



The People Behind HAC

President's Report 2024



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Interview with
Prof. Bertold
Fridlender,
Outgoing
President

At the end of June 2024, **Prof. Bertold Fridlender**, or “Tolo” as everyone calls him, is completing his 12-year term as President of HAC. Before becoming President of the College, Prof. Fridlender founded and then served as Chair of HAC’s Department of Biotechnology (offering the first undergraduate program of its kind in Israel), from 2004-2012 while working as a volunteer and commuting between New Jersey and Israel. Simultaneously, he served as a Visiting Professor at Rutgers University from 2005-2012.

Prof. Fridlender earned his M.Sc. in Biochemistry from the University of Chile, and a Ph.D. in Medical Microbiology and Immunology from UCLA. Prior to his appointment as a Visiting Professor in the Virology Department of The Hebrew University Faculty of Medicine, he pursued research for four years under the guidance of Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry Prof. Luis Federico Leloir, in Argentina. Over the years, Tolo has also served as CEO, president, and consultant for a number of biotechnology startups in Israel and abroad.

In 2012, you came to the position of HAC President with a clear vision of where you wanted to lead the college. Today, this vision is deeply rooted in HAC’s DNA. How did you achieve this?

When I began my term as President, I had already been at the College for 8 years and felt that we needed a clearer vision. We were a small, unknown College at the time with only 2,000 students compared to our student body of 5,000 today. There was almost no interaction or collaboration between the different departments. I realized that bringing everyone on board with a shared goal was critical to our success, and I leave this Presidency deeply satisfied that we have achieved this objective. Today our faculty interact and connect, and there is a profound sense of engagement; “HAC belongs to all of us,” so to speak. The second thing that was important for me was to create a spirit of diversity and inclusion. It was critical that everyone understand the implications of having such a diverse student body. HAC is a unique campus in comparison to other colleges that usually cater to one specific population.

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With such a distinct and well-established vision and mission, why did the College feel the need to undergo its recent strategic planning process?

The COVID-19 pandemic compelled us to change our teaching strategies overnight, and also underscored the fact that the world of academia is changing rapidly. We realized that what we have today is not what we are going to need tomorrow. Where do we want to go? What do we want to teach? How do we want to teach? How do we bring this together with all the changes that are happening, including AI that is revolutionizing

our world? Ultimately, the strategic planning process we undertook provides us with a comprehensive plan that will help HAC and its next President navigate the next decade.

During your term as President, the College has grown and expanded significantly. The Helmsley Building was built, you advocated for the establishment of the Azrieli Center for Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education and Employment, and launched The Blender – HAC’s Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, to name just a few of the new developments you initiated. In your view, what were your main achievements as President?

I can name several. First of all, I introduced the idea that, in addition to being an academic institution, HAC also has a social mission. We don’t only teach, but we also have a social responsibility towards society, towards our students, and towards the City of Jerusalem. Everyone here will tell you that we are on a mission to promote social mobility, and the internalization and daily implementation of this mission is what makes us so unique.

A second achievement is that we successfully embrace and promote the concept of a diverse campus: we have invested a lot of effort bringing in the right people who can help us fulfill the needs of our diverse student body, including professional coordinators for the different student populations (e.g., Ethiopian-Israelis, the ultra-Orthodox, Arab-Israelis, new immigrants, etc.).

“In addition to being an academic institution, HAC also has a social mission. We don’t only teach, but we also have a social responsibility towards society, towards our students, and towards the City of Jerusalem.”

A third achievement of which I am especially proud, is that HAC has become a well-known College with a stellar reputation, thanks to our successful graduates who are everywhere today. I have always maintained that you can compromise on everything except on academic excellence. When I was Chair of the Department of Biotechnology, I had to call in a lot of favors so we could find places for our graduates to complete their internships. Today these labs and companies are running after us. A recent survey of these graduates from 2019-2021 revealed that 84% are working in their chosen professions.

A fourth achievement is the establishment of the Azrieli Center for Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education and Employment, and specifically our Career Counseling Center (located within the Azrieli Center), a project that was made possible with the generous help of the Edmond de Rothschild Foundation. It is important that we show our students that we are not only going to help them graduate, but we are also going to help them find

“I am especially proud that HAC has become a well-known College with a stellar reputation, thanks to our successful graduates who are everywhere today.”

a job. The Career Counseling Center, the first of its kind in Israel, has served as a model for career centers at other institutions of higher education across Israel.

A fifth achievement is the promotion of research among our faculty members. It was important for me that the faculty engage in research because they can't be effective preparing students for a profession in their field if they are not well-versed and updated themselves. As a college, we are unfortunately not eligible to receive government funding for research, so I led the establishment of a special Authority for Research and Development which is responsible for helping the faculty to identify and obtain research grants. Also under my leadership, we created an International Unit that promotes student exchanges and international collaborations, such as joint research projects between HAC faculty and faculty members of universities and colleges abroad.

“It is important that we show our students that we are not only going to help them graduate, but we are also going to help them find a job. The Career Counseling Center, the first of its kind in Israel, has served as a model for career centers at other institutions of higher education across Israel.”

A diverse student body can give rise to tensions, especially in times of conflict. During your term, there were quite a few difficult periods, for example, the 2014 Gaza War, Operation Guardian of the Walls in 2021, and now the events of October 7th and the Swords of Iron War. How do you deal with these tensions?

This is not an easy task. In my view, social media is a dreadful thing, because you can't control what happens when you write something online. During the 2014 War in Gaza, we decided that if we saw posts that should be addressed, we wouldn't respond to them in writing; rather, we called the students in to talk together. This has been our policy throughout. The main tensions until now have been between Jewish and Arab students - in which cases we brought the students battling online into a room to talk in person. And, we have organized activities such as workshops and other programs to bring different groups of students together. Since October 7th, we have kept tensions down through constant dialogue and workshops. These programs are also intended for our faculty and administrative staff who oftentimes experience difficult feelings. Our Arab-Israeli staff and faculty members have been extremely helpful in this process.

A word of advice to your successor, Prof. Ariela Gordon-Shaag?

First of all, as I know her well, I am sure she will do an excellent job. My word of advice is to work cooperatively with everyone, bring everyone on board.

Do you have a message for your donors?

I had the immense pleasure to collaborate with our wonderful donors, and I want to take this opportunity to thank them for their support and generosity. They are critical partners in achieving our academic and social goals; they help us to transform Israeli society, the City of Jerusalem, and the lives of our students.

Though Tolo is looking forward to a well-deserved rest after seven decades of arduous work, HAC has other plans for him: he has already been asked to be involved in several initiatives at the College, including the “Tikun Olam Makers” program. So for now it is not “goodbye,” but rather, “see you soon.”

Tolo is a mensch. He is smart and charismatic and sets high ethical standards. He is very pleasant to work with and, even though he is not the typical ‘Sabra,’ he is assertive and always knows exactly what he wants to achieve.

