

2019-2020

Annual Summary

**The Bengis Center for
Entrepreneurship &
Innovation**



**Bengis Center for
Entrepreneurship & Innovation**

Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business and Management
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev



Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business & Management
Management Leads Society

Greetings from David Bengis

Nearly 20 years ago, my father, Arnold Bengis, established the first academic entrepreneurship center in Israel, creating new businesses, integrating practical content into academic courses, holding hundreds of conferences, and establishing ties between academia and industry. Today, the Bengis Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation upholds its leadership role in educating Israel's future cadre of business leaders and instilling within them the interest and skills needed to transform ideas into viable ventures. It actively develops and strengthens all aspects of the innovation ecosystem of Beer-Sheva by asking our students to solve real-world problems.

With nearly two decades of success behind us, here's to many more years of meaningful growth and achievement.

Sincerely,
David Bengis

Greetings from Prof. Oded Lowengart **Chairman of the Bengis Center for** **Entrepreneurship & Innovation**

It is with great pleasure that I write this greeting to conclude the wonderful academic year of 2019-20. Despite the unforeseeable challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, this year the Center continued promoting its activities and international outreach. Whether in person or not, it is of great importance to us to strengthen our relationships and expand our reach abroad. For that reason, we took advantage of the new normal to seek virtual opportunities for collaboration and development with universities and institutions worldwide.

While daily activities may have had to adapt, the core values of hands-on, interdisciplinary and multicultural entrepreneurship education and the interplay between academia and the "field" remain the same and will continue to be significant components of the Center.

Best regards,
Prof. Oded Lowengart

Greetings from Yossi Shavit

Director of the Bengis Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation

This year was fraught with complex challenges, from the security situation in the first semester to the Coronavirus pandemic in the second. As any innovator knows, a challenge is an opportunity in disguise. In that sense, this year was a huge opportunity for the Bengis Center to develop our virtual programming and strengthen our relationships with international partners.

This was a time of recognizing the underlying strengths of the Bengis Center and simultaneously expanding our capabilities. I am proud to look back on all we accomplished this year and eager to see what's to come.

*Sincerely,
Yossi Shavit*

Our Philosophy

We believe that becoming an entrepreneur is a process. It begins with learning what entrepreneurship is and what it takes and concludes when one has acquired the tools needed to successfully land investments and grow a company. People come to the Bengis Center at all stages along this process; some just starting out, others already established entrepreneurs.

The Center's programming addresses every step along the entrepreneurial process with practical, semi-academic, and academic programs, providing everyone who walks through our doors with the support that they need to grow and succeed.

About the Bengis Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation

Since its establishment in 2001 as the first academic entrepreneurship center in Israel, one of the fundamental beliefs of the Bengis Center at BGU has been that entrepreneurship can be taught. We strive to do just that, providing innovators at any stage of the entrepreneurship process with the skills and support they need to be successful.

The Bengis Center, situated in the GGFBM, is dedicated to educating and training a future cadre of business leaders and innovators who have taken up the challenge of converting ideas into new marketable products, services, and enterprises. We serve as a catalyst, creating and channeling entrepreneurial activity throughout the university environment and the entire Negev region.

In all of our programs, we strive to give our students practical knowledge and hands-on experiences. We emphasize multi-disciplinary activities that promote collaborative bonds across sectors, and also believe in the importance of cross-cultural interactions, working in partnership with institutions from around the world. Over the years we have created programs that allow us to support students, staff and people from the community throughout the entrepreneurial process.



Multicultural
programs



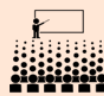
Multidisciplinary
programs



Challenges
from the field



Support throughout
the entrepreneurial
process



Exposure to
all students



Activities
open to all
institutions

The Bengis Center in Numbers

500 HOURS

Of individual mentoring by **30** leading figures in business and technology.



215 PARTICIPANTS

In The Challenge competition, with **104** submissions from **19** participating courses at **7** academic institutions.

5 INTERNS

From China and Israel, working with **2** startups in the FacultyXL Accelerator.



4 COMMUNITIES

3 student communities and **1** professional network that led a combined total of **16** events, both in-person and online.

1 TECH HUB

24/7 workspace equipped with cutting-edge technology



Note about COVID-19 Response

*Playing to our strengths and
adapting to the times*

The coronavirus pandemic presented a global challenge unlike any seen in our generation. We chose to see this crisis as an opportunity: The unprecedented level of global solidarity as everyone underwent the same challenges made for an ideal time to strengthen international partnerships and forge new relationships. The transition to online courses meant that students were in need of practical, hands-on activities to supplement their education more than ever.

While some programs had to be postponed and some had to be altered, others were created, allowing us to ultimately continue promoting the vision of the Bengis Center to support entrepreneurs at every step of the way



Our Programs



Faculty XL Accelerator

Based out of the Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business and Management (GGFBM) at BGU, the Faculty XL Accelerator adds an essential practical element to entrepreneurship and innovation education. This year, five student interns, three from Israel and two from China, worked with three startups to conduct market analyses of Chinese, Israel, and U.S. markets. This was yet a great opportunity to keep students engaged in entrepreneurship and innovation education while they are learning from home.

