BIU NEWS BYTES
Bar-Ilan University
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All you need to know in a glance

BIU Scientist Joins Prestigious Nano Company's Advisory Board

In a recent press release, Israeli nanotechnology company Piercell proudly announced that Dr. Cyril Cohen, of BIU's Laboratory of Tumor Immunology and Immunotherapy in the Mina and Everard Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences, will be on its scientific advisory board. Piercell develops therapeutic solutions to a variety of medical problems *(PRWeb)*.

Dr. Cohen, an immuno-cell and gene therapy expert with experience in metastatic melanoma treatment acquired from his post doctoral fellowship at the NIH, will collaborate with Piercell initially on the development of a novel treatment for metastatic melanoma. Piercell aims to integrate its innovative biomolecular delivery device with Dr. Cohen's cell therapy protocols.

Dr. Cohen's research is part of a novel approach for the treatment of cancer using immunological cell therapy, namely genetically modifying immune system cells ex-vivo to specifically target and destroy cancer cells in the patient's body. His current research at BIU is aimed at the exponential enhancement of this treatment's capabilities.

Looking forward to seeing you at the
2009 Board of Trustees Meetings
May 11-13, 2009

In this issue...

- BIU Scientist Joins Prestigious Nano Company's Advisory Board
- Nanotechnology Offered in First Degree Studies
- Teaching Eastern Wisdom with a Jewish Twist
- Rackman Center Study: Mothers Earn Less
- Faculty of Law Admitted to International Law Association
- Math Expert's Biography Published in Encyclopedia Britannica
- Reaching Out to the Community
- How to Share Without Spilling the Beans
- "The Chosen" Program Underway
- BIU Alumnus Writes New Passover Haggadah
- Israel Media Watch 2009 "Yoav" Prize to BIU Doctor
- BIU Launches 24-Hour Automated Restaurant
- Contemporary Jewish Art Series Premiered at BIU

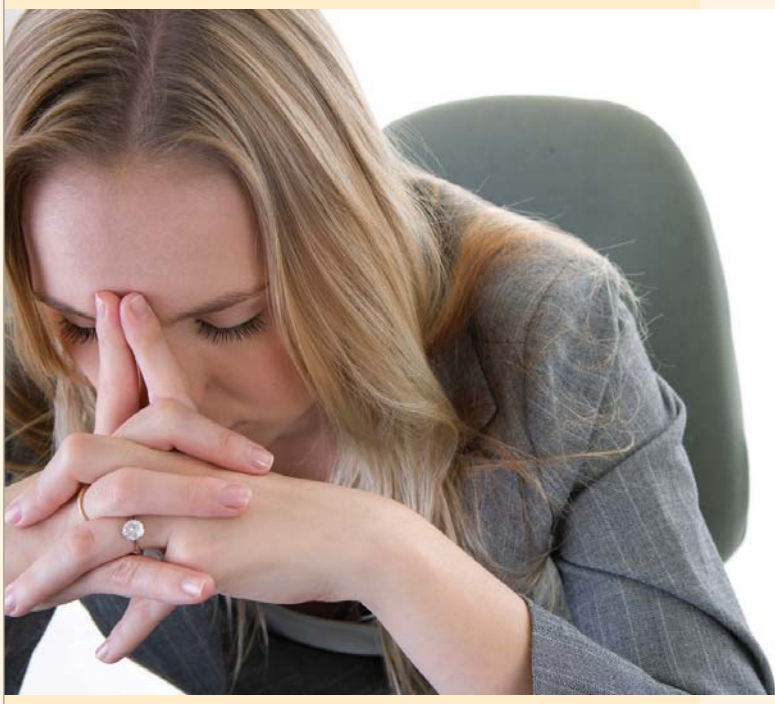
Nanotechnology Offered in First Degree Studies

BIU is offering students who are studying chemistry, physics, or life sciences the opportunity to start studying nanotechnology already during their first degree. As part of the development of the field, BIU has expanded its studies in nanotechnology to chemistry students in the material sciences track, physics students in bio-physics, and life sciences students. These students will thus be able to expand the basis of their specialization in preparation for their studies in advanced degrees in nanotechnology *(BIU Press Release)*.