Prof. Yoram Eden, Chair of the Interdisciplinary Faculty of Society and Community, and Chair of the Department of Economics and Accounting

Tolo is exceptional in that he is both an optimist at heart and a born leader. He has advanced the College through the joy of hard work. He identifies the talents of individuals before they are even aware they have these abilities themselves. He has very sharp managerial instincts and is a cut above everyone else.

Dr. Simcha Rozen, Dean of Academic Affairs

Tolo is a great partner from a personal and professional point of view. He’s generous, warm and caring. He is a humanitarian, and really sees people. Thanks to Tolo, HAC is more than just a place to work. Over the last 12 years, he has left his mark by making HAC a multidisciplinary institution and a safe multicultural zone. He himself is the embodiment of multiculturalism so it comes naturally to him.

Eli Bahar, Chair of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees

Tolo has done wonders for academic development; under his leadership, the different departments suddenly began communicating with one another. And, Tolo greatly emphasized the promotion of women.

Prof. Dina Shahar, the DAN Department of Creative Human Design, and Adviser to the President on Gender Equality.

Over the course of many years working closely together, Tolo and I have become good friends. There is amazing harmony in our work together. As a leader, Tolo has a clear vision of where he wants to go, yet he collaborates with everyone in getting there - and decisions are made jointly. He has succeeded in bringing the College to great achievements while maintaining a pleasant atmosphere with a lot of humanity, optimism, and humor.

Dr. Tzachi Milgrom, Vice President



Steering the Course: HAC's Leadership Team

Every successful organization is the product of the devoted and industrious people who lead it. In addition to paying tribute to our outgoing President, we want to take this opportunity to introduce you to some of HAC's top leadership.

Meet

Shay Abrahamamy, Our new CEO



Shay Abrahamamy was appointed CEO of HAC as of September, 2023. He earned a B.A. in Industrial Engineering and Management, an M.A. in Public Administration, and MBA, all from Tel Aviv University. Prior to his current position, Shay was CEO of the Wingate Institute for four years. His impressive list of past positions includes CEO of the South Sharon Regional Council, CEO of the Shoham Local Council, Deputy CEO for Management and Operations at Hadassah Medical Center, and Head of the Aircraft Engineering and Maintenance Division at El Al, among others. Shay is married and a father of four.

Shay, who is a relative of Israel's former President Reuven Rivlin, explains that HAC embodies Rivlin's "Four Tribes."¹ This, in his mind, along with the College's location (an urban environment near the vastly different neighborhoods of East Jerusalem and Mea She'arim) make it a special institution.

"I am committed to preserving the unique nature of HAC as a multidisciplinary institution that builds social and industry leaders through modern management practices grounded in both qualitative and quantitative data," he says. "It's important to identify the needs of 21C students and to continue to innovate when it comes to digitalization and other improvements in infrastructure. Our students have a vast network of support: our goal is to get them to the finish line, and so we work concertedly to eliminate any obstacles in their path."

HAC is creating academic, social, and financial change in the City of Jerusalem. "We hope to reach 7,000 students and become the largest college in the Jerusalem area, while expanding to other campuses.

¹ Secular, religious-Zionist, ultra-Orthodox and Arab, as outlined in President of Israel Reuven Rivlin's famous speech in 2015.

Meet

Dr. Tzachi Milgrom, Vice President

Dr. Tzachi Milgrom is Vice President of HAC. He earned a Ph.D. with a focus on Science Education, Science Technology, and Society from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Before coming to HAC 24 years ago as Dean of Academic Affairs, Tzachi was head of R&D teams at the Science Teaching Center of The Hebrew University. He began working closely with Tolo in 2012, since which time they have managed HAC together, dividing the responsibilities between them.

Tzachi has a strong credo that does not always bear well with his colleagues at other institutions of higher education: “studies are important,” he says, “but if students graduate successfully, even with excellent grades, but we have not helped them advance socio-economically, then we have failed in our mission. This essential mission is not just ‘nice to have,’ but it enables more graduates from different sectors of Israeli society to get a good education.” “In this context,” he adds, “our job is not just to create knowledge, but to teach. And, our Career Counseling Center operates so that students start thinking about their future starting in the second year of their studies.”

During the time that Tzachi has been at HAC, the number of degree programs offered at the College has grown to 15, all of which are job-oriented. “For example,” he explains, “instead of offering a B.Sc. in Biology (which you can’t really do much with except teach high school or continue to a graduate degree) we teach Biotechnology, which is a profession in high demand. Our Department of Biotechnology offers a degree which was the first of its kind in the country. Similarly, we teach economics and accounting together, which provides graduates with more job opportunities.”

Tzachi’s first task at the College was to open “designated” mechinot, or pre-academic courses, which was an innovative concept at the time. “Our thinking was ‘why should a student spend time completing his bagrut (matriculation) when he can start investing in his future?’ So, we offered designated pre-academic courses in the sciences and in Hebrew.” Other institutions of higher education finally realized the advantages of this strategy and have followed suit in recent years and, more importantly, there is mutual recognition of these programs by the different institutions.



Meet

Eli Bahar, Chair of the Executive Committee

Eli Bahar is a graduate of Tel Aviv University's Faculty of Law. He also has degrees in Economics, Political Science, and Public Administration and a Master's in Public Administration from the Kennedy School at Harvard. Eli served for many years in the legal department of the General Security Services, and from 2006-2011, served as the organization's Legal Advisor. During 2012-2018, Eli was a researcher in the Amnon Lipkin-Shahak Program of the Israel Democracy Institute. He is the author of *Providing Legal Counsel in a Security Organization* (in Hebrew) and *The Test of the Shin Bet: Law and Democratic Values* (in Hebrew). Currently, Eli lectures in the Department of Political Science at Tel Aviv University on national legal and security issues, and is engaged in various public activities, including the release of the hostages taken on October 7th. In addition, he is involved in several start-ups in the field of chemistry and biology.

Eli was invited to join HAC as Chair of the Executive Committee two years ago. "I discovered an excellent institution, and a dedicated administration and faculty," he recalls. "HAC has a clear and important mission of academic excellence, equal opportunity, and social mobility. That is the story of HAC. We give secular, Haredi, and Arab-Israeli students the feeling that we see them, that we invest in them, and provide them with a positive learning experience."

Eli explains that HAC is deeply rooted in the urban landscape and reflects Jerusalem's multicultural environment. "A large part of the faculty and students are Jerusalemites, and there are many existing collaborations with government ministries and other Jerusalem-based organizations. HAC makes a significant social and economic impact on the City."



Meet

Prof. Dina Shahar, Senior Lecturer, the DAN Department of Creative Human Design, and Advisor to the President on Gender Equality

Prof. Dina Shahar has been at HAC for over 15 years. Dina earned a Master of Arts from the Royal College of Art in London. After teaching at Shenkar College of Engineering, Design, and Art, as well as at Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Dina came to HAC in 2006, and helped establish the Department of Inclusive Industrial Design - now the DAN Department of Creative Human Design. In 2020, she became the first woman in Israel to earn the status of professor in the field of industrial design.

