab research students in STEM fields. They were applied to creating a new definition of academic excellence that gives greater opportunities for inclusion to underrepresented groups. A summer track was created to facilitate the transition to master's studies, and another grant will forge academic leadership in environmental studies among Arab graduate students.

B. CULTIVATING EMERGING LEADERSHIP FOR SHARED LIFE ON CAMPUS

Separate meetings with Jewish and Arab students conducted by the Office for Diversity and Inclusion revealed significant tensions, including fear of on-campus encounters, lack of trust, and narrative gaps among students, which were exacerbated during the war. There was also a fear of losing any common ground. Several preliminary measures were developed in response, including "Dormitory Trustees", student mediation, intercultural workshops, and tools for lecturers in diverse classrooms during wartime.



→ Prof. Abu-Rabia Queder led a delegation to the University of Rochester to exchange knowledge and practices of diversity in September 2023. Photo: Matt Wittmeyer

✓ Roundtable discussions about shared life on campus. Photo: Tony Twito



Various University units, including the Student Union and the Faculty Forum for Shared Space, approached the Office to reassess strategies for creating a shared space under current circumstances. We proposed establishing a sustainable institutional infrastructure based on data collection and communal resilience building to preserve relations between Jews and Arabs. As a university committed to the wellbeing of all its communities, located in the South, we recognize the need to create a balanced and common ground between different narratives and develop appropriate measures for all groups, ensuring their security and sense of belonging to the campus community.

Establish a 'shared lives' research lab and a shared space on campus: The current conflict and societal divisions in Israel underscore the crucial role of academic institutions in fostering shared spaces and partnerships among diverse groups, and in shaping a future leadership committed to democratic values, equality, and diversity.

Instituting a shared space and laboratory dedicated to promoting and researching shared lives will establish a robust infrastructure and broaden its impact through the implementation of permanent, long-term programs; create a framework for student leadership across the campus, serving as ambassadors for shared life; facilitate faculty and student initiatives based on their experiences and needs on campus; develop research methodologies to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs and tools;

and cultivate a sense of ownership of the space through active participation in its development, a concept known in academic literature as 'place-making.'

Promote shared lives on campus: The Faculty Forum for Shared Space was established as a framework for 20 faculty members interested in promoting equality and justice, combating racism, and promoting relations between Jewish and Arab students. This framework will allow them to initiate activities and provide them with the knowledge and tools needed to collaborate and nurture these budding communities of knowledge and entrepreneurship.

This year, we also launched the Shared Life Ambassadors program, a new leadership program supported by the Edmond de Rothschild Foundation Israel and Yad Hanadiv Foundation, aimed at promoting relationships between students from different communities on campus. The first cohort of the program includes 20 students, Jews and Arabs, who will receive tools and resources to help develop a fair and beneficial fabric of relations among students within every faculty. Participants receive a scholarship to support their efforts to acquire the skills, knowledge, and tools to become ambassadors of shared life.

In May 2023, we organized a Shared Life Challenge Hackathon, which attracted over 60 students from all faculties. One resulting initiative is the "Burst the Bubbles" course, designed to provide tools for dialogue between different groups, and scheduled to run as a pilot

ARAB STUDENTS COMPRISE



8.4% (1,507)
OF ALL BACHELOR'S DEGREE STUDENTS



9.1% (303)
OF ALL MASTER'S DEGREE STUDENTS



7.9% (126)
OF ALL DOCTORAL STUDENTS

STUDENT DIVERSITY

2,459 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

28 ULTRA-ORTHODOX STUDENTS

113 ETHIOPIAN STUDENTS

2,202 ARAB STUDENTS

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS: **18,553**

during the second semester this year in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, funded by the Edmond de Rothschild Foundation Israel.

and Arab students in open, safe spaces to address their feelings and concerns. We developed training programs for academic and administrative staff to map hidden biases and racism. In addition, we published a document outlining principles of freedom of expression on campus during times of conflict.

D. FOSTERING AND DEEPENING UNDERSTANDINGS OF DIVERSITY

A delegation from the Office for Diversity and Inclusion visited the University of Rochester in the US to share knowledge and learn about training programs on cultural competence, mitigating racism, inclusivity, and cultural and religious sensitivity, as well as practices for teaching in a diverse classroom during emergencies.

The Vice President also participated in an event addressing Jewish-Arab relation in academia, held at the residence of the President of the State of Israel in partnership with the Edmond de Rothschild Foundation Israel and led by GISHA, where she presented the efforts of BGU in the field of diversity, inclusion, and shared society, in opening for the reopening of the academic year.

The Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, in partnership with the Community Action Department, led a solidarity visit with the Bedouin population that has been negatively impacted by the ongoing war. BGU staff members visited the Arab-Jewish Emergency Center in Rahat, where they met with the mayor and social activists and helped to prepare food aid packages. The group also visited the home of one of the hostages from Rahat, met with a former hostage, and heard about challenges faced by his family.



← BGU staff members visited Bedouin schools to learn about new initiatives

We are building a database to track Jewish-Arab relations on campus and support decision-making and policy development. This database will be updated through ongoing surveys to understand the prevailing sentiments, identify key challenges, and monitor changes over time.