Teaching Eastern Wisdom with a Jewish Twist

BIU will launch a BA course in East Asian Studies next year, but unlike at other universities, Asian languages and cultures will be studied from a Jewish perspective *(Haaretz)*. The new course is part of a program offering a multidisciplinary BA degree. "As a university committed to Jewish heritage and enrichment, our uniqueness is our emphasis on how this unique perspective impacts on different peoples and traditions. We are trying to build a bridge between the two cultures," says Dr. Danielle Gurevitch, director of the multidisciplinary BA program.

An MA program in East Asian culture is also being started, sponsored by the BIU Comparative Literature dept. and directed by Dr. Shlomy Mualem, who has for many years been involved in the Asian martial art of aikido. "When a young Israeli searches for his spiritual identity, he generally at some stage encounters Jewish mysticism-kabbala or East Asian philosophy, yoga and meditation. These are two major elements of New Age philosophy and we try to bring them together in an academic environment," says Dr. Mualem.



Rackman Center Study: Mothers Earn Less

According to a study published to coincide with International Women's Day, mothers still earn much less than any other demographic in the workforce, despite the fact that they make up a greater part of the workforce than any other group *(Haaretz)*.

The study, conducted by researchers from BIU's Ruth and Emanuel Rackman Center for the Advancement of the Status of Women at Bar-Ilan University, shows that matrimony has a clear detrimental effect on women's earning power and that raising children is the factor that most affects women's ability to close the financial gap between the sexes.

"The study clearly shows that getting married harms women's earning power and increases the earning power of men," Prof. Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, head of the Rackman Center, said. "Compared to married men, married women earn less and less as they get older, while single women's average salary gets closer to men's average as they get older. Mothers work less hours because of child-rearing and household chores. Motherhood, therefore, is the main factor that perpetuates the gap between men's and women's earning power."

According to Prof. Halperin-Kaddari, "the State of Israel has one of the highest birth rates in the Western world, but the infrastructure for childcare and the possibility of both parents playing a role in the workforce are extremely restricted. Because of the high birth rate here, mothers are more greatly impacted by this than in other places."

Faculty of Law Admitted to International Law Association

BIU's Faculty of Law has become the only faculty of its kind in the State of Israel to be admitted to the Association of Transnational Law Schools (ATLAS). ATLAS is a consortium of institutions of higher education from around the world dedicated to strengthening the intellectual foundations of highly talented doctoral students. This is accomplished while fostering inquiry and research on issues broadly related, but not limited, to comparative legal and regulatory responses to various forces of globalization, international governance challenges and the evolution of transnational law.

The Association holds an annual seminar for doctoral students which focuses on issues related to law and international rule, comparative law and globalization, with the participation of leading lecturers from around the world. It also seeks to advance joint research and study projects between its members.

"The admission to ATLAS of BIU's Faculty of Law, which competed with many other faculties of its kind in order to achieve this coveted honor, is testimony to the Faculty's high quality of research and instruction," says Dean Arie Reich. "This outstanding achievement carries international recognition for Israel as a country which contributes to the advancement of global law and to BIU as the university which can best carry out this mission" *(BIU Press Release)*.

Math Expert's Biography Published in Encyclopedia Britannica

Prof. Avraham Trahtman, of BIU's Department of Mathematics, grabbed international headlines one year ago by solving an abstract math problem which befuddled experts for 40 years. His genius has been recognized by the prestigious Encyclopedia Britannica, who included his biography in their latest edition. Below is an excerpt:

> *The astonishing news emerged in 2008 that in September 2007 a 63-year-old Israeli mathematician, Avraham Trahtman, had solved a long-standing problem in graph theory…the road-colouring conjecture...Trahtman's solution is notable for its brevity: at less than eight pages it is extremely concise and considered quite elegant. The proof is also rather noteworthy in that most major mathematical breakthroughs come from individuals before the age of 40, or even 30. Trahtman proved, however, that age was not a barrier to solving a nearly 40-year-old mathematical conundrum.*

Prof. Trahtman's full entry may be viewed at: http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1443932/Avraham-Trahtman

Reaching Out to the Community

This year over eighty BIU students are participating in the Student Union's Community Involvement Project (in partnership with the Dean of Students Office), whose worthwhile endeavors include assisting children with disabilities, gathering and distributing food to the needy, working with people from difficult socio-economic backgrounds, improving the environment, and combating traffic accidents, to name a few.

