



Brain Sharing

Strengthening the connection
between Israeli minds around
the world and Israeli academia



“ Throughout my many years in academia, I have watched the ever-growing phenomenon of brain drain with concern, and wondered how I could help slow it down.

Last month, I was appointed president of Reichman University. In this role, I see the advancement of quality and groundbreaking research as a fundamental national mission, and I have set ourselves the goal of bringing back outstanding Israeli and Jewish researchers in tenured positions at the world’s top universities and offering them an academic home in Israel that will serve their needs.

All parties will gain from this, and the State of Israel will benefit from closer ties with its leading scientists and their integration into Israeli academia.”

Prof. Rafi Melnick

President of Reichman University



Background

Since its inception, Reichman University has aspired to be a unique voice in Israeli academia, while remaining an integral part of it: an institution that excels in teaching and research, enriching and advancing higher education in Israel, while cultivating the future leadership of society and contributing to the State of Israel and the Jewish people.

Reichman University is a model of the ability of a private enterprise to offer solutions to national and societal challenges.

"The State of Israel is the largest exporter of academics to the United States relative to its population, or in other words, a world leader in brain drain. Over the years, various steps have been taken to try to stop this phenomenon.

According to OECD data, as of 2020, Israel is ranked 17th out of 37 countries in terms of emigrants with higher education, and the rate of highly educated Israeli emigrants in OECD countries is 6.9%."

(From "Israelis with Academic Education Abroad and Steps Taken to Return Them to Israel," Eliran Zered, June 2020).

According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics, about 33,000 academics with Israeli degrees currently live abroad. About 2,300 of them are Israelis who hold doctoral degrees, the majority of whom live in the United States.

The CBS data refer to researchers temporarily employed at U.S. universities, primarily in postdoctoral programs, as well as to guest researchers and lecturers who have completed their Ph.D.'s and who have nowhere to come back to. The shortage of job opportunities in Israeli academia forces many of them to remain abroad.

The national plan to reverse the brain drain, which was approved at the beginning of the last decade and even provided a budget of billions of shekels, failed. But it is not a lost cause.

The reasons for this phenomenon are varied, though the main explanation seems to be the chronic shortage of available positions and research infrastructure in Israel. In light of the opportunities offered at universities around the world, bringing Israeli researchers back to Israel is a complex task.

Reichman University offers a creative solution to the problem by strengthening these researchers' ties with the Israeli academy and creating a support system for them - inviting them to act as lecturers for intensive courses, engaging in joint research with them, hosting them for a sabbatical year, and more.

Reichman University as an academic home for Israeli minds abroad

The successful integration of Reichman University into the State of Israel's research community was a welcome development.

A Council for Higher Education report (June 2021, Jerusalem) stated that "IDC Herzliya's inclusion in the list of Israeli research universities will be an honor for the country and its system of higher education."

From the day **Prof. Uriel Reichman** founded Reichman University (originally called IDC Herzliya), it was one of a kind: an academic institution modeled after the elite universities in the United States; a private, non-profit institution that does not receive funding from the governmental budgetary system for higher education, whose expenses are funded exclusively by tuition and donations. This has allowed the university to maintain its independence and commitment to act purely in the interest of its students and their education.

Since its establishment, the best Israeli lecturers and researchers from the leading universities in the world have joined the faculty of Reichman University, drawing on their rich experience to teach, research and develop up-to-date curricula. All of these Israeli researchers, who returned home after many years in the United States and Europe, are world-renowned in their field and have published vast amounts of research.

They decided to return to Israel and contribute to the bolstering of Israeli academia, giving up the higher salaries offered at universities around the world. Our researchers publish articles in the most prominent journals and appear at important international conferences. In recent years, hundreds of research grants have been awarded to Reichman University's faculty members, including the prestigious European Research Grants (ERC).

An international and Zionist University

The adoption of an international outlook has been a central pillar of the institution's approach and character from day one. Today, thousands of students from 90 countries around the world are pursuing degrees at the Raphael Recanati International School. The school was established in 2000 with the aim of strengthening the connection between Israel and Jewish communities around the world. About 70% of the international students make *aliyah* by the end of their studies, and many of them serve in the IDF – this is a profound Zionist mission.

Just as we turned the university into a home for thousands of students from around the world pursuing their BA and MA degrees in Israel, our ambition is to provide an academic home for leading Israeli and Jewish scientists currently living abroad.



“IDC Herzliya (today Reichman University) is the most international institution in Israel, with the highest number of international students studying for full degrees and the highest number of Jewish international students...”

*(From the Council for Higher Education's
"Internationalization in Higher Education" report)*



**For more
information:**

president@idc.ac.il

www.runi.ac.il