C. REDUCING DISCRIMINATION, HIDDEN BIASES AND RACISM

In preparation for our students' return to campus at the end of 2023, we held resilience meetings with Jewish



↑ Lillian and Larry Goodman Open Apartments Program
Community Theater production, May 2023. Photo: Daphna Talmon

COMMUNITY ACTION DEPARTMENT

The Community Action Department, established 50 years ago in 1974, is the primary vehicle for realizing David Ben-Gurion and the University's vision for developing the Negev through the advancement of its various populations. Under the leadership of Adv. Vered Saroussi-Katz, the Department operates on several levels: reducing scholastic gaps and promoting access to education in general, and higher education in particular, and assistance to disadvantaged populations.

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev views its students as potential leaders and believes they have the power to shape Israeli reality both now and in the future. Consequently, the Department runs a range of established and innovative new programs in which students donate their time and skills to the community in exchange for scholarships, including Bishvil Ha'Daat for adults with cognitive disabilities, and the Barvaz community theater. Other programs, such as the Keren Moshe Leadership Program, also offer leadership training.

Last year we launched a new initiative called Shorsheinu (Our Roots), which exposes students to the diversity of Israeli society while supporting the elderly. The program, supported by the Edmond de Rothschild Foundation Israel, funded 16 students from diverse backgrounds who visit elderly residents of Beer-Sheva and record their life stories.

Although many of the Department's programs were put on hold while the start of the academic school year was delayed, we were not idle. During the three months

following the October 7 attack, we collaborated with units across the University (Marketing, Human Resources, Dean of Students, Operations, and the Student Union) to support those adversely affected by the Hamas attack and the Iron Swords War: the elderly, families of reservists, people displaced from the Western Negev, and in particular, residents of neighborhoods in Ofakim, where pitched battles took place in the streets.

The Department supported nineteen different student, alumni, and staff initiatives, such as mobile laundries for IDF soldiers, 3D printing of medical and military accessories, applications that provide emotional first aid, activities for displaced children, tutoring, BGU radio broadcasts, and much more. In addition, over 800 staff and faculty members volunteered in logistics centers, farms, and wherever else helping hands were needed.

Once the academic year began, we resumed our regular activities, including the 14th year of the Access for All program, which expands knowledge of academic subjects among the general public. The program offers 12 classes in three different study tracks: medicine, psychology, and business administration, with lectures given by outstanding undergraduate students and academic faculty. This year, over 250 students from all over the Negev are participating in the program.

In war as in peace, the importance of the responsibility and commitment of BGU to the Negev has become ever clearer. The Department expects to play a key role in the efforts to rebuild the Negev and increase the resilience of its varied communities.



↑ Mobile laundry for IDF soldiers and reservists set up by staff member Sharon Toledano (center) and supported by the University



JEFF KAYE

VICE PRESIDENT
FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS
AND RESOURCE
DEVELOPMENT



I am pleased to present my annual report on the activities of the Division for Public Affairs and Resource Development, under my supervision. Despite facing significant hurdles, our team has risen admirably to the occasion.

The past year posed unique challenges, notably navigating our inherent drive to create a better future alongside internal rifts within Israeli society; and securing the future of BGU while responding to the urgent needs in our community triggered by the brutal Hamas attack on Israel on October 7. In navigating these difficulties, the relevance and importance of mobilizing BGU supporters worldwide became more pronounced than ever before.

Our outreach efforts played a pivotal role, utilizing webinars, video testimonials, and written updates to share compelling stories of our affected student population. We told the story of students who tragically lost their lives, those taken as hostages, and those displaced due to destroyed homes. Additionally, we highlighted the resilience of students serving in the IDF reserves during these tumultuous times. The Spokesperson's Unit initiated and facilitated international media visits to campus and interviews with President Chamovitz and the University leadership, resulting in unprecedented global exposure to BGU.

Amidst these challenges, our fundraising endeavors bore fruit. We are grateful for the generosity of many

donors who have made significant pledges to our future, such as Sylvan Adams, who contributed a substantial \$100 million to BGU. And when we needed to regroup in the midst of a war, our collective efforts resulted in \$12 million quickly raised in emergency funds. These contributions have been instrumental in addressing the urgent needs arising from the crisis.

WHEN WE NEEDED TO REGROUP IN THE MIDST OF A WAR, OUR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS RESULTED IN \$12 MILLION QUICKLY RAISED IN EMERGENCY FUNDS. THESE CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN ADDRESSING THE URGENT NEEDS ARISING FROM THE CRISIS.

We have hosted scores of visitors in the last year ranging from solidarity missions to exploratory visits from major philanthropic foundations. Division professionals and University leaders made dozens of visits overseas, attending galas and parlor meetings and engaging with current and potential donors. We learned that a visit from BGU serves not only to tell the University's story, but also provides an opportunity to learn about the current situation of the local Jewish community – often in crisis because of anti-Israel demonstrations and increased antisemitism.

