UMass Lowell and University of Haifa Sign Collaboration Agreement

The partnership between UMass Lowell and University of Haifa was officially launched when Chancellor Marty Meehan and President Aaron Ben-Za’ev signed a memorandum of understanding for cooperation across disciplines in education and research.

Provost Ahmed Abdelal chaired the reception, which included speeches by Paula Rayman, the Director of the Middle East Center, and Marcy Williams, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at the UMass System.

The collaboration includes:

• Cooperation across disciplines in education and research
• Faculty exchange across disciplines
• Student exchange through collaborative programs and reciprocal Co-ops and internships
• BA/MA Program in Peace and Conflict Studies
• Summer Institute between the Colleges of Education

(Seated L to R) President Aaron Ben-Za’ev, University of Haifa, and Chancellor Marty Meehan, UMass Lowell, sign the institutional collaboration agreement. (Standing) Middle East Center Director Paula Rayman and Provost Ahmed Abdelal.

“The partnership we are formalizing today is a momentous occasion for both of our outstanding public sector universities. Both universities stand behind incorporating social responsibility into the heart of our educational philosophy and both maintain a diverse culture of students.”

—Chancellor Marty Meehan

The Middle East Center for Peace, Development, and Culture focuses on fostering collaborations and partnerships with educational institutions in the Middle East across an interdisciplinary spectrum including the social sciences, the natural sciences and engineering, the humanities and health and education fields.

These international partnerships embrace undergraduate and graduate student exchange programs, faculty exchange and joint research ventures. The Center will explore the development of further collaborative ventures with major Middle East universities including institutions in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Turkey.

An integral part of the Center will be a wide range of activities to shed light on the major issues in the Middle East and their significance in the global arena. The Center will work to advance knowledge of the relationship between economic development and successful peace efforts. The Center will host Guest Speaker Series, seminars and cultural events as well as dissemination of relevant research reports, media resources, and special lectures.

The Center reflects the growing commitment of the University of Massachusetts Lowell to establish itself as a leader on key international issues of our time and to provide the educational vision to promote peace and understanding so necessary for the future of our global society.
UMass Lowell Launches New Middle East Center

Opening Event Features Expert on Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

UMass Lowell officially launched its new Middle East Center for Peace, Development, and Culture with a special event featuring Professor Yoram Meital of Ben-Gurion University in Israel.

Meital, chairman of the Chaim Herzog Center for Middle East Studies and Diplomacy at Ben-Gurion University, presented a lecture on “Peace in Tatters: Vision and Reality in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.” He explored the major obstacles and challenges to the peace process and the options for moving forward.

Meital identified four components that are necessary for all successful nonviolent movements for change: Commitment to a vision that peace can indeed be won; Trust that a genuine partner can be found in the “enemy camp”; Effective leadership that comes from below and rises to the top and a public shift from finger pointing towards collaboration. The conflict continues, Meital suggested, because these components are lacking on both sides.

Meital is an expert on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the politics of Arab states and nationalism in the Middle East, and he provides news analysis for media around the world.

Meital’s talk with faculty and graduate students is the first of what will be a wide range of activities—including guest speakers, seminars and cultural events—for the University community and the public presented by the center to shed light on the major issues in the Middle East and its significance in the global arena.

Plastics Engineering Partnership with Shenkar University

UMass Lowell and Shenkar University have an innovative joint graduate program in Plastics Engineering. Students from both UMass Lowell and Shenkar’s Master of Science (M.Sc) programs are be able to attend classes and conduct their research at both UML and Shenkar toward their graduate certificate.

Both universities’ polymer studies started out as textile technology and evolved into Plastics Engineering Departments. The Plastics Engineering Department in UML is the only accredited department in the United States, the same way that the Plastics Engineering Department in Shenkar is the only accredited program in Israel.
UMass Lowell Sends Delegation to Israel

International partnerships are essential for stimulating new research, discussion, and learning. Global collaborations allow UMass Lowell to go beyond what it can do by itself and these partnerships will create a new generation of decision makers, entrepreneurs, and leaders who have the international experience and perspective needed to succeed. The Middle East Center is one of six international centers set up by the University. In June 2009, a delegation from UMass Lowell visited several universities in Israel in order to establish partnerships and lay the foundation for future academic exchanges.