“The idea of a program of Inclusive Industrial Design with a clear social orientation was a new and exciting concept at the time,” she recalls. In 2010, she was appointed Chair of the Department, a position she held for 8 years. Since 2020, she has been a Professor in the Department and, since 2022, serves as Advisor to the President on Gender Equality.

“The College is a goldmine in terms of partnership opportunities,” she explains and cites the Department of Optometry, The Blender – HAC’s Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and Tikun Olam Makers activities as examples. “We promote an approach which centers on the human being, not the product.” HAC places great emphasis on practical applications and, in their final projects, students get many new opportunities to implement their knowledge and tools. When they graduate, they come to their new workplaces with a social agenda. And they have the tools to lead, conduct research, and manage projects.

As advisor on issues of gender equality, Dina explains that her job is to ensure gender fairness at all academic levels, while identifying visible and hidden mechanisms that create obstacles and opportunities. “Women tend to volunteer to take on responsibilities and extra jobs (for which they are not necessarily paid) much more than men do,” she explains. “As part of the multi-year strategic plan of the Council for Higher Education and the Committee for Planning and Financing, HAC is committed to equal gender representation at all executive and management levels,” she adds. “HAC is working to rectify disparities wherever necessary.”



Meet

Prof. Yoram Eden, **Head of the Interdisciplinary** **Faculty for Society and Community** **and Chair of the Department of** **Economics and Accounting**

Prof. Yoram Eden is Head of the Interdisciplinary Faculty for Society and Community, and Chair of the Department of Economics and Accounting. He is also a member of the Executive Committee of HAC's Board of Directors. Yoram earned a B.A. in Accounting, MBA and a Ph.D. in Finance and Accounting from Tel Aviv University, and a B.A. in Economics from The Hebrew University. Yoram came to HAC after 16 years at The College of Management - Academic Studies, where he served as Vice President for Academic Affairs during 2013-2016. He is the author of four books and countless articles that have been published in industry journals in Israel and abroad.

"Coming to HAC was a huge change compared to The College of Management," he says. "HAC has flourished in recent years. We have become the second largest educational institution in Jerusalem after The Hebrew University." When asked what impresses him about HAC, Yoram cites the tremendous growth in the number of students and faculty in recent years, the emphasis on faculty research, and HAC's efforts in preparing students for the workplace without compromising academic excellence.



Meet

Dr. Simcha Rozen, Dean of Academic Affairs



Dr. Simcha Rozen has served as HAC's Dean of Academic Affairs since 2022, prior to which she was Dean of Students for 9 years. In addition, she was a Lecturer in the Department of Computer Science for more than two decades. Simcha earned a B.Sc. in Physics and an M.Sc. in Applied Physics from The Hebrew University. She completed her Ph.D. in 2009 and was a Postdoctoral Fellow at The Hebrew University from 2009-2011. Among Simcha's many responsibilities, she is in charge of developing curriculums and overseeing the implementation of HAC's 5-year strategic plan.

"HAC's vision of bringing education to the social and geographical periphery puts the student in the center. Our goal is to advance the social and professional mobility of our students, for which we have built an extensive system of academic support to achieve this objective. At the same time, the needs of Israeli society and Israel's labor market help to shape our pedagogical vision. We are constantly examining new and innovation educational practices and tools in light of this vision. If teamwork, for example, is an important asset in the labor market, then students need to experience teamwork as an integral part of their studies."

"A college graduate in 2024 is not the same as a graduate from two decades ago, which obligates us to constantly evaluate our academic programs and training procedures. On the bright side, as a college we can react faster to changes than larger institutions of higher education. If we give our students the right tools, they will be able to continue to learn and develop throughout their entire lifetime."

Meet

Prof. Ariela Gordon-Shaag, Incoming President

Prof. Ariela Gordon-Shaag, a well-known figure at HAC, and an active member of the academic faculty, will become HAC's new President starting July 1, 2024. Born in Chicago, Ariela earned her B.Sc. in Chemistry from Barnard College, Columbia University. She later earned an M.Sc. in Genetics and Ph.D. in Molecular Biology from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. During 2002-2005, Ariela was a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Washington in Seattle. During 2005-2007 she was a post-doctoral fellow at The Hebrew University's Faculty of Medicine, after which time she joined the faculty of HAC.

Since 2023, Ariela has served as Chair of HAC's Interdisciplinary Faculty of Health, Science, and Society, and she is a member of the Executive Committee of HAC's Board of Directors. During 2014-2023, Ariela served as Chair of HAC's Department of Optometry and Vision Science. Among her many achievements there, she worked hard to update the curriculum to meet the demands of the European Council on Optometry and Optics, as a result of which HAC received significant grant support from European funders. During her tenure as Chair, Ariela consistently promoted research activities within the Department by establishing collaborations with other academic institutions, along with the optics industry in Israel and abroad, which led to dozens of scientific collaborations, and an exponential increase in the number of scientific publications published and grant proposals funded. In addition, Ariela was centrally involved in raising funding for three consecutive renovations to the Department and its clinics. Ariela contributed immensely to the establishment of HAC's degree program in Optometry for ultra-Orthodox women, and the International Master's degree program in Optometry (in English) both of which were approved by the Council for Higher Education.

From 2019 to the present, as a member of HAC's Internationalization Committee, Ariela directed the further development of HAC's strategic internationalization plan, and led efforts to submit three grant proposals to the Council for Higher Education concerning HAC's internationalization activities, which resulted in significant funding for this initiative at the College.





Israel at War: Swords of Iron

The murderous surprise attack by Hamas on October 7th, and the subsequent war turned life upside down in Israel, including at HAC. The 2023-2024 academic year, slated to begin in late October, was postponed until December 24th.

HAC consequently decided to grant our 400 students in reserve duty a special scholarship award in order to support them financially, and in recognition of their contribution to the State of Israel. At the same time, the College created a package of special academic support and benefits for these students in order to maximize their chances of completing the academic year.

Some Highlights:

Heroism in Action

On October 7th, **First Sergeant Shlomo Dema**, a combat medic, had just completed his B.Sc. in Computer Science at HAC and was working at his new job as a programmer with the Israeli Tax Authority. He would not have been called up to fight because of a previous injury, but he was determined to join his unit in the heart of Gaza. When a grenade went off, gravely injuring him in all four limbs, Shlomo managed to stay conscious, instructing the other soldiers how to treat him until the evacuation team arrived. "Despite the excruciating pain, I tried not to scream so the other soldiers wouldn't get too stressed," he said during a television interview from his bed in the new rehabilitation center at Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus. Shlomo has since undergone seven operations on his lungs and limbs as well as skin transplants. We wish him a speedy and full recovery.



Commemorative Wall at HAC

Remembering The Fallen

HAC's administration, in cooperation with the Student Union, recently established a commemorative wall on campus in memory of HAC faculty and students who were killed in the horrific attack of October 7th, and during Swords of Iron.

