

**THE JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN ABRAHAMIC
INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM**



The Role of Universities in Supporting Entrepreneurship & Innovation in the MENA Region

**June 13th
2022**

**7:30am –
12:00pm EDT**

WORKSHOP PROGRAM

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The long-term mission of The Lieberman Program is to integrate universities more fully into the entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem in the MENA region, empower universities to make entrepreneurship more accessible as a career path for all members of their community, and increase university capacity to produce innovative research and scholarship that serves as the basis for new enterprises in the region. The program accomplishes this mission by working closely with local stakeholders, through a process of reciprocal learning and adaptive program management, to improve the socio-economic infrastructure needed for universities to thrive as active participants with governments, investors, and entrepreneurs in the MENA region's emerging entrepreneurial eco-system. Through stakeholder engagement workshops and facilitating dialogues with impactful entrepreneurs, UConn will work with local partners to identify needs, discover and share best practices, and work collaboratively to address barriers to entrepreneurship through: 1) network building; 2) research; 3) educational programs and exchanges; and 4) community and public policy engagement.

The recently signed Abraham Accords paved the way towards increased regional integration. However, capitalizing on the integration to further socio-economic development may prove challenging. Universities can play an active role in overcoming challenges to the entrepreneurial environment locally, nationally, and regionally, so that opportunities for deeper economic integration and development in the MENA region are fully realized.

The academy has long been a neutral site where citizens of countries that mistrust one another may come together and collaborate in mutually beneficial ways. Universities have also long been fundamental actors in the production and commercialization of innovations (i.e. Google, Gatorade, Genentech, Moderna). Thus, Universities have the potential to be breakthrough sites of cooperation and economic development for MENA countries in the post-Abraham Accords political and economic landscape. The Lieberman Program builds on this tradition and facilitates the transition of ideas from the academy to the field. By developing a support structure for purpose-driven research, identifying and mapping resources for innovators and entrepreneurs, and by convening conversations between stakeholders across the entrepreneurial eco-system, the Lieberman Program identifies best practices in entrepreneurial education and provides a vehicle for universities in the MENA region to learn from each other.

AGENDA

Please note that the schedule is in EDT, please view [time zones here](#).

7:30 AM WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

Zaid Eyadat, Ph.D., *Vice President for International Affairs & Professor of Political Science, University of Jordan*
Daniel Weiner, Ph.D., *Vice President for Global Affairs & Professor of Geography, University of Connecticut*
Senator Joseph I. Lieberman, *Former United States Senator from Connecticut*

7:45 AM INTRODUCTIONS

8:20 AM SESSION I: THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN NATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECO-SYSTEMS

Discussion Leaders:

Şeyda Ateş, *General Manager, Technology Transfer Centre, Hacettepe University*
Ryan Coles, Ph.D., *Assistant Professor of Management & Entrepreneurship, University of Connecticut*
Rona Samler, *General Manager of T3, Technion Institute of Science & Technology*

Google, Gatorade, Mobileye, and Genentech are all University spinout companies, highlighting the growing importance of University research commercialization in regional entrepreneurial eco-systems. Universities are centers of R&D, entrepreneurship education, and a social nexus of innovators, investors and policymakers that are crucial to high-growth entrepreneurship that stimulates local employment and socio-economic development. In this session, attendees will discuss common characteristics of entrepreneurial universities drawing from cases in the U.S., Israel and Saudi Arabia.

9:20 AM BREAK

9:30 AM SESSION II - BREAKOUTS:

BUILDING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL UNIVERSITY

Facilitators:

Itzik Goldwaser, Ph.D., *CEO of Yisum, Hebrew University*
Mostafa Analoui, Ph.D., *Executive Director, Technology Commercialization Services, University of Connecticut*

In this session, we discuss best practices and lessons learned from university entrepreneurship systems (pedagogy, events and programs) that successfully 1) commercialize research via academic spinouts, 2) prepare students to be future entrepreneurs and 3) make entrepreneurship more accessible as a career path for marginalized members of society.

10:00 AM SESSION III - BREAKOUT SYNTHESIS

Facilitators will report back on conversations that took place in breakout groups for broader reflection and discussion.