At the University of Haifa, the delegation met with President Aaron Ben-Ze’ev, Vice President and Dean of Research Majid Al-Haj, Rector Yossi Ben Artzi, and Dean of Education Ofra Mayseless. Members of the two universities decided to establish an institutional collaboration agreement. This collaboration encompasses faculty and student exchange, research partnerships, and a joint BA/MA program in Peace Studies. On October 5, President Ben Ze’ev signed the agreement at UMass Lowell.

The Deans of Education, Anita Greenwood and Ofra Mayseless proposed a joint Summer Institute between the universities. Currently, Professor Jim Nehring and Professor Stacy Szczesiul are working with their counterparts at the University of Haifa to establish a summer institute dedicated to Cultivating Professional Learning Communities.

Professor Susan Braunhut and Professor Stephen McCarthy visited Technion University to explore possible collaborations in the sciences and engineering.

The entire delegation traveled to Ben-Gurion University for a meeting with Rector Jimmy Weinblatt.

The Rector is planning on visiting UMass Lowell in Spring 2010 in order to continue the conversation about how the two universities can establish partnerships and exchanges.

At Shenkar University, the delegation met with President Amotz Weinberg, Professor Hanna Dodiuk, head of Plastics Engineering, and Professor Samuel Kenig, Dean of the faculty of Engineering and head of Chemical Engineering. UMass Lowell and Shenkar University have a joint graduate program in Plastics Engineering.

“We are confident that our partnership can set an example in advancing understanding that our world so desperately needs in the area of peace and conflict resolution. For each one of us in our respective universities is responsible for replacing resentment with understanding, and indifference with resolve. The academy is a place more than any other that can shape processes for learning for generations to come. That is why I am so proud of this partnership we are forming.” —Provost Ahmed Abdelal on the partnership between UMass Lowell and the University of Haifa.
Peace and Conflict Studies BA/MA

Nina Coppens, Interim Dean of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, established a faculty committee to oversee the development of the Peace and Conflict Studies degree program at UMass Lowell. The committee will develop the core curriculum and listing of electives, identify pre-existing courses such as those that were part of the Peace Studies Certificate Program, and establish the requirements for both the bachelors and masters degrees.

The UMass Lowell Peace and Conflict Studies degree program is scheduled to launch in the near future. The University of Haifa is establishing its Peace and Conflict Management program next year. A central part of the partnership between the universities will be student and faculty exchange in the area of Peace and Conflict Studies. Students from both universities will have the opportunity to intern at NGOs working on peace and justice issues.

Several NGOs in the Middle East have already expressed a willingness to accept UMass Lowell Students. They include:

- Center for Jewish-Arab Economic Development, Sails for Peace, Shatil, New Israel Fund

The Middle East Center will also be identifying appropriate NGOs in the region for foreign exchange students who will be visiting UMass Lowell.

The Middle East Center will be working closely with Professors Gavriel Salomon and Sammy Smooha to develop the degree program. Professor Salomon will be serving as this year’s Greeley Scholar. Sammy Smooha is the director of the program in Peace and Conflict Management at University of Haifa. Sammy Smooha is a professor of sociology and currently serving as the Jennings Randolph Senior fellow at the United States Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C. Professor Smooha will be a Visiting Scholar at UMass Lowell in fall 2010.

Greeley Scholar: Gavriel Salomon

The Greeley Scholar for Peace Studies award honors a distinguished advocate for peace, noted humanitarian, or faith leader who is asked to serve in limited residency at the University of Massachusetts Lowell during one semester each year.

The award is named for Rev. Dana McLean Greeley, who was an internationally respected advocate for peace, human rights, and civil rights and a long-time Unitarian Universalist minister in Concord, Massachusetts. The Scholar is selected on the basis of his or her ability to effectively promote the cause of peace and conflict resolution at local, regional, national, or international levels and/or peace and justice studies.

Gavriel Salomon is this year’s Greeley Scholar. He is the director of the Center for Research on Peace Education in Haifa. Professor Salomon was the Dean of the Faculty of Education and an educational psychology professor at the University of Haifa.

He is co-chair of the board of directors of Sikkuy, the Association for the Advancement of Civic Equality in Israel, and chair of the Academic Council of the Arab Academic College El-Kassami.

Professor Salomon received the Israel Prize in 2001 for his work in the field of peace education. In 2006, Salomon was elected as fellow of the International Academy of Education.

Professor Salomon received his B.A. and M.A. from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and his Ph.D. in educational psychology and communication from Stanford University.