

FOCUS



Newsletter
of the Rothberg International School



The Hebrew University
of Jerusalem



Rothberg
International
School

38 March 2011



In recent weeks, the RIS has worked closely with study abroad directors at Princeton University, Vanderbilt University, University of California schools, Michigan State University, and Allegheny College to place students who had been studying at the American University in Cairo into its program. Special orientation sessions were given to facilitate their transition to the Jerusalem campus. Small independent study groups were set up to provide Arabic language study in Colloquial Egyptian, Modern Standard Arabic (at different levels) and Fuskha (Formal Literary Arabic), thereby allowing the students to continue the Arabic studies begun in Cairo.

"When the universities asked us to assist their students, we did not hesitate. Our devoted staff made sure that the students would feel welcome and would be able to enjoy the warm and rich environment the Rothberg International School provides," said Prof. Mimi Ajzenstadt, Provost of the RIS. "The various courses taught by top

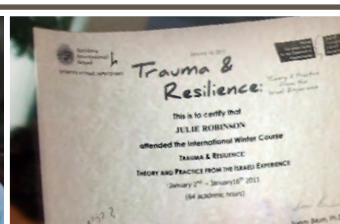
(cont. on page 12) ➤

The Rothberg International School has welcomed twelve displaced American students who were forced to discontinue their education in Egypt amid the deepening political turmoil. The students arrived on time to begin the spring semester at the Hebrew University on February 13.

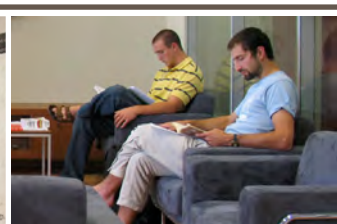
"We are grateful to the staff at Hebrew University for being so responsive to our request to enroll two Princeton students in Hebrew University, where the students can continue to study Arabic and Middle East issues at this important time in the region," said Nancy Kanach, Director of the Office of International Programs at Princeton.



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MEET THE NEW PROVOST:

PROF. MIMI AJZENSTADT IS STRIVING TO MAKE THE
School's Dreams Come True



When Prof. Mimi Ajzenstadt was approached by Hebrew University President Prof. Menahem Ben-Sasson, about taking over as Provost of the Rothberg International School, she knew the job would be time-consuming, but she did not realize that many of her academic interests would have to be put on the back burner in order to dedicate herself to the School. Nonetheless, she is excited about her new position, which entails numerous interesting issues and concerns, enabling her to learn something new every day. "Actually, I learn five new things every day," she admits.

regular academic work? For one, she had taught at the RIS before in the M.A. program in Community Leadership and Philanthropy Studies, held in conjunction with the Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare, and she liked the students and the atmosphere. Second, she had been approached personally by the President, who felt that she was the right person for the job at this important crossroads for the School.

"There are a lot of processes going on right now – internal, national, and global – which are forcing us to rethink our relationship with the

North America are more reluctant to go abroad. It is a challenge to find a way to convince them to come and learn about Israel."

Another process with which the RIS has to contend is globalization. International students have become a major industry. All over the world, students are moving around, taking a semester in a different country or registering for classes in different universities. "This process has led to the development of many competing academic institutions. We see it in Europe, India, China, and North America. We have fierce competition in Israel and around the world. We have to make sure that we provide students with a unique and high caliber academic experience," she says.

Finally, all of the Israeli universities are undergoing an internationalization process. "The RIS is not unique in recruiting foreign students. Each

department at Hebrew University is trying to attract foreign students. We have to make sure we are not being swallowed. We need to be creative, learn about other programs, look deeply into our own program and define our identity," she concludes.

Prof. Ajzenstadt is in direct contact with other Hebrew University departments, taking the initiative to create connections within the University. Starting next year, for instance, the RIS, together with the Edmond and Lily Safra Center for Brain Sciences and the Interdisciplinary Center for Neural Computation, will be offering three fellowships for excellent Ph.D. students in Neuroscience. These students will be taking neuroscience courses, participating in lab work in brain sciences, and taking two courses at the RIS.

