

# The FORUM

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This special issue of The FORUM is devoted to the recent international workshop on The Future of the Research University, held in Jerusalem, June 1-3, 1999, under the joint sponsorship of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities and the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC) of the Israel Council for Higher Education.

SPECIAL  
EDITION

Seventy senior Israeli decisionmakers and scholars met with selected senior counterparts from abroad to share experiences and to help explore Israel's options for meeting its new educational goals. Brief formal presentations led to long, lively open discussions which will eventually be published as an edited proceedings. Meanwhile, selected highlights of the workshop follow.

## NEW ROLES AND RULES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN A CHANGING WORLD

The Israeli higher education system is at a crossroads. Rapid changes in national opportunities and needs, in student and societal aspirations, in the industrial-government-university relationship and in the international environment all require a major rethinking of the Israeli higher education (IHE) system. As a small, but highly developed country, Israel can greatly benefit from the advice and experiences of others to stay abreast of, and if possible ahead of, current trends.



Conference participants (L to R): Dr. Al Teich (USA), Prof. P.J.D. Drenth (Netherlands), Prof. Brian Fender (U.K.), Prof. Jacob Ziv (Israel) and Prof. Robert Rosenzweig (USA).

continued on next page

# NEW ROLES AND RULES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

cont

Israel Academy President Prof. Jacob Ziv began by noting that, Israel is a country of science and technology, with both the world's highest number of scientists and published scientific papers per capita. With a smaller population than many cities, it publishes a disproportionate 1% of all the world's scientific journal articles, while its discoveries have fueled over 3,000 high-tech startup companies and created an insatiable demand for highly trained manpower. Israel's universities, however, were originally founded on the German Humboldtian model which combines teaching with extensive basic research.

To provide broad, technology-literate education for ever larger segments of the Israeli public, Israel has greatly expanded its less-expensive, teaching-oriented college system, which now absorbs over 45% of all undergraduate students. However, according to PBC Chairman Prof. Nehemia Levtzion, research universities still play a crucial, irreplaceable role by producing Israel's next generation of world-class researchers and educators. They can also provide the leadership to move the whole higher education system forward, a far more rewarding task than looking back and worrying about whether the newer colleges are closing the gap between them. The PBC's funding policy must reflect these new realities by appropriately identifying and rewarding high-quality research outputs, teaching and services.

In the face of competition from high-quality far less expensive college, internet and Open University courses, today's research universities must also increasingly define the unique "value added" in their approach.

Participants cited such factors as:

- \* The stimulating intellectual environment created by a community of

highly intelligent and ambitious scholars and students competing on the frontiers of research.

- \* An emphasis on developing flexible, problem-solving, team-based approaches to new situations.
- \* The national need to do world-class original research to gain access to the international "club" of nations who produce new knowledge.
- \* To evaluate the new technological opportunities such membership provides.

**In the face of high quality, far less expensive college, internet and Open University courses, research universities must increasingly define the unique "value-added" in their approach.**

Prof. Pieter J. D. Drenth, former President of the Netherlands Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences, noted that the "downsizing" of industrial research laboratories has led to rapid growth in the industrial funding of academic research, which presents both new opportunities and difficulties. Prof. Zehava Tadmor, former President of the Technion, sees this trend as a normal consequence of society's increasing emphasis on economic competitiveness. He believes that the accompanying need for new

discoveries and highly trained manpower will inevitably make research universities ever more important to society.

Tadmor also foresees a continuing decrease in the time between discovery and application, and a blurring of the distinction between pure and applied research. Drenth argues that tomorrow's students will face a more dynamic, market-driven world, characterized by more subcontracting and part-time work, more flexibility and autonomy, more career changes and less company-employee loyalty. Israel Academy Senior Advisor to the President Prof. Alex Keynan, agrees, but warns that universities must also preserve their intellectual freedom, creativity and excellence in the brave new world ahead.

