

AFFILIATED PROFESSORS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA

Over a decade ago, the senate of the University of Haifa moved to invite academics in universities all over the world to become Affiliated Professors of our university. The move was a response to the advent of a political campaign to boycott Israeli universities, which was beginning to infiltrate academic institutions. We witnessed strong opposition on the part of many of our colleagues to the boycott attempts. They were deeply disturbed by political manipulation of academic interaction on the one hand, and, on the other hand, by the discriminatory nature of the campaign, which singled Israel out from all the nations in the world, castigating it with biased and often unfounded allegations, in academic forums. Many professors in other countries became Affiliated Professors of the University of Haifa as a way of expressing their support for Israeli academia and for the principle of free universal academic exchange. **By becoming affiliated with an Israeli university, affiliated professors convey this message to would-be boycotters: “If you boycott Israeli academia, you are boycotting me.”**

Unfortunately, a small number of political extremists have worked systematically in many American university campuses, swaying often well-meaning academics with factually distorted rhetoric, emotionally targeting the uninformed, and creating an atmosphere of intimidation in which opposing voices are not heard. Recent conferences passing boycott resolutions against Israel are evidence of the unprecedented politicization of academic associations in general, and of the targeted demonization of Israeli academia in particular. Individual Israeli academics and intellectuals, often moderate peace-seekers, have been verbally assaulted and shouted down during speaking engagements in American universities.

As a result, **we have received repeated calls from supporters of Israeli academia to revive the Affiliated Professors framework, and we are very happy to do so. In the context of a complex and sometimes tragic conflict, we are proud that the University of Haifa is a beacon of academic achievement, equal opportunity, and coexistence.** The makeup of our student body reflects the demographic makeup of the country: about 25% of the student body are Arab citizens of Israel. Jewish and Arab students and professors study and teach side by side, in an atmosphere of academic freedom that is no different from that of universities in any other democratic country. Together, we are doing what academic institutions are meant to do: to pursue knowledge.

We are aware that the majority of academics strongly oppose the boycott campaign as discriminatory and as a violation of the universal principal of protecting academia from partisan political agendas. We also know that the majority is often silent because there is no appropriate forum to express that support. **If you would like to support us, we invite you to join the University of Haifa as an Affiliated Professor.** There are no obligations associated with this status, but it offers an opportunity to take a stand, for example, by including this affiliation in your publications and presentations, on your web site and in your email signature, or to more actively oppose boycott activities. For our part, we look forward to **facilitating academic contacts** with others in your field here, to promote genuine academic interaction. Attached is a short document explaining how to apply.