10:30 AM BREAK

10:40 AM SESSION IV: MOVING FORWARD

Discussion Leaders:

Ryan Coles, Ph.D., *Assistant Professor of Management & Entrepreneurship, University of Connecticut*

Daniel Weiner, Ph.D., *Vice President for Global Affairs & Professor of Geography, University of Connecticut*

Taking insights from the virtual conversations, participants will outline a set of action items for the Lieberman Program that are aimed at 1) increasing the entrepreneurial nature of Universities in the MENA region; 2) increasing inter-university research commercialization in the MENA region; 3) facilitating student collaboration across the MENA region; 4) empowering historically marginalized people and groups; and 5) other ideas as they emerge. The participants' agreed upon action items will also serve as the basis for the agenda of the fall summit in Stamford, CT.

11:40 AM CLOSING REMARKS

Sheikh Talal Al Madi, *Former Member of the Jordanian Senate*

David Noble, Ph.D., *Director of the Peter J. Werth Institute for Entrepreneurship & Innovation and Associate Professor In-Residence, University of Connecticut*

SENATOR JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN
Former United States Senator for Connecticut, USA



Now Senior Counsel at the law firm of Kasowitz, Benson, Torres LLP in New York, Joseph I. Lieberman was for 24 years a member of the U.S. Senate from Connecticut. At the end of his service in January 2013, he was Chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, and a senior member of the Armed Services Committee. Through both Committee positions, he became a leader in protecting the security of the American people and supporting American international leadership.

Senator Lieberman is known as a national leader who works across party lines to get things done and who speaks his conscience regardless of the political consequences. Before his election to the Senate in 1988, Senator Lieberman served 10 years in the Connecticut State Senate and 6 years as Connecticut's Attorney General. In 2000 he was the Democratic candidate for Vice President of the United States. Senator Lieberman also serves on the board of several nonprofit organizations including the McCain Institute.

Senator Lieberman is married to Hadassah Freilich Lieberman. Together they have four children and 12 grandchildren.

*The Joseph I. Lieberman Abrahamic Innovation & Entrepreneurship Program is made possible by the generous support of **Point 72 Asset Management**.*

Since 2017, UConn's Abrahamic Programs, situated in the Office of Global Affairs, has facilitated substantive, in-depth interactions for building meaningful, lasting relationships and new collaborations. Programming has focused on the thematic areas of: 1) Literature, Culture & Arts and 2) Environmental Change. We are delighted to add this third program area—and in honor of Senator Lieberman—in partnership with UConn's Peter J. Werth Institute for Entrepreneurship & Innovation.

The Werth Institute links resources, programs, academic courses, funding, mentorship, education, and activities relating to entrepreneurship and innovation throughout the University. Established in December 2017 with a historic \$22.5 million gift from philanthropist and entrepreneur Peter J. Werth, the Institute seeks to unlock an innovative mindset in every student, instilling an inquisitive approach to rejecting the status quo and creatively approaching the problems we face. By facilitating partnerships and building relationships spanning schools, industries, and traditional fields of study, the Werth Institute provides exceptional opportunities for students, faculty, and alumni.

PARTICIPANTS

KOSRAT SALEH AHMED, PH.D.

**Instructor of Religious Education, Islamic Sciences College
Salahaddin University of Erbil, Iraq**

Kosrat Saleh Ahmed is an instructor of religious education at the Salahaddin University of Erbil in Iraq. His research focuses on Islamic rules, the moderation method and implementations in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. He holds a BA in Islamic Sciences (Sharia) from Salahaddin University's College of Islamic sciences, and completed an MA in Islamic Sciences (Fiqh) and Ph.D. in Islamic Heritage (Islamic Law) from International Islamic University in Malaysia.

Dr. Ahmed is fluent in Kurdish, Arabic and English.

HATTAN AHMED

**Head of Entrepreneurship Center
King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, Saudi Arabia**

Hattan Ahmed is an Entrepreneurship Collaboration Manager at KAUST Entrepreneurship Center, supporting and mentoring existing startups and exploring new potential ones across the Kingdom. Mr. Ahmed runs the 910th Accelerator Program from the KAUST end in partnership with Takamol Holding. He monitors the entrepreneurial KPIs from the Entrepreneurship Center to measure impact, file for ranking in international indices and support building the KAUST startup pipeline.