Work is in progress to strengthen the School's M.A. program in Israel

Studies using similar interdisciplinary methods. "We think the program can be attractive to more students," she maintains. "We have experts at the

"This is an opportunity to dream and make the dream come true. I am proud to be the Provost of such an important endeavor."

University specializing in all aspects of Israeli studies, so we are considering working together with the Faculty of Social Sciences to strengthen the program."

Another new initiative aimed at strengthening ties between the Hebrew University and the Rothberg International School is the Distinguished Scholars Program (see box on page 4). In the upcoming academic year, an outstanding Hebrew University faculty member will be teaching one course each year at the School in English, and regular Hebrew University students will be encouraged to enroll as well.

For Prof. Ajzenstadt, the most important resource at the School is the staff and faculty working together to provide the best academic teaching en-

vironment for the students. "They are very experienced and their knowledge is an asset. It is fun to work with them," she says with a smile.

At the end of the day, Prof. Ajzenstadt sees the School serving as a platform for different disciplines. "The School could serve as a meeting point for academics and students from the Social Sciences, Humanities and Public Health field to come together to exchange ideas. I find this possibility very exciting," she enthuses. "This is an opportunity to dream and make the dream come true. I am proud to be the Provost of such an important endeavor." •

"We have fierce competition in Israel and around the world. We have to make sure that we provide students with a unique and high caliber academic experience."

Given her busy professional life (see article on page 4), what drew her to the position of Provost, distracting as it is proving to be from her

University and the global world," Prof. Ajzenstadt says emphatically. "One important factor, of course, is the economic crisis. Students from

The Provost's Academic Interests Span Many Disciplines

Prof. Ajzenstadt has a very diverse academic portfolio. She received her Master's degree from the Hebrew University in Criminology and her Ph.D. in Law and Society from Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada. Her thesis dealt with societal attitudes towards the "other" (i.e., the immigrant) there, specifically during the Prohibition Era in Canada in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. She returned to do her post-doctorate at the Hebrew University in the Department of Sociology, and then received a full-time faculty appointment to the Institute of Criminology in the Faculty of Law, along with a position in the School of Social Work. In addition, she has served as an expert consultant to law makers and was a member of the research committee of the Prison Authority.

Before coming to the RIS, Prof. Ajzenstadt was Vice Director of the Institute

of Criminology as well as Director of the Lafer Center for Women and Gender Studies. "We developed programs for M.A. students so that they could take an interdisciplinary degree in Sociology, Social Work or History and add on the element of Gender Studies," she explains. "In the end they have an M.A. in two disciplines. Under my direction, the Center took a more central place in the University's contribution to gender discourse," she asserts.

Gender plays a prominent role in her academic work. Her latest book, *In the Prison I Rest*, contains interviews of women in prison. It describes their days before and during incarceration, as well as their plans for the future. One of her current research projects looks at patterns of female criminality. "Since the welfare state in Israel has started to retreat, medical, welfare and social services are shrinking and

more women are entering prison," Prof. Ajzenstadt discloses. "We see more mental health and medical problems among female criminals. I am examining whether there are new populations in prison and how authorities are dealing with them," she says."

A second project is studying crime among illegal asylum seekers. Here, as in other projects, one sees an integration of elements from the disciplines of Criminology, Sociology and Social Work. "Data from around the world supports the fact that this population is not involved in more crime and, in fact, we see less crime among this population than among those naturally born," maintains Prof. Ajzenstadt. "So why are they being described as criminals? Why is there such fear of 'the other'?"



Distinguished Scholar Program Instituted

The new Distinguished Scholar Program at the RIS, designed to introduce a greater number of senior Hebrew University faculty members to RIS students, has been launched. Each year an outstanding faculty member will begin a three-year term during which he or she will teach one course in English at the RIS. This course will be open to regular Hebrew University students as well. In addition, the Distinguished Scholar will be encouraged to adapt one of his or her regular Hebrew University courses to be taught in English, thereby providing RIS students with an additional opportunity to take a course together with Israeli students. During the inaugural year, the Distinguished Scholar will give a lecture in his or her field of expertise at the RIS. The RIS will be announcing the name of its first Distinguished Scholar in April.