As the Project continues to develop, more students are expected to become involved from year to year. The Student Union maintains connections with a wide variety of organizations and associations in which students can choose to volunteer, among them: Big Brothers Big Sisters, Magen David Adom, Joy to a Child, Bnei Akiva, and many more *(BIU Academia)*.

How to Share Without Spilling the Beans

Dr. Yehuda Lindell, of BIU's Department of Computer Science, has come up with a new protocol aiming to protect privacy while allowing organizations to share valuable information *(MIT Technology Review)*.

Last fall, two of Israel's leading political parties, Likud and Kadima, became embroiled in a dispute when, in a close primary race, it was alleged that some voters had illegally registered to cast their ballots twice. The parties struggled to find a way to resolve the dispute, since neither wanted to turn over its list of members to the other. Finally, the parties agreed to give their lists to the attorney general, who would compare them confidentially.

This sort of problem is increasingly encountered by large organizations, including government agencies and big businesses, says Dr. Lindell. He also calls the solution devised by Likud and Kadima "outrageous," adding that handing over party-membership details to the government is "almost the same as revoking voter confidentiality for these citizens."

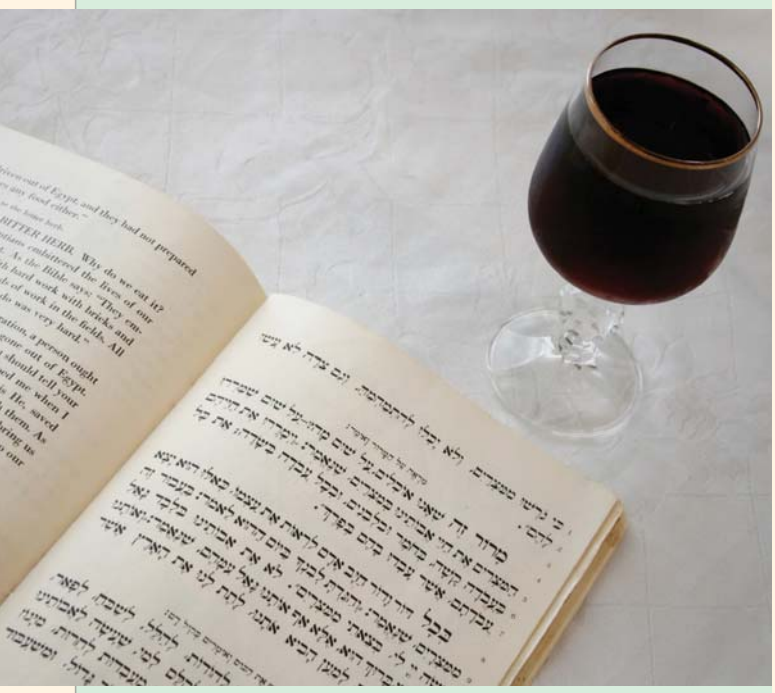
Lindell is one of a community of researchers studying ways to share this sort of information without exposing private details. Cryptographers have been working on solutions since the 1980s, and as more data is collected about individuals, Lindell says that it becomes increasingly important to find ways to protect data while also allowing it to be compared. Recently, he presented a cryptographic protocol that uses smart cards to solve the problem.

Currently, Lindell's protocol can only be used to make certain types of comparisons, but he is convinced that it could still prove useful in the future. "Let's give [organizations] only what they need, and, when we do have solutions already, let's at least start somewhere and limit what they could be learning," he says.

"The Chosen" Program Underway

Thirty-eight top-notch students have begun their BA studies in Bar-Ilan's "Nivcharim" ("The Chosen") Program – for those whose average is way above average. The Program is designed for students with a score above 740 on the Psychometric exam and an average of above 110 on their Bagrut (matriculation) exam. Participants in the Program meet personally with the heads of their departments and are accommodated with a personal tutor for the duration of their studies, in addition to receiving free tuition, free dorm residency (for those who meet the criteria of the Dean of Students office), and a monthly stipend.

The most popular departments for Nivcharim students include psychology, economics, computer science, engineering, physics, and the Goodman Faculty of Life Sciences. Students in the Program are also studying in the Naftal-Yaffe Department of Talmud, Martin (Szusz) Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology, and the Weisfeld School of Social Work. Deputy Rector Prof. Haim Taitelbaum leads this Program *(BIU Academia)*.