Despite the adversities, our regular activities such as the Board of Governors meeting and the Halutz leadership

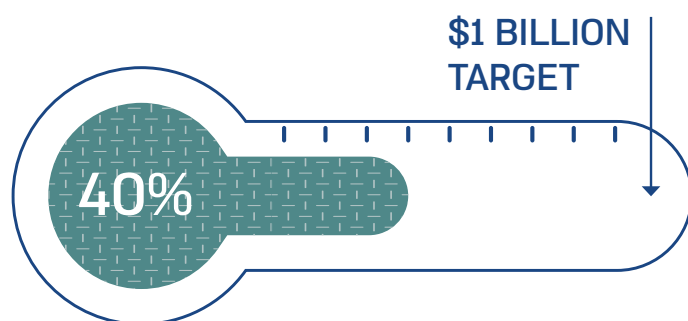


← Jeff Kaye with Cohort II of the Halutz Program

↓ Some of our friends and supporters at the gala dedication of the Sylvan Adams Sports Center, 2023 BOG meeting

program proceeded as planned, attaining even greater significance (A single social media post by Chelsea Clinton after receiving an honorary doctorate last year was seen by 500,000 unique viewers). These platforms have proven essential in fostering connections, sharing insights, and advancing the University's mission.

I am pleased to report that, amidst these challenges, we are making substantial progress towards our ambitious goals. **The Way Forward Global Campaign**, now three years into its ten-year timeline, has reached nearly 40% of its \$1 billion target. This remarkable achievement underscores the unwavering commitment of our supporters and the resilience of BGU's mission.



None of this work can be done in a vacuum. We are immensely grateful for the cooperation from academic and administrative staff who understand the importance of our collective work. We are robustly represented by Americans for BGU and BGU Canada, and are proud of similar associations in the UK, Switzerland, France, Belgium, Italy, South Africa, Argentina, and Mexico. Notably, we have secured more philanthropic support from within Israel than at any other time in our 54 year history. We also do not take

THE WAY FORWARD GLOBAL CAMPAIGN, NOW THREE YEARS INTO ITS TEN-YEAR TIMELINE, HAS REACHED NEARLY 40% OF ITS \$1 BILLION TARGET. THIS REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT UNDERSCORES THE UNWAVERING COMMITMENT OF OUR SUPPORTERS AND THE RESILIENCE OF BGU'S MISSION.



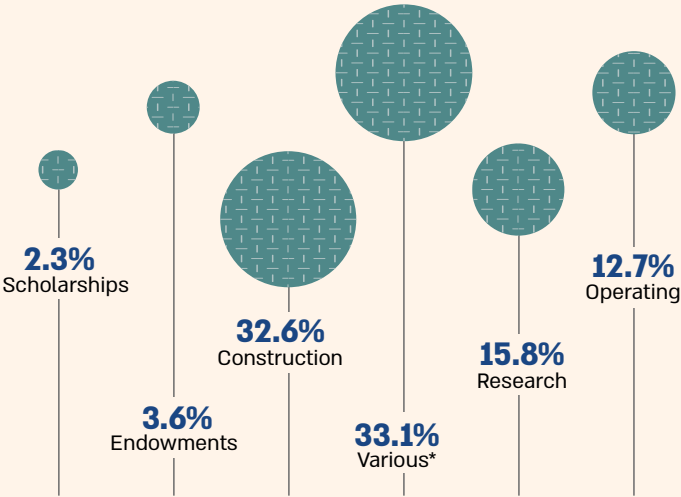
← Cohort II of the Halutz program at the Writers' House in Honor of Amos Oz in Beer-Sheva, March 2023

OUR WORLDWIDE FAMILY OF ASSOCIATES AT WORK 2022/23 YEAR-END FIGURES

	Total
Contributions Received	\$45,365,706
Interest Income from Endowments	\$30,983,106
Endowment Fund Balance (as of 30/9/2023)	\$760,425,099

1. Contribution figures are gross and do not reflect local fundraising charges.
2. All figures are approximate due to fluctuating exchange and interest rates.
3. Endowment balance includes \$474.3 million in the Marcus Fund and approximately \$59.6 million in endowment funds held in the US by and on behalf of A4BGU. (The figure does not include approximately \$23.4 million in trust funds held by and on behalf of A4BGU).
4. 2022/23 income distribution figure above represents the income distributed on endowments held in Israel (4%); \$19.77 million income released from the Marcus Fund; and \$1.95 million (4%) income released on endowment funds held in the U.S. by and on behalf of A4BGU.

DESIGNATION OF DONATIONS



* Various: Leadership training; community involvement; support for certain centers/institutes; fellowships and scholarships outside the operating budget; faculty development; special projects; pending designation.

for granted the invaluable contributions of the volunteer leadership in each location. These individuals consistently ask themselves what they can do to spread the word of BGU to wider audiences. By sharing our story, introducing us to their networks, and giving generously, they are enabling our success. We deeply appreciate every one of them and recognize the impact of their dedication.