Remembering Hayim, Uriel, Yitzhak, Ido, Michael, and Hanan



Dr. Hayim Katsman, z"l, a Lecturer in the Department of Politics and Communication, was murdered by Hamas terrorists at his home in Kibbutz Holit. In light of a special campaign to raise funds to honor Hayim, the College granted scholarships to three students in the Department who are preparing special projects in his memory. On December 7th, HAC held a special event in Hayim's memory, attended by colleagues, family, and friends.



Uriel Bibi, z"l, was slated to begin a degree program in Medical Laboratory Science at HAC, but was shot and killed on October 7th in a shoot-out with terrorists on his way to Kibbutz Be'eri. Uriel, age 30 and the father of two, was an officer in the Paratroopers Brigade. In 2021, he received an award of excellence from the Chief of Staff of the IDF. Uriel graduated from the Midreshet Noam High School, completed a course in first aid, and was a volunteer with Magen David Adom.



Yitzhak Levy, z"l, a graduate of HAC's pre-academic program, was murdered by terrorists who attacked the Nova music festival at Kibbutz Re'im. His friends describe him as "a talented guy, and a good friend who was loved by all."



Ido Rosenthal, z"l, (Staff Sergeant, res.), a talented photographer, was a graduate of the Department of Photographic Communication, and a reservist in Shaldag (one of the Air Force's elite units), fell in the battle to save residents of Kibbutz Alumim. He was 45 at the time of his death.



Michael Gal, z"l, (Sergeant Major, res.), a second-year student of Management at HAC, fell in combat in Southern Gaza on March 10th. Michael, who was 29 years old, was loved by all, and was a well-known figure in Jerusalem. His infantry battalion was one of the first units to enter Gaza.



Hanan Drori, z"l, (First Sergeant, res.), was a third-year student of Biotechnology at HAC, who died on February 7, 2024 from wounds sustained in combat in northern Gaza on December 17, 2023. Hanan was 26. Dr. Danny Zeevi, Head of the Department, spoke in his eulogy of how Hanan wanted to study in order to develop new medical treatments and drugs. "You were a brilliant intellectual light who made everyone around you better. You were loved by all, and your death proves how much we need people like you."

HAC Provides Critical Assistance to Evacuees

150,000 individuals were evacuated following the October 7th attack by Hamas. In response, **HAC's Department of Optometry**, in coordination with the Dept. of Ophthalmology at Hadassah Medical Center, established vision clinics in Dead Sea hotels, in which evacuees were being housed. These clinics offered comprehensive vision care services, including refractive and vision examinations, ophthalmological assessments, ocular imaging, and the provision of free glasses.



Approximately 800 evacuees received examinations, and approximately 700 pairs of glasses were distributed. This project serves as a model for future humanitarian interventions.



In addition, the walk-in clinics at the HAC campus in Jerusalem carried out free vision examinations and distributed free eyeglasses to hundreds of evacuees who were being lodged at hotels or other facilities in and around Jerusalem.



In connection to this project, HAC's President Bertold Fridlender presented a special award to Issa Zeitoun, a student in the Department of Optometry who organized a special donation of eyeglasses from his family's optical business towards this effort.

Volunteering and other War-Related Activities:

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs, and mentored by faculty, second-year **students of Social Work** oversaw volunteer activities in senior living facilities across the country. This helped to relieve the shortage of personnel after many were called up for reserve duty.



Dr. Chen Bram, Senior Lecturer at HAC, volunteered by helping citizens formerly from the Caucasus who were evacuated from towns attacked by Hamas on October 7th. Activities included raising funds to equip a civil emergency center in Sderot, and providing 150 hot lunches.



Prof. Ariela Gordon-Shaag, Head of the Interdisciplinary Faculty for Health, Science and Society, organized a group of 50 women from her area to assist farmers. **Dr. Tali Hadasa Blank**, Head of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and **Prof. Ann Saada-Reisch**, Head of the M.Sc. program in Medical Laboratory Science, also volunteered in agriculture.

The **Career Counseling Center** team took part in an employment fair for evacuees organized by the Municipality of Jerusalem. They helped candidates prepare resumes and referred them to potential employers.



A YNET news report featuring war-related inventions and innovations included two by students in HAC's DAN Department of Creative Human Design. **Tomer Beisky** created a stretcher for evacuating the wounded that ties at the waist, allowing those carrying the stretcher to monitor and treat wounded soldiers and also shoot their guns simultaneously. **Revaya Mor** created Mylo ('my location'), a phone application that helps children practice resilience in normal times, so they are better prepared for emergencies.

Honoring HAC reservists: At the beginning of March, HAC held a special evening in honor of HAC students serving in the reserves. In his opening greetings, HAC President Prof. Bertold Fridlender thanked the reservists for their contribution to the country. A memorable stand-up performance by Israeli comedian Guy Hochman brought a lot of laughs and a temporary escape from the harsh realities at the front.



Dr. Iris Gertner, a Lecturer in the Department of Management, together with the Aliyah Foundation, organized the contribution of 500 mattresses for IDF soldiers in the South.

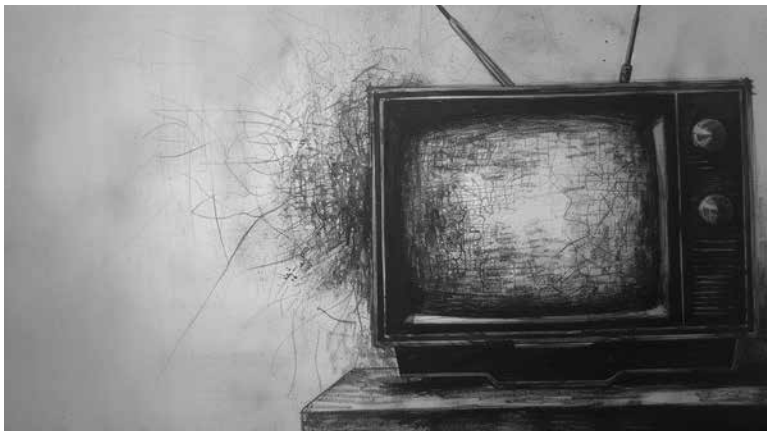
Dr. Yehudit Kahn, a Lecturer in the Department of Management, volunteered in the Ministry of Tourism's Emergency Center, helping evacuees find a place to live.

Galit Shabo, a Lecturer in the DAN Department of Creative Human Design, in partnership with Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, facilitated arts activities for evacuated children. Several students in the Department joined her in this effort.



Gauging the National Mood

Dr. Yitzhak Alfasi, from HAC's Department of Behavioral Science, conducted a study in November 2023 to understand how the events of October 7th affected mental health. The sample included 434 Jewish Israeli men and women in Israel. Some 51% of the respondents reported extreme depression, and 25% reported that they spend five hours or more a day reading or listening to the news. The study found that the more time people spend exposed to the news, the more they report a deterioration in mental health. Findings also indicated above-average levels of emotional attachment to the country, which were found to be directly associated to levels of mental health.