Mr. Ahmed has had couple of full cycle entrepreneurial experiences in Saudi Arabia for three years prior joining KAUST, for which he won a couple of international entrepreneurial awards. Prior to that, Mr. Ahmed was a research portfolio specialist for three years, overseeing a wide research portfolio and exploring entrepreneurial and commercialization opportunities funded by KAUST research fund. He assessed the research portfolio impact in collaboration with Thomson Reuters and conducted studies analyzing the applied research needs in the local market.

Mr. Ahmed started his career with Saudi Aramco in 2001 and worked closely with Siemens AG and Honeywell. He has an Information Technology (IT) background in system design, development and implementation in different industries ranging from oil and gas, travel to retail. He managed significant national projects introducing the automation system for the refined products distribution plants in the Eastern and Central regions in Saudi Arabia. Mr. Ahmed had experience in software development and obtained certification in key platforms such as SAP and SharePoint and conducted business analysis projects. Mr. Ahmed introduced Six Sigma project to Saudi Aramco and completed a full study on its impact and implementation plan.

Mr. Ahmed holds an MBA from University of Leeds and a BS in Computer Science from University of Alabama.

ZAHRA ALI
Director, Global Partnerships & Outreach, Office of Global Affairs
University of Connecticut, USA

Zahra Ali joined the University of Connecticut's Office of Global Affairs in August 2013 as the Partnerships & Communications Coordinator and became the Director of Global Partnerships & Outreach in March 2015. Prior to joining UConn, she worked at New York University since 2008. Zahra holds an MS in Global Affairs, with a specialization in energy and environmental policy from New York University, and a BS in International Business from the University of Rhode Island.

At UConn, she and her team collaborate with faculty, university administrators and partners around the world to advance UConn's global initiatives. In her role as director, she builds and maintains strategic alliances and fosters collaborations with universities, community partners, government institutions, and NGOs globally. She oversees data collection and reporting on UConn's global endeavors for dissemination to senior administration, donors, government officials, and the broader community. Her team coordinates outreach events, promotes engagement in global networks, and supports Global Affairs' units with communications and marketing. She serves on the Abrahamic Steering Committee, the Norian Armenian Programs Committee and is co-chairing UConn's refugee support initiative.

PAMIR ALPAY, PH.D.
Vice President for Research, Innovation & Entrepreneurship
University of Connecticut, USA

Pamir Alpay is UConn's interim vice president for research, innovation, and entrepreneurship. He oversees the University's \$375 million research enterprise for all UConn campuses across the state. He was appointed interim vice president following a successful tenure as executive director of the Innovation Partnership Building at UConn Tech Park, where he served as the University's chief advocate for industry-informed research and prime liaison between the research community and government collaborators. A professor of materials science & engineering and physics, Prof. Alpay was also associate dean for research and industrial partnerships for the UConn School of Engineering. He is a Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor, an elected member of the Connecticut Academy of Science & Engineering (CASE) and a Fellow of the American Physical Society, ASM International, and the American Ceramic Society.

Prof. Alpay's research is at the intersection of materials science, condensed matter physics, and surface chemistry. He has over 200 peer-reviewed journal publications and conference proceedings, five invited book chapters, and a book on the physics of functionally graded smart materials. Prof. Alpay is the PI of an \$18 million interdisciplinary Air Force Research Lab (AFRL) contract. As executive director of the UConn Tech Park, Prof. Alpay established partnerships with industry, state government, and federal agencies and built several interdisciplinary research teams that successfully competed for large-scale funding. Since 2017, industry partners have invested more than \$125 million for applied research at the Tech Park, corresponding to over \$30 million per year in research and development funding. Prof. Alpay also established partnerships with small to medium-size regional businesses as part of outreach efforts, supporting economic growth in the state.

Prof. Alpay earned his B.S. and M.S. from Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey, and his Ph.D. from the University of Maryland.