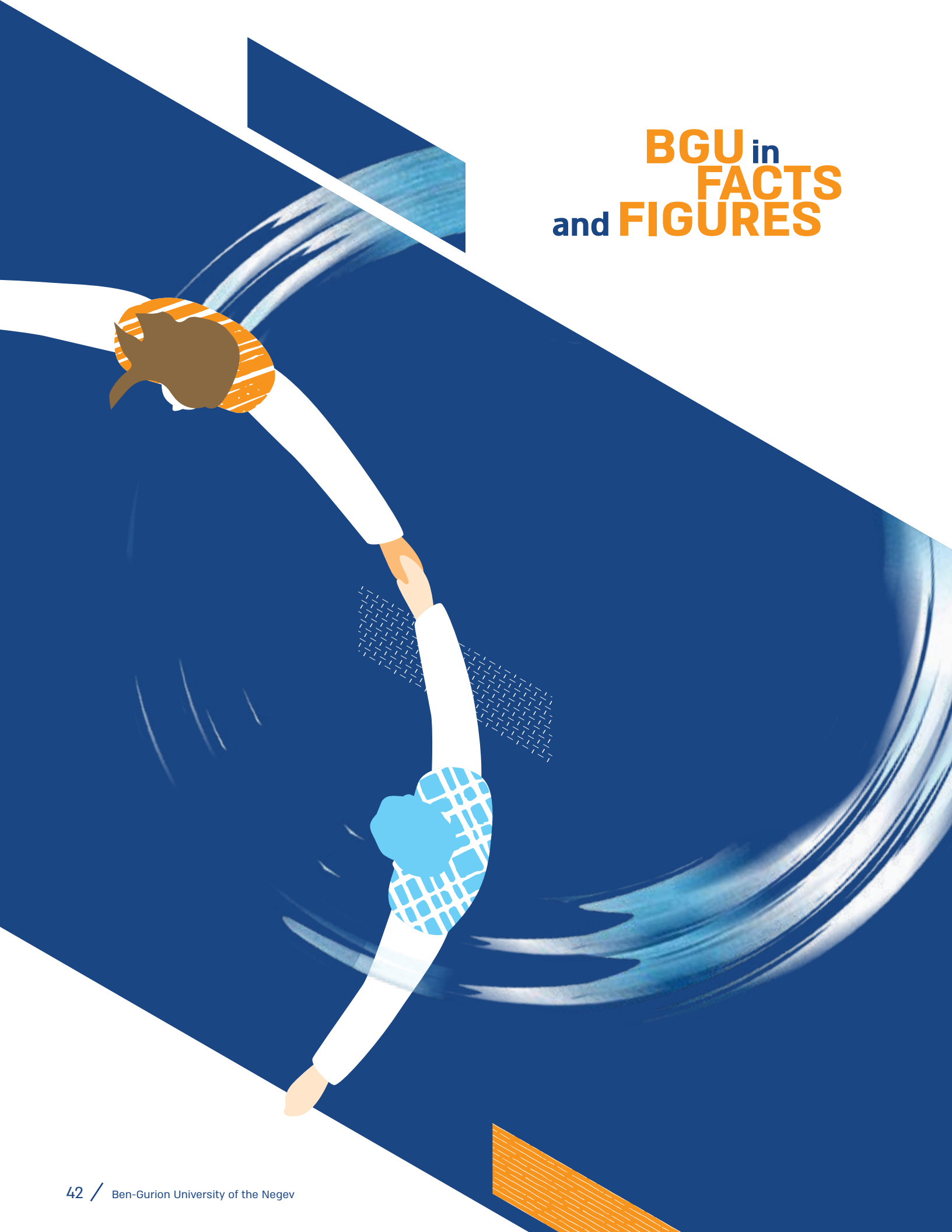
As we navigate the next years of the campaign, we remain dedicated to overcoming obstacles and realizing the full potential of our initiatives. The continued support and engagement of our global community have proven indispensable, and I am confident that, together, we will achieve our shared objectives.



↑ Lloyd Goldman, Chairman of the Board of Governors, with Aviva Barach, liason to the Board, at the Opening Plenary of the 2023 BOG meeting. Photo: Wolfgang Motzafi-Haller

← Jeff Kaye with Toni Young at the meeting of the Global Development Committee at the 2023 BOG meeting

BGUⁱⁿ FACTS and FIGURES





SENIOR ADMINISTRATION

Lloyd Goldman

Chairman of the Board of Governors

Avi Nissenkorn

Chairman of the Executive Committee

Prof. Daniel Chamovitz

President

Prof. Chaim Hames

Rector

Tal Ben-Haim

Director-General

Prof. Sarab Abu-Rabia Queder

Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion

Prof. Michal Bar-Asher Siegal

Vice President for Global Engagement

Prof. Dan Blumberg

Vice President for Regional and Industrial Development

Prof. Raz Jelinek

Vice President and Dean for Research and Development

Jeff Kaye

Vice President for Public Affairs and Resource Development

Prof. Orna Almog

Dean of Students

Prof. Orna Braun-Lewensohn

Dean, Kreitman School of Advanced Graduate Studies

Prof. Gabriel Lemcoff

Dean, Faculty of Natural Sciences

Prof. Yaniv Gelbstein

Dean, Faculty of Engineering Sciences

Prof. Miki Malul

Dean, Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business and Management

Prof. Reli HersHKovitz

Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences

Prof. Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby

Dean, Pinchas Sapir Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Prof. Noam Weisbrod

Director, Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research and Sde Boker Campus

