

TOGETHER AT LAST

Three of Israel's most important science-related institutions are now together under one roof.

The Government of Israel funds all Israeli higher education, including university-based research -- 80% of all Israeli basic civilian research -- through the Planning and Budgeting Committee (VATAT) of the independent Israel Council for Higher Education (CHE). VATAT now provides \$24 million to support the research projects, equipment grants and Center of Excellence mega-grants of the Israel Science Foundation (ISF). Now independent, the ISF was founded by the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, which consists of Israel's premier scholars in all fields, and which continues to develop the structures, means, advice, expertise and support required to ensure Israel's future in science. The Israel Academy directly administered ISF operations for decades, and still provides considerable administrative support.

The Israel Academy has long occupied elegant, modern quarters in the Van Leer Center, located on expansive private

grounds in Jerusalem's lovely Rechavia neighborhood. The ISF, which processes over 800 proposals and administers over 600 grants a year, was long housed in cramped "temporary" quarters in an apartment building many blocks away. The CHE and VATAT occupied a building on the Hebrew University's Givat Ram campus.

In 1995 the Israeli Government provided approximately \$4 million to construct 2,200 square meters of additional facilities (and 1100 square meters of underground parking) in a beautiful new building adjoining the Israel Academy. The additions were completed in August 1996 and the VATAT, which occupies two-thirds of the building, and the ISF have already moved in, increasing both their space, contact and efficiency.

The eye-stopping new building was designed by David Reznick (winner of the 1996 Israel Prize for Architecture) and Shimon Posner, the original architects of the Van Leer Center. In conjunction with landscape artist Don Tzur, over 7000 trees and plants have been planted, to complement the tranquil, green surroundings of the original buildings.



At the same time, the Academy dedicated a more visible Albert Einstein memorial to mark the Academy's official address "Albert Einstein Square." David Ben-Gurion had insisted on this address at the Academy's inception, both as a reminder to the world of the exceptional contributions of Jewish researchers to science and as a reminder to Israeli scientists of the standards of excellence to which they must aspire.

Yossi Lenz, the Academy's Comptroller, provided oversight to the project and helped design the Einstein memorial. He notes with pride that the new facilities do more than boost efficiency. "They really bring together the essential parts of Israel's research system for higher education, facilitating our ability to share -- despite our organizational independence -- problems, ideas and solutions more easily."