Documenting the Destruction

Prof. Moshe Caine from HAC's Department of Photographic Communication is participating in a unique project led by the Israel Antiquities Authority, the Ministry of Heritage, and the Tekuma Administration. The project uses advanced imaging technologies (360 photography, lasers, and drones) to document the devastation and destruction of the October 7th attack in order to create a virtual, interactive public museum. In this way, the history of this tragic event will be preserved even after these towns and kibbutzim are rebuilt.

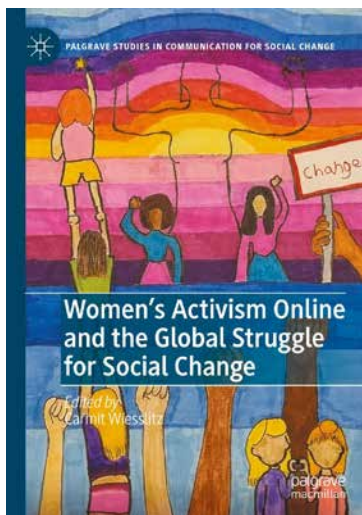


Other News



In an op-ed published in the Jerusalem Post, **HAC's President Prof. Bertold Fridlender** bemoans the decision of Israel's Minister of Finance not to include financial support for pre-academic programs ("mechinot") for students from East Jerusalem in the 5-year national plan for the Arab sector. "These *mechinot*, which help young Arab students from East Jerusalem gain access to higher education, are nothing less than a critical national and economic asset," Fridlender writes. "This is a clear Israeli interest."

Dr. Boris Severinsky, who has bachelor's and master's degrees in Optometry and Vision Science from HAC, made Newsweek's list of America's 200 Best Eye Doctors for 2023. After moving to the U.S., Dr. Severinsky completed externships with Bascom Palmer Eye Institute and Global Vision Rehabilitation Center in Miami. He then earned his Doctor of Optometry from the New England College of Optometry in Boston. Dr. Severinsky has published numerous articles in peer-reviewed optometry and contact lens journals, and he lectures nationally and internationally. Boris is internationally recognized for his work on the development and design of scleral lenses after corneal transplant surgery, and special soft scleral lenses for use shortly after corneal crosslinking procedures.



Kudos to **Dr. Carmit Wiesslitz**, a Lecturer in the **Department of Politics and Communication**, on the publication of her book *Women's Activism Online and the Global Struggle for Social Change*, which was included as part of the Palgrave Studies in Communication for Social Change book series. The book explores the challenges and obstacles facing women activists in the digital age and presents women's activism and use of social media as an arena for collective impact.



At the beginning of the academic year, HAC hosted the **Czech Ambassador to Israel, The Honorable Veronika Kuchyňová Šmigolová** along with the Embassy's Science, Research and Development Attaché, **Mr. Lukas Pribyl**. After a tour of the various departments, accompanied by HAC leadership, President Prof. Bertold Fridlender thanked the Ambassador and Attaché for their interest and time, and expressed his belief that the visit would lead to fruitful and creative collaborations.

Prof. Avi Besser, Chair of HAC's Department of Communication Disorders, and a member of the Council for Higher Education, was appointed **Chairperson of the Higher Committee for the Appointment of Professors in the Social Sciences, Management, and Law**. This landmark appointment, the first of its kind for a college representative (as opposed to university), testifies to Prof. Besser's stellar reputation and helps to strengthen the standing of public colleges within the Council for Higher Education.

Margulies Family Names Department for the Development of Children With Special Needs

HAC is thrilled to announce that our dedicated friends and supporters, Trisha and Fred Margulies, have made a generous commitment to name the Department for the Development of Children with Special Needs. This remarkable contribution will make a lasting impact on the College and this professional field in Israel. The newly named Department offers a groundbreaking M.A. degree program, the only one of its kind in Israel. The program was designed to train students for senior leadership roles in settings that provide treatment for children with special needs. By emphasizing a multidisciplinary approach, the program provides comprehensive training that incorporates principles from various clinical disciplines, special education, psychology, and social work.

Program graduates will become qualified to manage the Child Development Institutes located in major Israeli hospitals, as well as various community-based programs that care for young children with significant developmental disabilities. We are deeply grateful to Trisha and Fred Margulies for their unwavering support and visionary leadership. Their commitment will empower future leaders in this field to make a meaningful difference in the lives of children with special needs and their families across Israel.



Newly renovated clinic in the Department of Optometry and Vision Science

In February, **HAC inaugurated the newly renovated and upgraded clinic in the Department of Optometry and Vision Science** with a festive opening event. This major renovation created contemporary clinic facilities that are on a par with what graduates encounter when they go to work in the optical industry. The event featured greetings by President Prof. Bertold Fridlender, CEO Shay Abraham, Deputy CEO of Logistics and Operations Gadi Singer, Chair of the Department of Optometry and Vision Science Dr. Hadas Ben Eli, and the architect Mr. Rami Haviv. Afterwards, students participated in lectures and practical workshops, alongside optical industry representatives, concerning new innovations and the use of cutting-edge optical devices. Donors to the renovation included: the Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation, Dr. Ron Eichel, Dr. Howard Woolf, Maurice Saval Fund - the New England College of Optometry, Opticana, Ltd., Dr. Thomas Arnold, Dr. Henry Greene, Melvin S. Cutler Charitable Foundation, and Dr. Cathy Stern.



HAC salutes Aubrey and Marla Dan for their support of this effort

The DAN Department of Creative Human Design underwent a significant renovation in preparation for the current academic year to upgrade a number of the spaces serving both students and faculty. The renovation included a facelift of the entrance ways, installing suitable presentation facilities for student projects, and establishing contemporary teaching and meeting spaces. HAC is indebted to Aubrey and Marla Dan, and CHW, for the support they've given to The DAN Department to encourage our students to take a deep dive into the health and welfare needs of special population groups. This field of endeavor is a tremendous source of pride for the College. Design projects in this area include solutions for people living with aphasia, people with mobility challenges, and much more.



Elaine Adler, z"l, the well-loved founder and life-long supporter of the Adler Aphasia Center at HAC, passed away in August, 2023. She was 95 years old. Elaine was a dedicated activist and philanthropist who promoted community-based therapeutic treatment options for stroke and brain injury victims who suffered from aphasia. The Adler family originally became involved in this field when Elaine's husband, Mike z"l, suffered a stroke and developed aphasia, but found no appropriate treatment options.

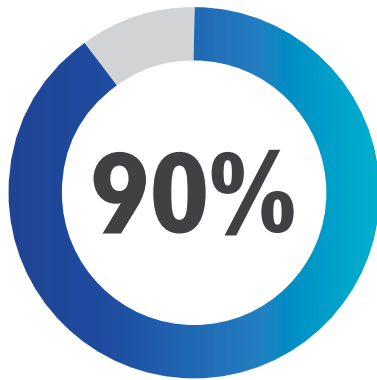
Elaine was a passionate and outspoken voice on behalf of people living with aphasia, and influenced many others to support the development of services for this population. With her influence, the State of New Jersey became the first state to enact legislation to increase the provision of support services for people living with aphasia. Elaine's mantra was "speak up for people who cannot speak for themselves."