Prof. Ofer Ovadia

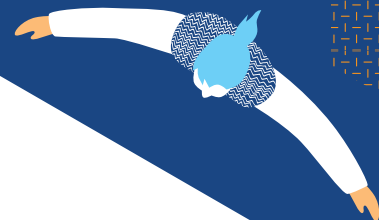
Academic Director, Eilat Campus

Prof. Gal deBotton

Vice Rector

Prof. Timor Melamed

Pro-Rector for Education



DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS BY FACULTY AND DEGREE, 2022-2024*

	Humanities and Social Sciences	Natural Sciences	Engineering Sciences	Health Sciences	Business and Management	Desert Studies	Kreitman Graduate School	Ben-Gurion Research Institute	Interdisciplinary Studies Unit**	Total for degree level
2023-2024										
Bachelor's	3,014	2,237	5,219	2,276	1,099	0	0	0	557	13,183
Master's	986	315	968	666	736	95	0	23	0	3,789
PhD	467	292	417	242	49	104	34	0	9	1,614
Postdoc	73	99	65	36	3	48	5	0	0	329
Non-Degree	63	2	140	20	18	2	0	1	0	244
Teaching Certificate	127	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	127
Total	4,625	2,935	6,680	3,169	1,903	248	39	24	566	19,286

ENROLLMENT* 18,946**

	Humanities and Social Sciences	Natural Sciences	Engineering Sciences	Health Sciences	Business and Management	Desert Studies	Kreitman Graduate School	Ben-Gurion Research Institute	Interdisciplinary Studies Unit**	Total for degree level
2022-2023										
Bachelor's	3,081	2,203	5,149	2,168	1,155	0	0	0	487	13,091
Master's	1,070	307	895	712	576	88	0	23	12	3,683
PhD	492	324	414	268	53	111	52	0	11	1,725
Postdoc	82	111	64	37	4	72	5	0	0	375
Non-Degree	116	4	206	17	21	4	0	1	0	369
Teaching Certificate	109	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	109
Total	4,844	2,937	6,634	3,142	1,805	267	57	24	510	19,352

ENROLLMENT* 19,046**

Notes

* Student numbers include students studying at BGU in Beer-Sheva, Sde Boker, and Eilat, in both degree and non-degree programs. They do not include international students, students in pre-academic prep courses, the Air Force pilot program, and auditors. The above figures refer to first semester only.

** The Interdisciplinary Studies Unit oversees students enrolled in interdisciplinary schools and programs, including the School of Brain Sciences and Cognition and the Goldman Sonnenfeldt School of Sustainability and Climate Change.

*** Actual number of students enrolled does not match total, because there are students enrolled in multiple faculties or pursuing multiple degrees.

2023-24 OVERALL UNIVERSITY BUDGET (NIS/USD THOUSANDS IN CURRENT PRICES)

	Operating Budget		Research Budget		Development Budget		Special Programs		Total Budget	
	NIS	USD	NIS	USD	NIS	USD	NIS	USD	NIS	USD
Expenditure	1,450,000	402,778	319,650	88,792	185,940	51,650	141,328	39,258	2,096,918	582,477
Income	1,450,000	402,778	319,650	88,792	185,940	51,650	147,856	41,071	2,103,446	584,291

UNIVERSITY OPERATING BUDGET (NIS/USD MILLIONS)

	2022-2023			2023-2024			
	NIS m	USD m	%	NIS m	USD m	%	% change
INCOME							
CHE Planning & Budgeting Committee	1,050.4	307.1	75.2%	1,093.1	303.6	75.4%	4.1%
Tuition and dorms	214.9	62.8	15.4%	219.7	61.0	15.2%	2.2%
Contributions	1.5	0.4	0.1%	1.0	0.3	0.1%	-33.1%
Endowment funds	61.1	17.9	4.4%	62.6	17.4	4.3%	2.4%
Other income	61.9	18.1	4.4%	69.6	19.3	4.8%	12.4%
Transfer from funds	7.7	2.2	0.6%	4.0	1.1	0.3%	-48.3%
TOTAL	1,397.5	408.6	100.0%	1,450.0	402.8	100.0%	3.8%
EXPENDITURE							
Salaries	1,009.4	295.1	72.2%	1,055.2	293.1	72.8%	4.5%
Fellowships & student assistance	90.0	26.3	6.4%	93.0	25.8	6.4%	3.3%
Teaching & research	57.4	16.8	4.1%	56.3	15.6	3.9%	-1.9%
Institutes & research centers	53.4	15.6	3.8%	55.4	15.4	3.8%	3.7%
Computer expenses	23.8	7.0	1.7%	22.9	6.4	1.6%	-3.9%
Library expenses	27.1	7.9	1.9%	30.3	8.4	2.1%	11.9%
Administration	32.3	9.5	2.3%	32.8	9.1	2.3%	1.4%
Maintenance	98.5	28.8	7.1%	98.1	27.3	6.8%	-0.5%
Financing	5.5	1.6	0.4%	6.0	1.7	0.4%	8.9%
TOTAL	1,397.5	408.6	100.0%	1,450.0	402.8	100.0%	3.8%
NIS/USD exchange rate:	3.42			3.60			
Higher education budgeting index	138.64			140.58			



BGU WELCOMES OUTSTANDING **new** FACULTY MEMBERS

Great research comes from great minds. Scientists with a burning curiosity, relentless drive, out-of-the-box thinking, and great instincts about science, but also about people. This year we welcomed 20 such outstanding individuals and we eagerly await their insights.



