



FLORIDA-ISRAEL INSTITUTE

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NEWSLETTER FROM THE INSTITUTE'S CO-DIRECTORS

September 2006



Dr. Daniel Rieger (BCC) Dr. Zvi Roth (FAU)

The Florida-Israel Institute (FII) is a public organization administered jointly by Florida Atlantic University (FAU) and Broward Community College (BCC). Its primary purpose is to promote enhanced governmental, economic, technological, cultural, educational and social ties between the States of Florida and Israel. This mission is achieved through the formation of cooperative initiatives in research, academic development, student and faculty exchange, cultural exchange, and technical assistance between FAU, BCC and Israeli institutions of higher learning and private sector commercial endeavors.

Two groups assist FII in carrying out its mission: a Board of Directors consisting of community leaders and members from academics, government and private industry; and a faculty committee that focuses exclusively on the academic activities of FII.

Florida-Israel Institute was created in the late 1980s by the state legislature as one of thirteen linkage institutes which paired public postsecondary institutions with selected foreign countries to enhance interactions between those countries and Florida.

FII co-sponsors visits from Israeli cultural artists, sponsors a monthly Israeli film series, invites Israeli faculty for academic collaboration, facilitates research initiatives, awards legislature-approved tuition waivers, develops study abroad programs in Israel for American college and university students, and facilitates academic and other (e.g., business, technological) delegations to Israel.

News Briefs

Florida-Israel Institute gratefully acknowledges the efforts of Florida legislators to fund the Institute at \$200,000 for Fiscal Year 2006-2007. The appropriation was sponsored by House Representative Adam Hasner.

The Florida-Israel Institute's office has relocated from the FAU Davie campus to the Boca campus, at Fleming Hall Room 405. The Institute thanks the FAU College of Business for its hospitality.

The Florida-Israel Institute welcomes its new executive secretary Ms Shari Saylor.

The Florida-Israel Institute Fall 2006 Scholarships

Every semester the Florida-Israel Institute awards 25 full-time out-of-state tuition exemption scholarships to Israeli citizens who study in one of the Florida public higher-education institutes. These scholarships are awarded on the basis of academic excellence, recommendations and community service.

This month's newsletter features scholarship recipient **Gadi Sharoni (Florida International University)** who tells us in his own words about his life in Israel and studies in Florida:



I was born in Jerusalem, and at age five, I moved to live in kibbutz Beit Kama. When I was a teenager, I relocated to a small town called Lahavim. There I joined a youth movement; at first as a participant but over time I became increasingly involved with administrative and leadership tasks. At the age of eighteen, I joined the Israeli army serving in the special service; then, I volunteered for an extra year of service to become an officer. This added responsibility gave me a great deal of satisfaction. I felt I was doing the best I could to help my country.

I came to Florida where I have family and relatives; I thought that family and relatives would make the relocation smoother. After arriving I found that Florida's unique multicultural society had many benefits for my international orientation. Currently I am pursuing a Bachelor degree in International Business and a minor in International Relations at Florida International University through the International Business Honors Program.

Ever since coming to Florida, I joined many organizations and even established one on my own. In 2003, I spearheaded a non-profit youth movement from its beginning; after one year it had over 130 attendees. The youth movement is part of the Tzofim (scouts) Movement in Israel and has local headquarters in New York. The attendees named the local branch in Florida Shevet Almog. I established new traditions in the local Jewish-Israeli community such as memorial ceremonies for the Holocaust, Yom Hazikaron, Yitzchak Rabin, and Ron Arad, as well as activities for the holidays as the "Purimon" happening in Purim, Parade and candle lighting in Hanukkah, Lag BaOmer fire ('Komzitz') and more. The weekly activities included trips, camps, ceremonies, leadership seminars, and holiday celebrations. These activities are for fourth to twelfth graders and are conducted in Hebrew.

I graduated from Broward Community College (BCC) with highest honors as a member of the Honors Institute. Currently, my grade point average (GPA) is 3.9. I am a member of the Honors College at Florida International University (FIU), and I regularly take honors classes. My major requires that students take more advanced classes, write an original thesis, and perform community service projects in order to graduate. I was nominated to the National Dean's List as well as to the FIU Dean's List.

Supporting the Institute

If you wish to support the mission of the Florida-Israel Institute, you are invited to make a tax deductible contribution to the Florida Atlantic University Foundation. Please indicate that your contribution is for the Florida-Israel Institute.