Today, the Adler Aphasia Center at HAC serves some 80 individuals, and is an active training site for students in the College's Department of Communication Disorders. The Center is also actively involved in training members of the Israeli medical community about the Life Participation Approach to Aphasia Rehabilitation, and advocating for the rights of aphasia patients to receive lifelong care throughout Israel.

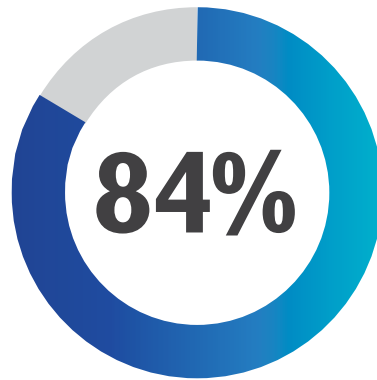


HAC's Career Counseling Center: Paving the Path to Success

The Career Counseling Center recently completed a survey of over 1,000 graduates from 2019-2021. The survey revealed that:



are employed
or studying for
advanced degrees



are currently working
in their field of study

The highest percentages of graduates are working in the fields of:

- ➔ Computer Science (96%)
- ➔ Economics and Accounting (95%)
- ➔ Communication Disorders (91%)
- ➔ Medical Laboratory Science (90%)
- ➔ Human Resource Management (90%)
- ➔ Optometry (87%)
- ➔ Biotechnology (87%)

Moreover, these figures reflect equal participation in the labor market for both Jewish and Arab graduates, and for both women and men. A full 82% of respondents, on average, reported “high” or “very high” satisfaction with their jobs.



Alumni Spotlight:
Inspiring
Stories



Bruria Ben Shahr

Bruria is just 28 years old, but she is already married with three children and working towards a Ph.D. in Computer Science. That is an impressive achievement, especially for an ultra-Orthodox woman. Bruria earned her B.Sc. in Computer Science at HAC's Strauss Campus. "Immediately upon graduating," she recalls, "I was given the opportunity to stand in front of a class and teach; I don't take that for granted." Bruria continued to earn an M.Sc. at HAC's main campus. Luckily, many courses were on Zoom because of COVID-19, making it easier for her to cope with the challenges of studying in a secular atmosphere. Later, a professor in the Department referred Bruria to her own thesis supervisor at Ben Gurion University, and Bruria decided to follow her dream of an academic career rather than pursue a job in hi-tech. Today, after teaching for five years at HAC's Strauss Campus, she is now working for her thesis advisor. Bruria recently presented the subject of their work - as well as her doctoral thesis, entitled - a "Clinical Decision Support System" (CDSS), at the annual conference of the Israeli Association for Medical Informatics (ILAMI).

"HAC is a home and a family," she says. "The faculty and administration are constantly thinking of how they can best support students without lowering academic standards. My classmates landed great jobs at Mobileye and Intel, among other companies."



Nour Afghani

Nour, who is from East Jerusalem, began her B.A. in Behavioral Science in 2019, and a large part of her studies was characterized by remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the fact that she did not complete the intensive Hebrew language pre-academic program, Nour overcame the language challenges with flying colors. Today, Nour manages a successful program that promotes social skills for over 60 East Jerusalem high-school students. As part of her responsibilities, she oversees university and college students from across Jerusalem who volunteer in the program to fulfill their community service requirements. In addition, Nour works in HAC's Career Counseling Center and advises young Arab-Israeli students during their studies at the College.

Nour wants to put her experience to further use and hopes to become an educational guidance counselor for young adults (ages 18-30). She enrolled in the M.A. degree program in Educational Counseling at The Hebrew University, and hopes to be accepted. "Studies at HAC were difficult, but I see that I have a much better grasp of the language than other students who studied at the University. Arab students often come to HAC from other Arab institutions of higher education, where the system is vastly different, and therefore the support that HAC gives its students is invaluable, especially in the first year of studies," she says.



Adi Gefen

Adi grew up in Rehovot and came to Jerusalem following her military service to study at HAC's DAN Department of Creative Human Design. Some eight years later, she is still living in the city: Adi works as a service designer for the Municipality of Jerusalem and is studying (not at HAC) for her M.A. in Sociology and Anthropology, with a specialization in organizational consulting.

"I was looking at four possible schools for my undergraduate studies, and I am so glad I chose HAC," she says. "It offered me so much. I took part in the President's Program for Excellence, I took workshops on multiculturalism, and helped run the Department's booth at Jerusalem's Artists' Colony Fair for a few years." Her final project involved customizing services to specific target populations, and she developed a system that enables organizations to identify community representatives and co-design community services in collaboration with them. Her M.A. thesis focuses on how organizations can use tacit information to promote cultural accessibility.

"HAC taught me how to be a researcher," she says, "not just how to collect information, but how to go out in the field, interview people, organize surveys, and so much more." When she completed her studies, Adi offered to help mentor fourth year design students at HAC. Once a month for the past three years, Adi has been doing just that.



Nerya Mansbach-
Richardson

After performing her national service, Nerya, who is from Ma'aleh Adumim, initially began studying Computer Science, but the COVID-19 pandemic led her to rethink the course of her life. She decided to study Behavioral Science instead and enrolled at HAC.

"Our professors were very strict, though fair with their demands," she recalls, "and they didn't miss an opportunity to tell us how much they believed in us, and that we should dream big." Nerya especially recalls one course which involved practical work at a center for at-risk and autistic children. "This really gave me a better understanding of the profession," she recalls.

Today, Nerya is married and the mother of two children, and remarkably busy on all fronts. She is completing an M.A. in Early Childhood at The Hebrew University's Department of Social Work. Simultaneously, she works as an assistant researcher at The Haruv Institute and as an assistant researcher for Dr. Shani Oppenheim-Weller, Chair of HAC's Department of Behavioral Science. Moreover, following her teachers' advice about dreaming big, Nerya hopes to continue to pursue a doctorate and engage in academic research in her field.



Ezra Feldman

Ezra is originally from the community of Hashmonaim, near Modi'in, and today is married and living in Jerusalem. He was always interested in product development and 3D printing, so the field of industrial design was a natural choice for him. Ezra started his undergraduate studies at HAC in 2018 and finished in 2022. During his studies, HAC helped Ezra to obtain a job at a studio for mechanical engineering, where he gained important experience.

Today Ezra works at PublicZone, a leading Israeli company in the field of transportation design, which was co-founded by Prof. Kenneth Segal, a Senior Lecturer in the DAN Department of Creative Human Design, and one of the Department's founders. As part of the responsibilities in his job, Ezra is working on large national transportation projects.

“We were especially fortunate to be a relatively small class, with only 26 students, and therefore we received a lot of personal attention and support,” he says. “Having said that, the faculty gives you the independence to develop on your own.”