DR. ORLY BAREKET
Department of Psychology



DR. DAVID CODISH
Department of
Industrial Engineering
and Management



DR. LIRON DAVID
Department of Life Sciences



DR. AVIV DERRI
Department of
Middle East Studies



DR. GILAD GABAY
French Associates Institute
for Agriculture and
Biotechnology of Drylands



DR. REA GOLAN
Department of Philosophy

Back, shoulder and hand pain are not decreed by fate or a function of age. There are solutions.

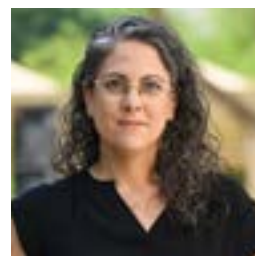
Dr. Yafi Levanon

Magic and magical thinking haven't been relegated to somewhere in the distant past, even if we sometimes consign them to the margins or omit them from our history books.

Dr. Gal Sofer



DR. TOMER IFERGANE
Department of Economics



DR. DANIELLE KARO-ATAR
Department of
Clinical Biochemistry and
Pharmacology



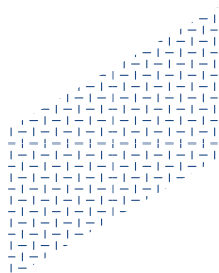
DR. TAMAR KOLODNY
Department of Psychology



DR. ASSAF KOTT
Department of Economics

Our day-to-day lives are less affected by big events like elections or a precarious political situation. This greatly benefits the individual's quality of life, while at the same time is a disaster for society.

Dr. Almog Simchon



DR. YAFI LEVANON
Department of Occupational Therapy



DR. EREZ MAGGOR
Department of Sociology and Anthropology



DR. YOAV MATIA
Department of Mechanical Engineering



DR. ALMOG SIMCHON
Department of Psychology

I chose to come to BGU because the University has an excellent reputation within the academic community as an organization that supports and takes care of its faculty members.

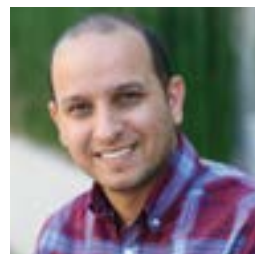
Dr. Erez Maggor



DR. GAL SOFER
Department of the Arts



DR. ADI STERN
Department of Occupational Therapy



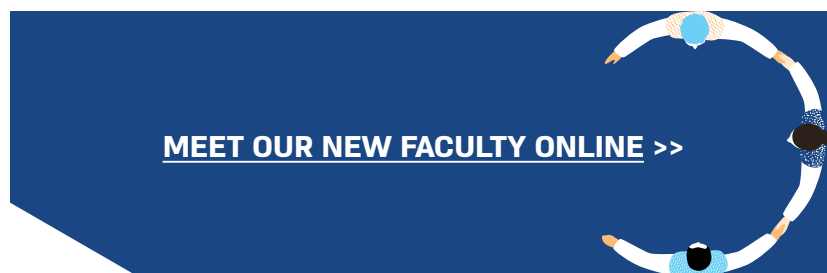
DR. RAN TIVONY
Department of Chemical Engineering



DR. TUVIA TURKELTAUB
Zuckerberg Institute for Water Research



DR. TAL YATZIV
Department of Psychology





DONOR RECOGNITION 2023-2024

Now more than ever, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev is proud to acknowledge the generosity of our friends and supporters worldwide.

This generosity of donors large and small from around the world enabled our decisive response in the wake of October 7th. At the same time, our long-term "Way Forward" global campaign remains on track. Thank you!!!

Listed below are new donor society members from the past year.* For full lists of all donor society members, named chairs, named facilities and major endowment funds, visit our [DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT WEBSITE >>](#)

PRESIDENT'S PILLARS

Bona Terra Foundation, Switzerland
The Schulich Foundation, Canada
Toni and Stuart Young and Family, United States

BEN-GURION SOCIETY

Inge and Egon Guttman, Silver Spring, MD
Sidney and Howard Schulman, California
Gerald B. Shreiber Honors Nathan & Francis Shreiber

NEGEV SOCIETY

TAMAR

Gary and Tamara Fine and Family, Toronto, Canada
Gottesman DeBode Family, New York, NY
Charles K. and Esther Krieger Foundation, New Jersey
Ruth E. & William Hy Ross Foundation, Vancouver, Canada
Shapiro Family and the Estate of Chana Stern, Winnipeg, Canada

ARAVA

Nani and Austin Beutel, Toronto, Canada
Regina Boxer, Vancouver, Canada
Consolidated Anti-Aging Foundation
Roni Eshel and Dovi Frances, CA
The Klarman Family Foundation, Boston, MA

