

NEWS

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Weizmann Institute launches a new nationwide Women in Science Program: **11 YOUNG ISRAELI WOMEN SCIENTISTS TO RECEIVE CAREER** **ENHANCEMENT AWARDS**

In a festive ceremony at the Weizmann Institute of Science, 11 young women scientists, who had completed their Ph.D. studies with honors at several Israeli universities and academic institutions, will each receive an award of about \$20,000 a year (for two years). These awards, which will help them conduct postdoctoral studies at leading universities abroad, are being granted within the framework of the new Weizmann Institute Women in Science Program aimed at assisting highly talented young women to work toward a career in the natural or exact sciences. The goal of the program is to begin closing the gap between male and female scientists in the highest ranks of academia.

Recipients of the Sara Lee Schupf Postdoctoral Awards have been selected by a special Feinberg Graduate School committee, headed by the Weizmann Institute President's Advisor for the Advancement of Women in Science, Prof. Hadassa Degani. The new program, funded by the Clore Foundation and S. Donald Sussman, is in its first year.

Three of the recipients have conducted their doctoral studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, three at the Weizmann Institute of Science, two at the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, two at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and one at Tel Aviv University.

The 2007 award recipients are:

- Lilac Amirav. Title of Ph.D. thesis from the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, Department of Chemistry: "A Novel Spray Technique for the Production of Semiconductor Nanocrystals." Topic of postdoctoral research to be conducted at the University of California, Berkeley: "Improved Solar Energy Harvesting with a Semiconductor-Metal Nanorod Photocatalyst."
- Yael Artzy-Randrup. Title of Ph.D. thesis from Tel Aviv University, Department of Zoology: "Modeling Spatially Structured Biological Systems." Topic of postdoctoral research to be conducted at the University of Michigan: "The Impact of Environmental Forcing on the Dynamics and Evolution of Infectious Diseases."

- Hadas Hawlena. Title of Ph.D. thesis from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Department of Life Sciences: “Interrelated Nature of Host-Parasite Interactions: Role of Ecological Factors.” Topic of postdoctoral research to be conducted at Indiana University: “Evolution of Virulence and Bacteriocins in Bacteria.”
- Ayelet Lamm (Margalit). Title of Ph.D. thesis from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Department of Genetics: “Functional and Structural Analysis of the Barrier-to-Autointegration Factor (BAF) Gene in *C. elegans*.” Topic of postdoctoral research to be conducted at Stanford University’s School of Medicine: “Genomic Imprinting and Epigenetic Modifications in *C. elegans*.”
- Anat Levin. Title of Ph.D. thesis from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, School of Computer Science and Engineering: “Learning and Inference in Low-Level Vision.” Topic of postdoctoral research to be conducted at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology: “A Bayesian Analysis of Camera Light Field Samplings and Reconstructions.”
- Genela Morris. Title of Ph.D. thesis from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Department of Physiology: “Neural Mechanisms of Reinforcement Learning in the Basal Ganglia.” Topic of postdoctoral research to be conducted at the Neuroscience Research Center, Charite, Germany: “Evaluating the Roles of the Cortex, Basal-Ganglia and Hippocampus during Sensory Rule Learning.”
- Irena Pekker. Title of Ph.D. thesis from the Weizmann Institute of Sciences, Department of Plant Sciences: “Mediators of the KANADI-Morphogenetic Signaling.” Topic of postdoctoral research to be conducted at the University of Massachusetts Medical School: “The Role of the Essential RNA Helicase Armitage in Gene Silencing.”
- Adi Salomon. Title of Ph.D. thesis from the Weizmann Institute of Science, Department of Materials and Interfaces: “A Different View of Charge Transport through Alkyl Chain Monolayers.” Topic of postdoctoral research to be conducted at ISIS, France: “Surface Plasmons Molecules Coupling.”
- Genia Sklute. Title of Ph.D. thesis from the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, Department of Chemistry: “Dinuclear Zinc Catalysis: Towards the Asymmetric Cyanomethylation Reaction.” Topic of postdoctoral research to be conducted at Stanford University: “New Multicomponent Approach for the Creation of Chiral Quaternary Centers in the Carbonyl Allylation Reactions.”
- Ervin Tal-Gutelmacher. Title of Ph.D. thesis from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Department of Materials Engineering: “Hydrogen Interactions with Titanium Based Alloys.” Topic of postdoctoral research to be conducted at the Institute for Materials

Physics, Germany: “The Effect of Hydrogen on the Grain Growth Phenomena in Titanium.”

- Neta Wexler Sal-Man. Title of Ph.D. thesis from the Weizmann Institute of Science, Department of Biological Chemistry: “Characterization of the Parameters Involved in the Oligomerization of Transmembrane Domain of Integral-Membrane Proteins.” Topic of postdoctoral research to be conducted at the University of British Columbia: “The Assembly of Type III Secretion System of Pathogenic *Escherichia coli*.”

The awards will help outstanding women scientists overcome the main bottleneck that impedes their professional training – conducting postdoctoral research abroad. These two or so years are considered a critical step in which up-and-coming scientists must prove their ability to conduct independent research. Yet personal, financial and family considerations may all conspire to keep many women from being able to spend several years abroad, and the result is a relatively small number of women entering the academic track compared to men.

The Weizmann Institute’s Women in Science Program aims to change that situation. Within its framework, the Institute will now annually grant special awards that will allow outstanding women scientists to conduct postdoctoral research in leading labs around the world. The grants will give women (particularly married women or mothers of young children) incentives – financial, but also social, personal and professional – to spend two years of training abroad. The long-term goal of the program is to invest resources in women who plan to develop their scientific careers in Israel, and to create a feminine leadership within the Israeli research community.

The Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, is one of the world's top-ranking multidisciplinary research institutions. Noted for its wide-ranging exploration of the natural and exact sciences, the Institute is home to 2,600 scientists, students, technicians and supporting staff. Institute research efforts include the search for new ways of fighting disease and hunger, examining leading questions in mathematics and computer science, probing the physics of matter and the universe, creating novel materials and developing new strategies for protecting the environment.

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