Shada Baghdadi

After Shada completed her degree in Optometry in 2020, HAC helped her to open a few doors, and she immediately landed her present job at Hadassah Medical Center, where she works as an optometrist and imaging technician. However, this job appears to be just a steppingstone on her career path: Shada hopes to pursue an M.Sc. in Brain Science in the near future, and is interested in becoming a researcher. Shada, from East Jerusalem, is the youngest of four siblings, all of whom have university degrees.

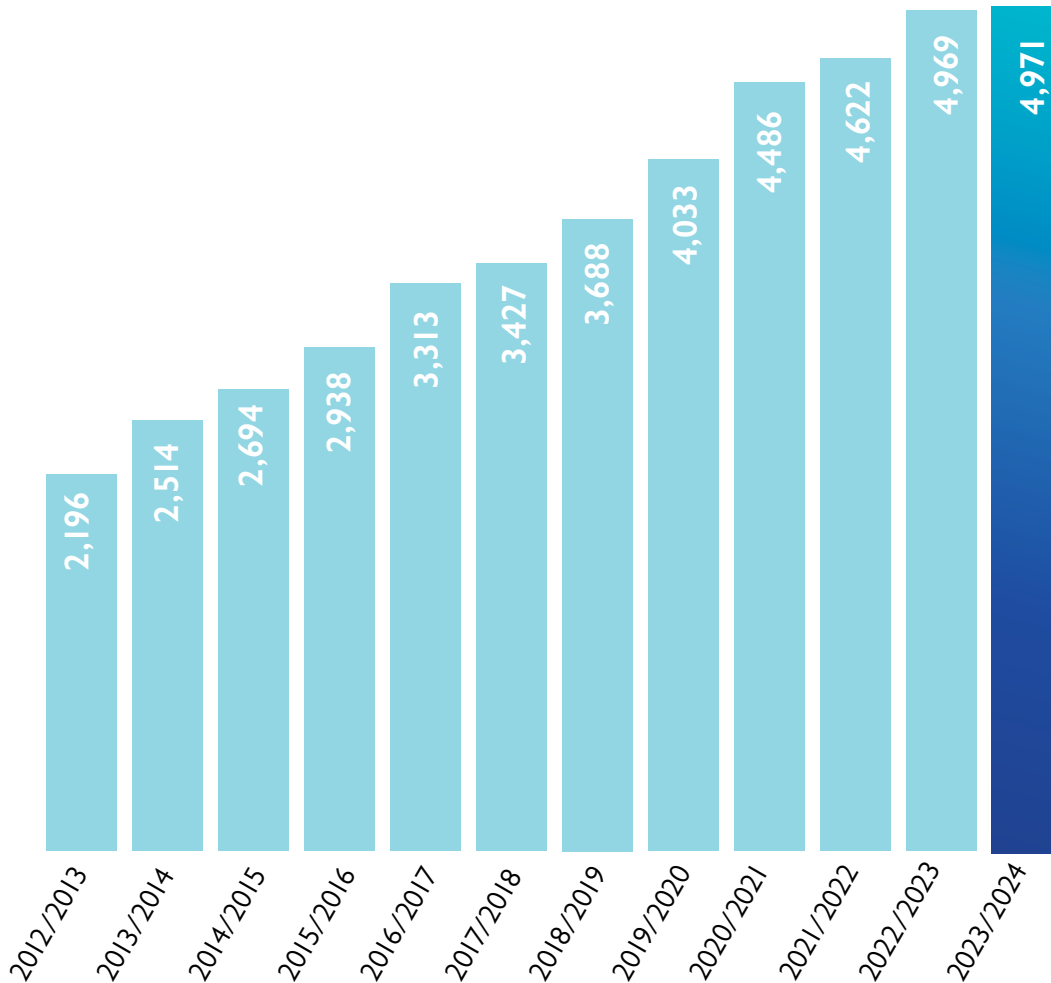
“I didn't know any Hebrew when I finished high school, so I enrolled in HAC's pre-academic program, during which I decided to study Optometry,” Shada recalls. Studying on a mixed campus was a pleasant experience for her. “We were 10 Arab students in a class of 40, but I felt no different than anyone else. It wasn't an issue at all.”

As an excellent student, Shada was one of three students from HAC selected in 2019 to participate in a special student exchange program with Fulda University in Germany. Shada is also fluent in English, and participated in the Model United Nations program on campus, and appeared prominently in a fundraising video that the College produced during 2020.



Student Body

Growth in the number of students during the last decade.