TWO-WEEK TraumaSession Attracts Australian Students

The Department of Summer Courses and Special Programs held a two-week winter session of the course "Trauma and Resilience: Theory & Practice from the Israeli Experience" in early January. The course attracted 21 participants, 18 of whom were from Australia.

"This is the first time we have run the winter course, and we did so in cooperation with the Australian Friends of the Hebrew University," says Keri Rosenbluh, administrative director of the department. "They really made it happen by signaling their interest and actively recruiting students."

Plans for the three-week summer course are underway, as well as for a 2012 winter session. ●

Program Director Dr. Naomi Baum shakes hands with student Sandra Baker while giving her a certificate of participation in the course.



Students in the winter "Trauma" course gather with program directors Dr. Danny Brom (back left) and Dr. Naomi Baum (middle row, far right) of the Israel Center for the Treatment of Psychotrauma.



Transitions

- **Prof. Mimi Ajzenstadt** (see article on page 2) has succeeded **Prof. Yonata Levy** as Provost of the Rothberg International School.
- **Mira Smoli** has succeeded **Sarah (Uki) Israeli** as Assistant Academic Director of the Division of Modern Hebrew Language Instruction. Israeli held the position during the past four years, and she is continuing to teach Hebrew at the RIS.
- **Yael Cohen**, a veteran teacher of Arabic at the RIS, retired at the end of September 2010. She is continuing to teach and tutor students at the School on a voluntary basis.
- **Dr. Mordechai Nisan**, senior lecturer at the RIS in Middle Eastern studies and former academic director of the Preparatory Program–Mechina (1997-2000), retired at the end of September 2010. He voluntarily taught a course in Middle Eastern studies to Mechina students in the autumn semester. Dr. Nisan is continuing to conduct research on Israeli policy and the peace-making process.
- Senior Hebrew Teachers **Batia Omlinsky** and **Meira Rom** retired in 2010. Both women taught at the RIS for over 30 years, coordinated various programs in the Division of Modern Hebrew Language Instruction, and prepared Hebrew textbooks as well as other educational materials.
- Senior Hebrew teacher **Rivka Halevi** retired in January 2011 after dedicating 40 years to teaching, coordinating programs and writing textbooks for the Division of Modern Hebrew Language Instruction. In addition, veteran Hebrew teacher **Rachel Garber** retired at the end of January 2011.
- **Betty Wu** has assumed the position of Business Manager at the RIS Office of Academic Affairs in New York, replacing **JoAnn Panzella**.



New Graduate
Lounge
Provides Haven
for RIS students



Hope Wilson working in the quiet "sanctuary" provided by the graduate lounge.

"It feels like a sanctuary, conducive for relaxing, reading, studying, and doing homework"



Chihiro Ara (photo on left) demonstrates the art of sushi making to fellow graduate students (photo on right).

The new graduate lounge which opened in September has proven to be a haven for students seeking a quiet, comfortable place to do homework or a recreational room for socializing and drinking coffee. The lounge provides both options because it has a quiet room where talking is discouraged, as well as a larger common room for gatherings. Since it opened there are rarely times when either room stands empty.

Graduate student Hope Wilson, for instance, is a regular fixture in the new lounge. She enjoys escaping the bustle of the building to absorb the tranquil feeling exuded by the lounge. "It feels like a sanctuary, conducive for relaxing, reading, studying, and doing homework," she says. Wilson, originally from Uganda and more recently New York, is a second year student in the Bible and the Ancient Near East master's program. Her passion is Biblical Hebrew. She is applying to doctoral programs in the U.S., but she hopes to continue doing her research in Jerusalem.

For Graduate Community Coordinators Dorit Grant and Maya Halpern, the lounge is an ideal place for hosting graduate activities and a welcome alternative to using classrooms. They have used it to host "Hebrew Café" in which Israeli students are paired with RIS students. The pairs are given a list of topics to talk about over coffee and cake in order to facilitate conversation in Hebrew.