Joseph Lebovic z"l, Toronto, Canada
Dr. Wolf Lebovic, Toronto, Canada
Sheldon z"l, and Margery London, Bethesda, MD
Jean Matlow z"l, Toronto, Canada
Joanne Moore, Tel Aviv, Israel
Lana R. Pinkenson, Trevoise, PA, USA
Max and Marjorie Schechner, Newton, MA
Stephen and Sylvia Schoenbaum, New York, NY
The Sheba Foundation (Lavin Family), Chicago, IL
Linda and Sigmund Soudack, Toronto, Canada
Phil and Cees Wynn. Wynn Family Charitable Foundation, Toronto, Canada

ESHKOL

Apple Israel, 2024
Deborah and David z"l, Bergeron, Houston, TX
The John Black Charitable Foundation
Center for Jewish Impact, Russian Jewish Congress
Dollinger/Levine Family, San Rafael/Los Angeles, CA
Sheila and Kenneth H. Fields, New Jersey
Paul Fischer, Weston, FL
FSJU - Fonds Social Juif Unifié – France & Israël
Edith and Arthur Hessel, Washington, DC
A linguagem de Deus também se manifesta pela ciência.
Família Horn
Olga (z"l) and Yuri Kanner; Alexander Bondarenko

* Feb 2023-Feb 2024. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information included here is accurate and reflects the wishes of individual donors.

The Connie and Sam Katz Family, Philadelphia
 Reiko and Dr. Barry Kayne, Wilmington, Delaware
 Daniel Klionsky
 The Koum Family Foundation, Menlo Park, CA
 Marianne & Doron Livnat, Tel Aviv
 Dagmar and Sam Nowak, Kelowna, BC, Canada
 Dr. Milton Marvin Paul z"l, Toronto, Canada
 Bathsheva Rifkin and Howard S. Hochster
 Marcia and Donald Rivin, Croton on Hudson, NY
 Robert Rosen, Edmonton, Canada
 Family of Carol & Steven Rothschild, Delaware
 The Sherman-Saifer Family, San Carlos, California
 Danna and Alex Slusky, San Francisco, CA
 Henriette and Leonard White Endowment, Vancouver, Canada

FOUNDERS

Eric and Naomi Bissell, Montreal, Canada
 The John Black Charitable Foundation
 The Paul Bronfman Family Foundation, Toronto, Canada
 Center for Jewish Impact, Russian Jewish Congress
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 In honor of John Naomi Rosi, Dan Goldsmith, J. Cwikel
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 A linguagem de Deus também se manifesta pela ciência.
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IN MEMORIAM

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev mourns the members of our community who were slain by terrorists or fell in battle since the attack of October 7, 2023. We share in the grief of our community members who lost family members and dear ones and pray for the wellbeing and safe return of all hostages.

Sgt. Maj. (Police) Deborah Abraham, z"l
Student
Fell in battle. October 7, 2023

Sgt. First Class (res.) Ahmad Abu Latif, z"l
Staff member
Fell in battle. January 22, 2024

Superintendent (Police) Amin Akhundov, z"l
Alumnus
Fell in battle. October 7, 2023

Liav Asayag, z"l
Student
Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Itay Banjo, z"l
Graduate student and TA
Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Sahar Baruch, z"l
Student
Abducted on October 7, 2023 and murdered in captivity

Sgt. Maj. (res.) Lior Ben Yaakov, z"l
Alumnus
Fell in battle. October 7, 2023

Captain (res.) Roey Biber, z"l
Student
Fell in battle. November 18, 2023

Major Oriel Bibi, z"l
Student
Fell in battle. October 7, 2023

Sgt. Maj. (res.) Adam Bismut, z"l
Junior faculty member
Fell in battle. January 22, 2024



Sgt. First Class (res.) Or Brandes, z"l
Student
Fell in battle. December 2, 2023

Ronen Deitchman, z"l
Adjunct faculty member
Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Matan Ekstein, z"l
Student
Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Rinat Segev Even, z"l
Graduate student
Killed together with her husband and children in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Shira Eylon, z"l
Student
Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Sgt. Maj. (res.) Eliraz Gabai, z"l
Alumnus
Fell in battle. December 30, 2023

Tom Godo, z"l
Alumnus
Killed in the terrorist attack. October 8, 2023

Prof. Sergei Gredeskul, z"l
Emeritus faculty member
Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Dr. Victoria Gredeskul, z"l

Emeritus faculty member

Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Dr. Lilia Gurevich, z"l

Alumna

Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Sgt. Maj. (res.) Eitan Hadad, z"l

Alumnus

Fell in battle. October 7, 2023

Lt. Col. (res.) Yochai Gur Hershberg, z"l

Alumnus

Fell in battle. December 5, 2023

Ido Hubara, z"l

Alumnus

Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Smadar Mor Idan, z"l

Alumna

Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Sgt. Maj. (res.) Gideon Ilani, z"l

Doctoral student and TA

Fell in battle. December 10, 2023

Dr. Marcel Freilich Kaplun, z"l

Alumna

Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Dina Kapshetar, z"l

Staff member

Killed in the terrorist attack with her husband and children.
October 7, 2023

Dr. Hayim Katsman, z"l

Alumnus

Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Shani Kupervaser, z"l

Graduate student and junior faculty member

Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Sgt. Maj. (res.) Matan Lazar, z"l