BIU Alumnus Writes New Passover Haggadah

Just in time for Passover BIU alumnus Dr. Joshua Kulp's *The Schechter Haggadah: Art, History and Commentary,* presents a fascinating discussion and analysis of the historical development of each aspect of the Seder, from the development of the *Mah Nishtanah* to the use of horseradish as *maror*, to the larger question of how new seder rituals were established and infused with meaning. Along with the traditional Hebrew text and English commentary, The Schechter Haggadah is adorned with over 100 illuminations from Haggadot from the medieval and modern periods.

Dr. Kulp, co-founder of the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem and member of the Shechter Institute of Jewish Studies, holds a Ph.D. in Talmudic Studies from BIU and has published numerous articles on the Seder and other subjects in leading academic journals *(Jewish Times of South Jersey)*.

Wishing you all a happy kosher Passover!

Israel Media Watch 2009 "Yoav" Prize to BIU Doctor

The Yoav Prize, awarded by Israel's Media Watch, was given this year to BIU's Dr. Tsuriel Rashi, for his outstanding doctoral thesis, entitled "Communication and Journalistic Ethics in Judaism: The Public's Duty to Know – Theory and Practice."

Rashi offers a theoretical and conceptual framework of the media and its implications, based on the 3,000 year old traditions of Israeli thought and Halachic deliberations. He creates a thread that ties the modern theory of human communications and its criticism with time-honed Jewish theories. In his work, which includes references to thousands of biblical texts, Halachic works and 20th century philosophical treatises, Tsuriel Rashi uses modern tools to uncover the Jewish attitude to the media's fundamental, social and ethical values.

His work reveals a new communications value that is based on Israel's tradition: it is the *duty* of the public to know, and not just its *right* to know. The research criticizes common systems and norms, and brings a Jewish perspective to questions connected to journalistic ethics. At the conclusion of this landmark study, Tsuriel Rashi suggests a new type of journalism, based on Jewish sources and clear guidelines for a more ethical and professional Israeli media.

The prize was awarded by Israel's Media Watch for outstanding doctoral research, in the field of Israeli media criticism, "which significantly contributes to journalistic and media ethics" *(BIU Press Release)*.

The automated restaurant represents just another of many improvements which the University management is implementing in order to enhance the student experience at BIU. “This restaurant is unique in that it provides students with nutritious, healthy, accessible, tasty and low-priced meals around the clock - the perfect solution for our dynamic student population,” said Bar-Ilan director-general Haim Glick at the official opening this week.

Student Union president Shlomi Shem-Tov pointed to this new venture as yet another indication of the excellent dialogue between the administration and the student body. “We feel that we are cared for and listened to,” said Shem-Tov. With an ambitious plan of innovations and improvements scheduled, there is no doubt that this feeling will grow from day to day.

BIU Launches 24-Hour Automated Restaurant

An automated machine that refrigerates food and then warms it up immediately on demand has been installed in BIU’s new engineering complex, to provide tasty and efficient food choices for the University’s hungry students *(The Jerusalem Post)*. The machine is the heart of a new campus restaurant called Just Like Home, open 24 hours a day, with no need for waiters or other distractions.

According to Eldad Feigel and Gil Mitrani, the entrepreneurial owners of this innovative restaurant, there is no need to wait in line or make a reservation. In this establishment, tipping is a thing of the past! The machine contains a wide array of 400-gram meals that accommodate the student and faculty’s varying tastes. From low-calorie meals to vegetarian ones, there is something for everyone, and the meals have a high nutritional value and are made from natural ingredients, without preservatives.

The machine is equipped with a wireless modem that continuously transmits information on its status. The machine also contains a computerized controller, which monitors temperature and shuts the unit down in the case of power outage.

Contemporary Jewish Art Series Premiered at BIU

The art exhibition “The Sabbath” opened the series “Otot (Signs) – The Annual Cycle of Holidays and Contemporary Art,” on display in BIU’s Leiber Jewish Art Exhibition Center. The exhibit is part of a series presenting reproductions of contemporary art. The compositions exhibited demonstrate central themes that are of interest to artists in the field of Jewish expression in contemporary art. The catalogues accompanying the exhibitions provide a broad survey of the works included in the exhibit, many of which are usually excluded from local art-discourse *(BIU Press Release)*.

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