Another successful event played on the diversity amongst the student body. Japanese student Chihiro Ara explained and demonstrated the art of sushi making. The audience then enjoyed experimenting with the ingredients and making their own sushi. ●

JUSTDANCE

ARTS, ACADEMICS AND ISRAEL STUDIES DEFINE NEW RIS PROGRAM

Photo: Melissa Strain

Paul Bloom had been teaching dance at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance (JAMD) for 25 years when he began to fantasize about creating a program that would

in New York, was a crucial part of the planning," says Bloom. "She sent the joint RIS-Academy curriculum we had developed to several universities, such as Case Western Reserve Univer-

the program. "It was very important to me that this not be solely a dance program. I want them to know something beyond the dance studio," explains Bloom, who himself received a graduate degree in Chinese Foreign Policy from the University of London's School of Oriental Studies before pursuing a career in modern dance. "All great choreographers have traditionally been educated, cultured people. Today too many students are technically skilled but have no time or energy for broader education. I want to correct that imbalance in this program. I also want to introduce them to Israel and hope that a sense of this year somehow infiltrates their dancing in the future."

"The program will also enrich student life at the RIS," adds Kaplan. "The group opened up the school year with a presentation of two pieces by Israeli choreographers, and the

dancers this semester have already been invited to perform at two major University events. They immediately became local stars and have helped to build up a Rothberg School spirit."

Leah Boresow, from Georgia, a junior at Indiana University majoring in dance, had wanted to return to Israel since participating in a birthright trip over a year ago. When the director of the dance program at Indiana forwarded her a link about the new program in Jerusalem, she felt it was calling to her. She immediately contacted Bloom, and he came to Indiana to audition (and ultimately accept) four students. "Since then it has been quite an adventure," enthuses Boresow.

The students in DanceJerusalem started studying almost two months earlier than the Israeli students at the Academy. As a result, they

"It was very important to me that this not be solely a dance program. I want them to know something beyond the dance studio."

combine the dance options at the Academy with the academics of a university program. "When I first came to talk to Jonathan [Yoni] Kaplan, Director of the RIS Division of Undergraduate Studies, this program was a figment of my imagination," he recalls. Within weeks however, Bloom and Kaplan had put together a cohesive program which combined Hebrew ulpan, RIS classes, dance training and Rothberg's extracurricular activity package. "Janet Alperstein, the Director of the RIS Office of Academic Affairs

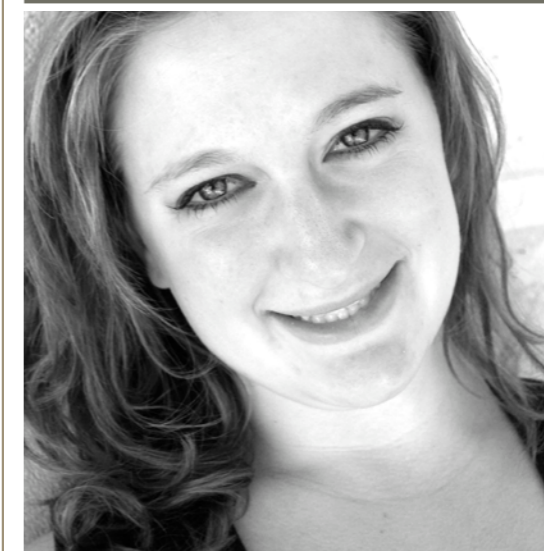
city, Cornell, Columbia and Indiana University, and they all approved it – so we finally got it going."

The JAMD and the RIS received seed money from MASA to set up the program, which enabled Bloom to visit over 60 U.S. colleges and universities to recruit students. The result of that labor led to the opening of DanceJerusalem last August, with eight talented students.