74%
Female

26%
Male



68%
Jewish

32%
Arab-Israeli



51%
From Jerusalem

49%
Outside Jerusalem

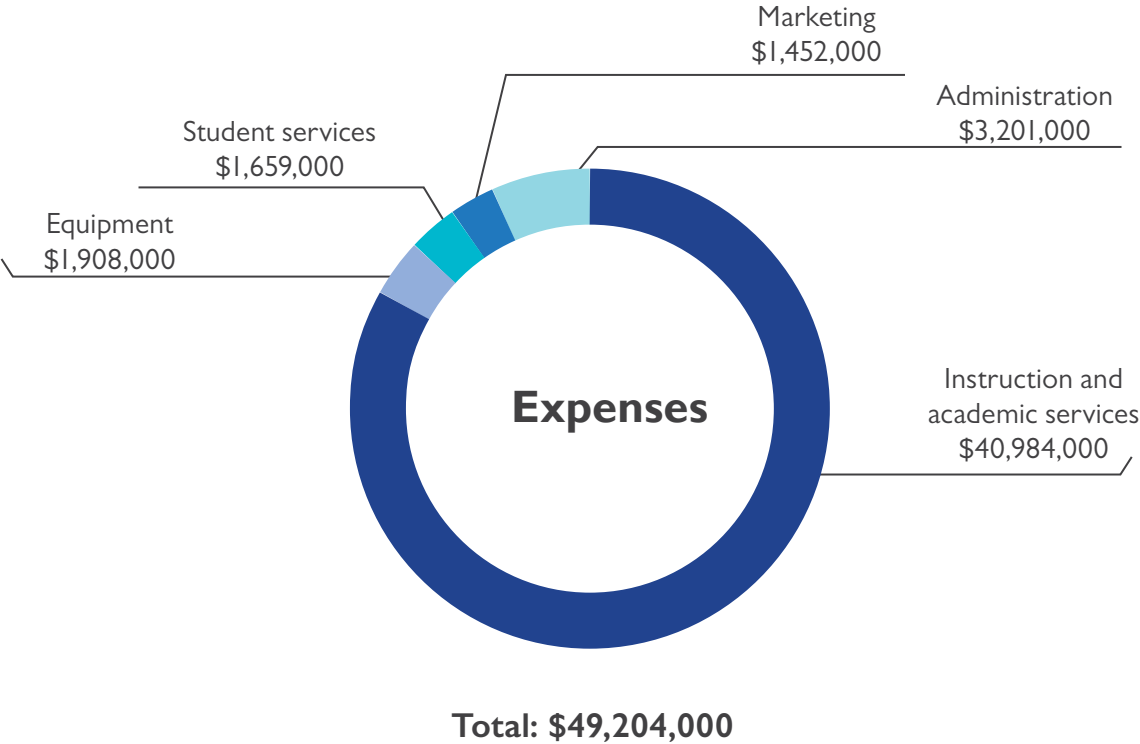
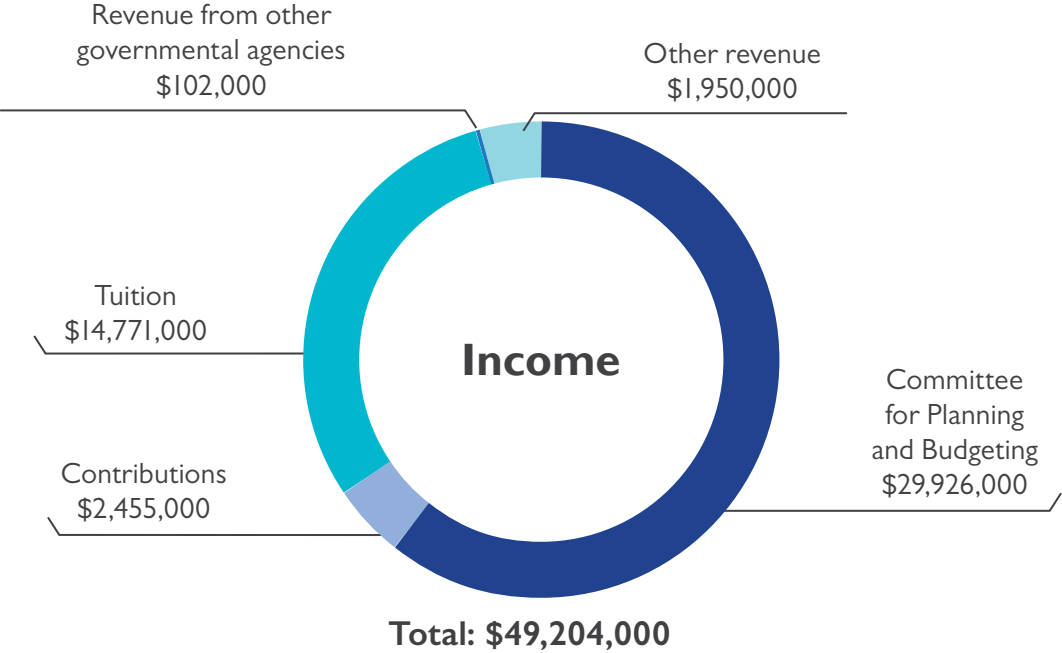


54%
First generation to
higher education



Financial Summary

Fiscal Year 2023-2024



Interdisciplinary Faculty for Science, Health, and Society

Prof. Ariela Gordon-Shaag, Chair

Abrons Department of Computer Science (B.Sc. and M.Sc.)

Prof. Michael Berman, Department Chair

Prof. Michel Bercovier, Head of
Computer Studies Program

Dr. Yoram Yekutieli, Head
of the Master's Program

Biotechnology (B.Sc.)

Dr. Danny Zeevi, Department Chair

Communication Disorders

(B.A. and M.A.)

Prof. Avi Besser, Department Chair

Dr. Ruth Litt-Afori, Head of the
Speech and Language Division

Dr. Devora Brand, Head of the
Audiology Division

DAN Department of Creative Human Design (B.Des.)

Liran Elbaz-Bloch, B.Des.
Department Chair

Elfant Department of Optometry and Vision Science (B.Optom. and M.Optom.)

Dr. Hadas Ben-Eli, Department Chair

Dr. Liat Gantz, Head of Master's Program

Environmental Quality Science (B.Sc.)

Dr. Geula Sharf, Department Chair

Medical Laboratory Science

(B.Med.Lab.Sc., M.Med.Lab.Sci.)

Dr. Ayelet Arbel-Eden, Department Chair

Prof. Ann Saada-Reisch, Head of the
Master's program

Margulies Family Department for the Development of Children with Special Needs (M.A.)

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Management of Health Systems (B.A.)

Prof. Nissim Alon, Department Chair

Interdisciplinary Faculty for Society and Community

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Behavioral Science (B.A.)

Dr. Shani Oppenheim-Weller,
Department Chair

Economics and Accounting (B.A.)

Prof. Yoram Eden, Department Chair

Management (B.A. and M.A.)

Dr. Iris Yaffe, Department Chair

Dr. Keren Mazuz, Head of Master's Program

Photographic Communication (B.A.)

Prof. Judith Guetta, Department Chair

Politics and Communication (B.A.)

Prof. Doron Shultziner, Department Chair

Social Work (B.S.W.)

Prof. Chaya Itzhaky, Department Chair



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Azrieli Center for Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education and Employment

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Hagit Freeman, B.A., Deputy Director, and Manager of the **Career Counseling Center**

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Yael Lezmi, M.A., Dean

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Karina Linetsky, M.A., Director

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HAC International Office

Yael Catalan, M.A.

Student Administration

Inbar Levi, B.A.

Ruth Blond Information Resource Center

Eric Royi, Library Director

Community Outreach Programs

Azrieli Gallery

Shani Avivi, M.A., Curator

Prof. Judith Guetta, Academic Director

Adler Aphasia Center

Dafna Olenik, M.A., Director

Canadian Hadassah-WIZO Centre for Clinical Training & Community Care

Prof. Cahtia Adelman,

Director of Audiology Clinic

Tzila Shwartzshtein, M.A., Director of Speech and Language Clinic

Community Optometry Clinic

Cyril Kahloun, M.Optom.,

Director of Optometry Clinic

Strauss Campus for Haredi Students

Rabbi Yaakov & Rivka Yeruslavsky,

Directors

Community Clinics

Annual Number of Patient Visits



Audiology

2,569



Speech and Language

2,088



Optometry

8,197

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HAC's Vision

HAC is a multi-disciplinary institution of higher education that encourages excellence among its students, academic faculty, and administrative staff. The College prioritizes students' success and wellbeing, while promoting tolerance and cultural diversity. HAC utilizes advanced educational methods and technologies to offer its students high-level academic courses, personalized practical training, and all the tools they need for professional advancement throughout their career. With its diverse student body, burgeoning number of outstanding graduates, stellar faculty, and exceptional achievements, the College is a driving force of innovation in the academic landscape, and makes a significant impact on the social and economic development of Israel and especially the City of Jerusalem.

American Friends of HAC, Jerusalem

We are happy to announce that, together with a select group of friends and supporters in the US, we have established the American Friends of HAC Jerusalem, a 501(c)(3) organization. Through this initiative, we will be able to publicize HAC's activities in a more effective way, and raise awareness of HAC's critical impact on Israeli society and economy. We invite our friends and donors to become active in this organization, join us in our efforts to promote support for HAC from a wider audience, and help us increase our critical network of donors and friends. We will keep you informed about further developments.

For further information contact:

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