Alumnus

Fell in battle. January 22, 2024

Master Sgt. (res.) Yoav Levi, z"l

Student

Fell in battle. January 22, 2024

Sigal Levy, z"l

Alumna

Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Shahak Yosef Madar, z"l

Student

Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Major (res.) Dr. Eitan Menachem Neeman, z"l

Faculty member

Fell in battle. October 9, 2023

Evgeni Postel, z"l

Student

Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Hagit Refaeli-Mishkin, z"l

Alumna

Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Major (res.) Aryeh Rein, z"l

Alumnus

Fell in battle. December 24, 2023

Major (res.) Uri Rousso, z"l

Alumnus

Fell in battle. October 7, 2023

Mark Shindel, z"l

Student

Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Shlomi Sividia, z"l

Alumnus

Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Noam Slotki, z"l

Alumnus

Fell in battle with his brother. October 7, 2023

Ronit Tal Sultan, z"l

Doctoral student

Killed with her husband in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Master Sgt. (res.) Constantine Sushko, z"l

Alumnus

Fell in battle. December 29, 2023

Ori Tchernichovsky, z"l

Student

Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Lior Tkach, z"l

Student

Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Adi Vital-Kaploun, z"l

Alumna

Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Shachar Zemach, z"l

Alumnus

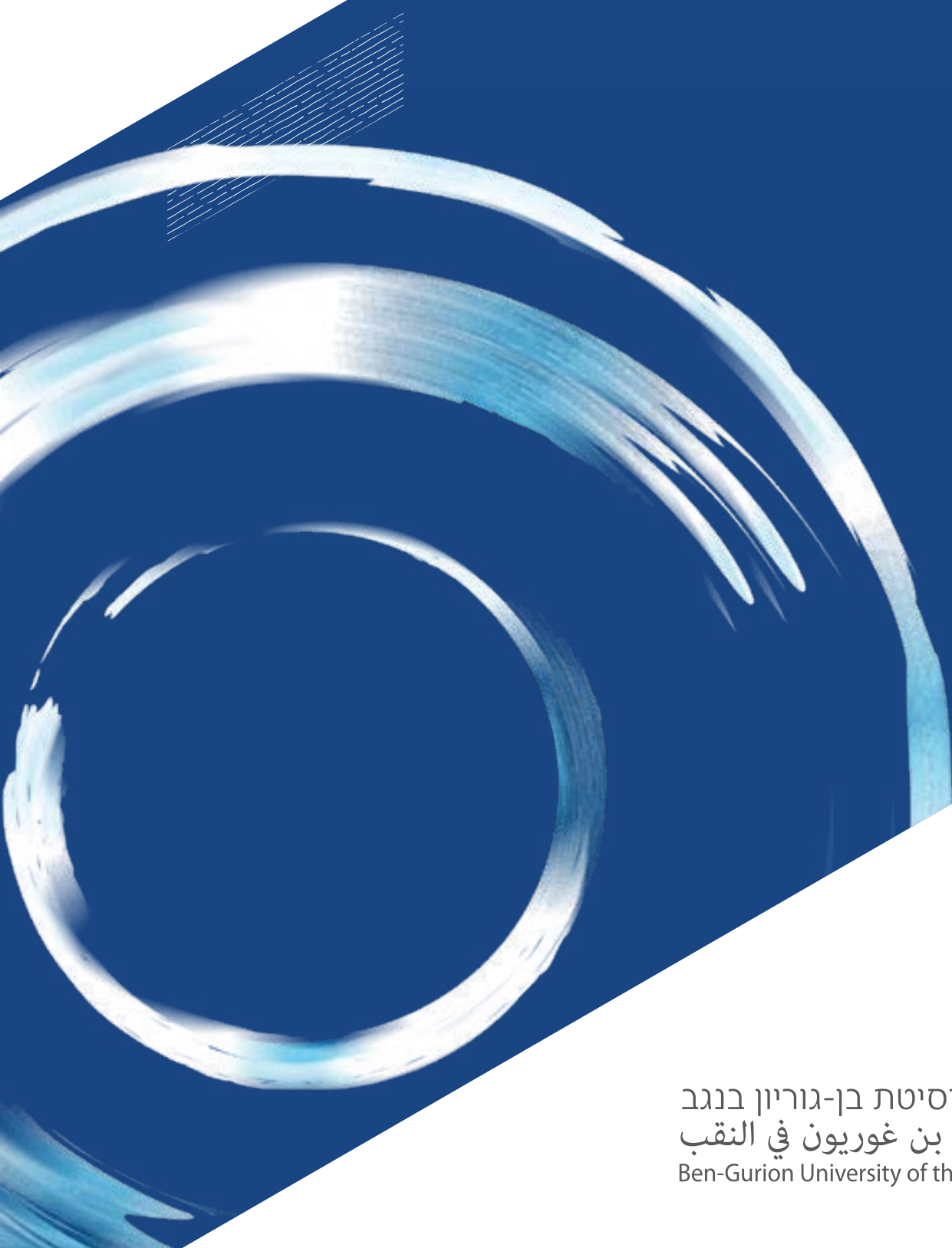
Killed in the terrorist attack. October 7, 2023

Yasmin Zohar (Livne), z"l

Graduate student and junior faculty member

Killed with her father, husband and children in the terrorist
attack. October 7, 2023

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جامعة بن غوريون في النقب
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