"This experience has been phenomenal. The interns have added a lot of value to my business and I would definitely repeat the program."

Lee Joffa, CEO and Co-Founder of Pitch Career

GGFBM Academic Programs

This year was an opportunity for the Bengis Center to strengthen its role of providing practical, real-world programming to the GGFBM. In that capacity, we won two grants from the Edmond de Rothschild Foundation to support two academic courses focusing on social innovation. One will be used to create a new course in the Department of Hotel & Tourism Management and the other will help expand the Social ImpTech track, which asks management students to develop an original social impact startup idea as their final project in their degree.

Additionally, five courses from the GGFBM integrated The Challenge competition into their curriculum. Read more about The Challenge on page 9.

Programs with Other Departments

In addition to its work within the GGFBM, the Bengis Center also works with other departments to supplement entrepreneurship education with real-world activities.

Project with Electrical & Computer Engineering

This was the fourth year of incorporating an entrepreneurial component into over 100 senior projects submitted by the undergraduate students of the Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering. The students were asked to consider the managerial aspects of commercializing the technology they developed for their senior projects.

Medical School for International Health Module

12 students in the Medical School for International Health (MSIH) participated in a practical module that asked them to move beyond their theoretical studies and develop affordable biomed tech solutions for the developing world.

Judging Events in Inter-Departmental Courses

The Bengis Center organizes judging panels for students to pitch their final projects in front of, bridging the gap between academia and industry.

Engineering Student Mentors

This year, for the first time, we paired students from engineering departments with management students to foster collaboration and to provide support for the technical side of management projects.

"This was the first time MSIH students were exposed to the hands-on approach of entrepreneurship. It was inspiring to see the enthusiasm the students put into the course and we will be continuing the course next year, with the hope of attracting students from the Israeli medical school to participate."

Mike Diamond, Initiator of the Biomedical Engineering Program for low-income medical settings, MSIH

The Challenge

The Challenge is a global open innovation platform, designed to enlist students from all faculties and academic intuitions to provide solutions to real-world challenges affecting large organizations. Each cycle, a different global company provides a unique Challenge they are facing. This year, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Bengis Center itself presented a challenge specifically tailored to the current state of students and university studies worldwide.

THE CHALLENGE

Fourth Cycle - The Triple Bottom Line Challenge

The Triple Bottom Line Challenge asked students from all over the world to come up with an impact startup idea for improving the post-Corona world. Students could easily participate from the comfort of their own homes while being challenged to think and learn about impact startups, impact investing, the triple bottom line theory, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and more. 204 students from eight academic institutions in the U.S., Lithuania, and Israel all submitted ideas to The Challenge, with 19 participating courses presenting the Challenge to their students.



PennState



**Business
School**



International Programs

Danish-Israeli Joint Course

This program brought Danish and Israeli students together to develop their own ideas into viable business ventures in a practical, interdisciplinary and multicultural setting. The Hi-Tech Entrepreneurship in Hotels and Tourism Management program represents the beginning of an academic collaboration of great importance between Danish and Israeli institutions – Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel, UCL University College and University College Absalon in Denmark and the Innovation Centre of Denmark in Israel.



“The Innovation Centre at the Danish embassy is working to promote university collaboration with a specific focus on student entrepreneurship. In our dialogue with Israeli partners we were enticed by the unique entrepreneurship education of the Faculty of Management at BGU. We are confident that this is just the start of many jointly organized Danish-Israeli programs to come.”

Charlotte Slente, Former Ambassador Denmark to Israel

Postponed Programs

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, many programs that were scheduled to take place in the second semester of this year were delayed, with the intention of resuming activities as soon as we are able.

Joint Courses with Ivey Business School and Asper School of Business

Intended to take place in May, the Faculty planned two prestigious international programs in collaboration with leading schools in Canada - the Asper School of Business at the University of Manitoba and Ivey Business School at Western University. In each course, six or eight Israeli and 12 Canadian students will work together in both Canada and Israel to learn about startup management or business sustainability.



Hosting Delegations

Also in May, the center was supposed to host a delegation of 18 MBA students from Colegio de Estudios Superiores in Colombia for a week-long Startup Nation immersion program. Tentatively postponed for November, the students will attend lectures and work together on promoting their own startup ideas, all the while being exposed to the innovative and cultural landmarks of Israel.



Events

The Bengis Center holds dozens of events every year, such as hackathons, workshops, lectures, conferences and more. Though the format had to be adapted in many cases, the events themselves still took place, offering a practical component to studies and supplementing virtual classes.

Guest Lectures

The Center hosts dozens of guest lectures each year. These lecturers come from the business world as specialists in marketing, sales, business development and more, and from the tech world as specialists in web development, software implementation or digital health, to name a few.

