

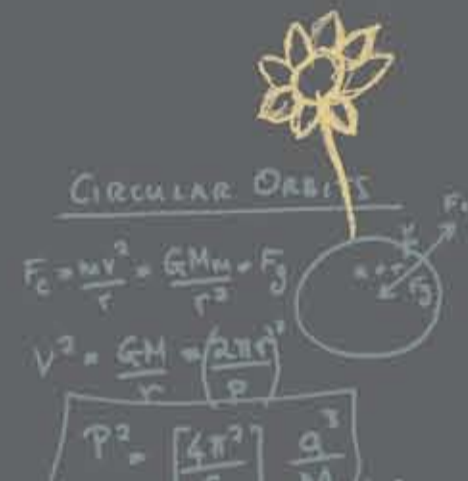
President Itamar Rabinovich

On the Record, 1999-2007



→ "I do feel a sense of pride and achievement. Needless to say, like all aspects of my job, this was not an individual effort but one that rested on the talent, cooperation and goodwill of many. I am grateful to them all."

© shapovalkera



1999-2007

→ Dear supporters,

Fundraising is an essential dimension of a university president's work. So much so, that people sometimes tend to think that it is the office's main function. This is not the entire picture. Certainly after Tel Aviv University's governance reform of 2005, but to a great extent prior to that, the president serves as the head of the university and also its academic leader. He is responsible for the overall conduct of the institution, for its academic development, for its administration and for government relations. He is also the university's chief fundraiser. There is a development division; there are hundreds of friends, supporters and employees engaged in mobilizing resources for the university. But overall responsibility for this work rests on the president.

In order to be effective, the fundraising operation has to be based on a concept and a plan of action. The following is a description of this concept and plan accompanied by a list of the main projects established during my tenure.



1 // Research and teaching

The highest priority in resource mobilization was assigned to academic development. In this context, I would like to emphasize the nanoscience and nanotechnology drive that became a forty million dollar project, together with a long list of smaller but highly important projects across the campus. This list reflects the recognition of the primacy of bio-medicine both as a cutting-edge field and as a field in which TAU enjoys a comparative advantage. A balance was sought between the reinforcement of areas of excellence and the need to develop new and innovative areas.

2 // Nurturing young researchers

Funds for doctoral fellowships and special chairs for young faculty recruitment were another priority. Major funding was elicited for the development of new interdisciplinary graduate schools (Environment, Government and Communication). The framework chosen for their development was a virtual one – raising a large fund, relying on existing faculty and space at first, and then following this by gradual academic and physical development.

3 // Community building and outreach

The major projects in this area were the Price-Brodie Initiative in Jaffa; the Landa Center for Equal Opportunity through Education; the Amiram Sivan Center for Community Initiative; the admissions program for students from the periphery supported by the Legacy Foundation; and, most recently, the Youth University. These five major programs and a number of smaller ones, all of which sought to open TAU to Israel's underrepresented groups, brought in large grants and donations. The funds have been leveraged by the enthusiasm and creativity of the teams running these projects.

4 // Stressing the "public" in a public university

TAU has built its position and reputation through academic excellence as well as through its research and policy institutes that have enriched the Israeli public discourse since the late 1960s in such areas as national security, Middle Eastern studies, law, economics, business and education. Many of the projects listed here were designed to preserve and develop the university's capacity to shape the public agenda.

The opposite side of this coin was inviting the public to help shape TAU's development. As part of building up the network of friends and supporters for TAU, we instituted an innovation: establishing International Boards of Trustees for relevant faculties, schools and institutes. This system brought in considerable additional resources and, more significantly, tied to TAU a large number of new lay leaders and supporters who otherwise may not have joined our ranks.

In addition to fundraising in the traditional sense of the term, I would like to point to two other sources of income introduced during the past few years.

1 // Venture capital investment


As part of the strategy of revitalizing Ramot – the University's technology transfer arm – and generating revenue from intellectual property, we succeeded in setting up a \$10 million fund (the Future Technology Partnership) that enabled TAU donors and others to invest in several TAU projects that had a clear potential for commercialization. We also received additional grants from foundations specially for this purpose.

2 // Direct grants from the US Federal Government

In this area TAU has just broken the ice with the first \$1 million grant but additional projects are in the pipeline.

In conclusion I would like to make a personal statement regarding fundraising. It is customary among university presidents to complain to each other about the hardships of fundraising. Indeed, like any other task, it can sometimes be difficult or tiring. But on the whole, the opportunity to meet so many engaged and generous people, to decipher their code, to understand their priorities, and to find ways of involving them in the University has, in fact, been one of the more enjoyable aspects of my work and life.

Looking back at the goals achieved and seeing the quantum leap in fundraising during my eight years, I do feel a sense of pride and achievement. Needless to say, like all aspects of my job, this was not an individual effort but one that rested on the talent, cooperation and goodwill of many. I am grateful to them all.


Professor Itamar Rabinovich