To Bloom, the synthesis between the Academy and the RIS is what defines

"We do not study Gaga in the U.S. so this is a real opportunity"

Leah Boresow



were treated to special seminars with prominent Israeli dancers and choreographers. "Seven of us were in a studio with Aya Israeli, a rehearsal director with the Batsheva Dance Company," says Boresow. "It was a nice introduction to Israel – to be learning Israeli choreography." Students also traveled to the Suzanne

Dellal Center in Tel Aviv to take a class with Ohad Naharin, artistic director of the Batsheva Dance Company and the developer of Gaga, a dance technique known around the world that establishes a flow throughout the entire body which facilitates complete fluidity, no matter where the movement is initiated.



Students in the **DanceJerusalem** program performed pieces that they choreographed in January at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance.

Above, RIS dancers Anna Gross, Loren Parella, Yael Degani and Leah Boresow perform. Below Melissa Strain.



"The dancers have already been invited to perform at major University events"



"Israel is an unknown hotbed of contemporary dance"

Melissa Strain

The dance students have put on four performances since the beginning of the year.

Boresow is excited by the amount of dancing they are doing here. "Indiana awards a Bachelor of Science degree in dance, so dance students at Indiana take many science courses. DanceJerusalem has more of a focus just on dance classes," she explains. Boresow is taking ten dance classes including ballet, modern dance, choreography, ballet repertoire and

versatile program." Strain had no prior connection to Israel, but her friendship with Boresow was the impetus behind her applying to the program and ultimately coming to Israel. Strain spends Mondays from 9 A.M. to 9 P.M. at the Academy and Tuesdays from 9 A.M. to 6 P.M., as well as other mornings and/or afternoons throughout the rest of the week. "Israel is an unknown hotbed of contemporary dance," she says affirmatively. "For instance, last year I saw Hubbard Street Dance Chicago

"I am curious to see whether DanceJerusalem influences them in their development... I want to see how this informs their creativity."

Gaga. "We do not study Gaga in the U.S. so this is a real opportunity," divulges Boresow.

Melissa Strain, also from Indiana University, explains: "I chose to come here because I wanted to be exposed to new types of dancing. I wanted to study abroad with a

performing Ohad Naharin's "Echad Mi Yodea" and I fell in love with the piece. Then I came to DanceJerusalem and I found out that we were going to learn and perform it!"

The students receive a lot of exposure to contemporary Israeli dance. They take a survey course, "Dance in

Israel," at the RIS with Debra Friedes Galilee, a prominent writer about the Israeli dance scene, which covers everything from small fringe companies to Batsheva. They see many performances and meet directors and performers of various companies. For instance, they traveled to Kibbutz Netiv HaLamed Heh to see the Vertigo Dance Company, whose members live in an eco art village there. The students danced, helped build houses out of bricks and rode horses. The hope is that these experiences will shape their future creativity as dancers and choreographers.

"I am curious to see whether DanceJerusalem influences them in their development and whether this experience will make them more cultured, sophisticated human beings about the Middle East and Israel," reflects Bloom. "I want to see how this informs their creativity."

In addition to DanceJerusalem, the RIS is planning to open two additional arts-based programs for undergraduates next year: Jerusalem Sounds, also in conjunction with the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, and ArtJerusalem, a joint initiative with the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design Jerusalem. "In the coming years, the dancers in DanceJerusalem together with the musicians in Jerusalem Sounds and the artists in ArtJerusalem will transform Rothberg into the hottest and most exciting overseas study center in the world," says Kaplan. "I can't wait." ●

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האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem



בית הספר לתלמידים מחו"ל ע"ש רוטברג
Rothberg International School

Twelve Students Transfer from Cairo

(cont. from page 1)

academics of the Hebrew University will enable the students to put their personal experience in Egypt and in Israel within a broader academic framework." ●

Back Row (left to right): Sophia Tahrán, UC Berkeley; Harrison Cooper, UC Berkeley; Jeremy Hodge, UC Santa Barbara; Thomas Corrigan, UCLA. Front Row (left to right): Tal Eisenzweig, Princeton; Kelly Roache, Princeton; Sloane Speakman, Vanderbilt; Morgan Walsh, UCLA; Analucia Partida, UC Berkeley; Penelope Shepard, Allegheny; Amber Judd, Michigan State University. Missing: Shannon Callahan, UC San Diego.