Google Hashcode

On February 20, over 60 students gathered at the GDG Beer Sheva hub hosted by the Bengis Center for the Online Qualification Round of Hash Code, a team-based programming competition created by Google for university students and industry professionals.

The competition asked students to step into the shoes of a Google engineer, choose their programming language and tackle real-life engineering challenges while competing against students across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

"There is no doubt that the Bengis Center is my first choice when it comes to student action. The center empowers initiative and gives university students, from all departments, the best tools to make their vision a reality."

Ido Marko, Event Organizer
and Engineering Student



The Challenge Final Event

On June 18th, nine student finalist teams presented their ideas to a panel of seven judges from Israel, Lithuania, Russia, and the U.S. First place was awarded to two students from Yeshiva University for their idea, Remote Education for All, a tutoring app that connects students in North America and Africa. Second place went to a team from Penn State University while third place went to a team from BGU. A second team from BGU was awarded "Biggest Social Impact," while a team from Vilnius University in Lithuania was deemed "Most Creative."



Bridging the Gap - Academia & Industry

Tools for Entrepreneurs

A key aspect of the Bengis Center's activities is providing the necessary tools and resources for teams who want to advance their idea. Entrepreneurs who come to the Bengis Center have access to a variety of databases that assist with collecting information about the market, competitors and investors. We also hold one-on-one counseling meetings with students who ask for our help in developing an idea, writing a business plan or building a pitch deck.

Mentors

The Bengis Center is home to 30 mentors who represent the hi-tech sector in Israel and abroad. During the course of the year, about 800 hours of individual counseling were given to students from various programs. This year, two student volunteers developed a customized, automated platform to facilitate student meetings with mentors that will be launched next year.

Innovation Gateway - Technological Hub

The GGFBM Innovation Gateway tech hub is run by the Bengis Center and supported by Intel. The hub serves as a gateway for its visitors into the innovation ecosystem of BGU and Beer-Sheva as a whole. The fully equipped room provides visitors access to the cutting-edge technology inside.



Student Activity

The Bengis Centers supports the establishment of communities that bring together ecosystem influencers, startup communities and industry leaders to collaborate and find new innovative approaches to solve real problems and chart the way forward for entrepreneurs. Our communities create their own events with guest lectures, workshops and competitions.



DiSCo Community

DiSCo is a data mining and data science community. Led by Shahar Wirtzberger and Sheli Kohan, the community strives to provide hands-on experience in data science and organizes meetups and seminars, bringing in guest lecturers like Dr. Boris Gorelik, data scientist, and Dr. Eyal Gruss, New Media Artist and Artificial Intelligence Researcher.

BioMed Tech Community

BioMed Tech is a community of Biomedical Engineering students led by Matan Aroosh, Roni Shaashoua and Dr. Hadar Ben-Yoav. The group planned numerous events, such as Arduino workshops and guest lectures by Eran Vicus, CEO of SanoV Pte Ltd. and Yariv Kedem, Technology, I.P. and Commercial Lawyer at Kedem Law.



FinTech Community

New this year, FinTech BGU is a community for people interested in studying and exploring the new financial industry, which uses technology to revolutionize financial activities. This year's events included lectures from Elad Shemesh, Co-Founder of Together and Paul Klein, CEO VIDEA.

The English Entrepreneurship Network of the Negev

Also new this year, the Network provides a platform for current and aspiring entrepreneurs to meet, share knowledge, and learn from each other and industry experts. In addition to mingling and networking events, the community's events included lectures by Fred Kahn, CPA at Philip Stein & Associates and Dr. Asaf Zohar, Chair of Sustainable Studies Program at Trent University.

Together Apart

A team of management students and engineering students came together to work on an open-source platform that allows seniors to communicate with each other, family members and community members, especially while they are isolated in their homes.



Our Team

Board of Directors

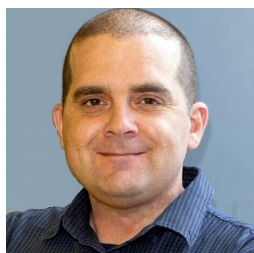


Prof. Oded Lowengart
Chairman



David Bengis
Board Member

Center Management

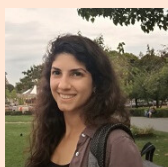


Yossi Shavit
Director

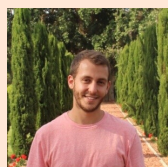


Rachel Eisman
Coordinator of Programs
and External Affairs

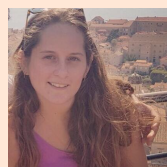
Student Leaders



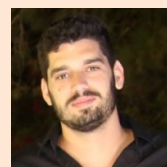
Roni Shaashoua



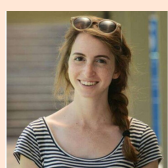
Matan Aroosh



Sheli Kohan



Shahar Wirtzberger



Libi Shlasky



Gal Memia



Noam Even



Ido Marko