

Asper Center Newsletter Vol 1 – Starting the year with a bang

Dear Gail, Moe, and friends of The Asper Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation

I am writing to share with you my enthusiasm for some of the events taking place at the Asper Center these past few months. The academic school year started at the end of October and with it our activities started to roll out. These involved both students, researchers, and the broader business community.

Very excitingly, we hosted a demo day at HUstart. This was a celebration of the 2017 graduates of the digital incubator. Five companies presented at the event, representing a broad swath of industries and ideas: EndoViTech—a real time trauma analysis system for vehicles, Fishtank, a platform using machine learning and NPL that enhances current insurance sales technology, WalkOut, an add-on to shopping carts based on a computer vision device that scans what goes into the cart and enables quick payment, and Licensit, a web platform that automates the music licensing process. We think Licensit is particularly cool because its founders met at HUstart!

The event was very well attended – 250 entrepreneurs, investors, and students were in the audience listening to promising companies built by Hebrew University students and alumni. Here are some photos from the event:



For students, ***we began another year in the Start-up Science Innovation seminar.*** This is a special concentration (i.e., set of courses) for students pursuing a B.A. in computer science exposing them to a breath of innovation and entrepreneurship courses. Some exciting highlights I can report:

A record number of students enrolled in the program this year (28, enrollment in 2016 was 16 students). So overall, we have a record number of 45 active students in the program! And, we increased the percentage of female students enrolled to the program this year from 6% to 40%.

Very excitingly, 6 students graduated the 2nd cohort of the program (5 students graduated the 1st cohort in 2016). We plan to honor these students at the upcoming Annual Asper Lecture.

Here are some photos from the opening lecture (a creativity workshop):



On the broader business community front, the Asper Center hosted the Jerusalem Digital Business Summit. This event, which included a multitude of lectures about how to expand your business with digital marketing, social networking, mobile technology, and eCommerce. About 500 business owners were in attendance and the business school was represented by Dr. Shai Harel who spoke about the challenges of business planning for small and medium sized firms.



We are also enjoying to opportunity to explain the Israeli ecosystem to Chinese students who hope to implement some of the aspects of Israel's success in China. We do this through a series of site visits and lectures as you can see in the picture:



For researchers, we had our first Organization Studies seminar for the year. This is an academic meeting of scholars pursuing work on organizations and innovation from a variety of theoretical lenses: strategy, entrepreneurship, organization theory, sociology of organizations, to name a few. In our first meeting, we hosted Dr Ohad Ref (Ono College) who presented ongoing research with Professor Zur Shapria from NYU. He spoke about how firms make the decision to enter new product markets and the role of their past performance and experience in making these decisions. Their study offers a more nuanced and richer analysis of both negative and positive performance feedback than much of the current literature. This was a vibrant seminar with a lively discussion—the stuff academic rigor is made of.



So I hope you are also excited about all this activity. We certainly are!

I will write again soon with highlights as the semester continues to progress. As a teaser, we have the Annual Asper lecture coming up very soon and I will be telling you all about that as well as a guest talk by leaders in the field of digital currencies—very cutting edge. Stay tuned!

More seriously, we really appreciate your support and it is central to us being able to conduct these wonderful activities and to retain this vibrancy. Thank you! In the meantime, please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Micki Eisenman, Director, the Asper Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Zvi Wiener, Dean, Jerusalem School of Business Administration