MOSTAFA ANALOUI, PH.D.
Executive Director, Technology Commercialization Services
University of Connecticut, USA

Mostafa Analoui joined the University of Connecticut in 2016. With oversight of venture development activities for UConn startups and the Technology Incubation Program (TIP), Dr. Analoui supports the launch and growth of UConn companies. He also works closely with partners throughout UConn and UConn Health to support entrepreneurship and innovation programs. He also collaborates with organizations and institutions around Connecticut to support economic development efforts in the state.

He holds a PhD from Purdue University, an MS from Illinois Institute of Technology and BS from Shiraz University.

DANIEL ARMANIOS, PH.D.
BT Professor of Major Programme Management, Saïd Business School and
a Professorial Fellow of St. Anne's College, University of Oxford, UK

Daniel Erian Armanios integrates civil engineering and organizational theory to better understand how organizations coordinate to build, manage, maintain, and deploy infrastructure amidst complexity. He focuses on complexity arising from national and subnational variation in institutions, heterogeneity in individual capabilities, and reforms that aim to transition infrastructure from one set of guidelines to another. His findings inform efforts to advance sustainable development, entrepreneurship, and innovation, while also alleviating systemic and persistent inequities within such systems.

His research has been featured at numerous international summits and has led to publications in leading management, organizational theory, engineering, and scientific outlets such as the Journal of Construction, Engineering and Management, Nature Sustainability, Organization Science, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), and the Strategic Management Journal.

Prof. Armanios also extensively translates his research into policy and community action. He has contributed to reports and public comments for the U.S. DOT, DOE, EPA, NASA, NOAA, and the UN-OHCHR. He is also cited in popular media such as PBS News Hour, Fortune, The Hill, New York Times, and NPR. He served as a committee member of the National Academy of Sciences' Review of the U.S. Department of Energy's SBIR/STTR program, as well as a board member for various non-profit and for-profit organizations.

Prof. Armanios holds a BS Mechanical Engineering and BA in Political Sciences from the University of Pittsburgh, where he was a Goldwater and Truman Scholar. He holds an MS in Water Science, Policy & Management from the University of Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar. He completed his Ph.D. in Management Science & Engineering from Stanford University, where he was a National Science Foundation (NSF) and Stanford Benchmark Graduate Research Fellow.

ŞEYDA ATEŞ
General Manager, Technopolis Technology Transfer Centre
Hacettepe University, Turkey

Şeyda Ateş is an agriculture engineer and also has a MS in Food Engineering (Food Microbiology). She has several years of experience in private sector companies.

Ms. Ateş has extensive experience in Technology Transfer Leads and Technology Transfer Management. Together with a dedicated team of colleagues, she has successfully started and managed the Entrepreneurship Development and Incubation Program of Hacettepe University (Hacettepe HAMLE - a customized entrepreneurship program which is currently being funded by TUBITAK under TEYDEB 1601 Individual Young Entrepreneur program). She also contributes to the organization of the Hamle Innovation Competition every year since 2015.

Ms. Ateş has been the Horizon 2020 project expert since 2015. She is also the expert of a program launched in 2018 and co-funded by Enterprise Ireland and the European Union, which offers experienced researchers worldwide the opportunity to develop their careers in market-oriented applied research at Ireland's Technology Centres.

ABHIJIT BANERJEE, PH.D.
Associate Vice President, Innovation and Entrepreneurship
University of Connecticut, USA

Abhijit Banerjee joined UConn in 2020 as the Associate Vice President, Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Reporting to the Vice President for Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Banerjee supports UConn's continued growth as an economic driver for the state of Connecticut by helping to set an agenda that defines the University's program in technology commercialization. He is responsible for all aspects of the University's technology commercialization activities, including patenting, licensing, venture development, and UConn's business incubator, the Technology Incubation Program (TIP).

Dr. Banerjee holds a Ph.D. from the Indian Institute of Chemical Biology and an MBA from Suffolk University.

YUVAL BEN-DAVID
Investment Officer
EcoPeace Middle East - Tel Aviv Office, Israel

Yuval Ben-David is an Investment Officer in the Tel Aviv office of EcoPeace Middle East, working to harness the private sector towards regional collaboration on environmental and climate issues. He has consulted for the World Bank and several UN organizations on conflict, governance and climate security as well as for several emerging/frontier markets investment firms. Mr. Ben-David started off his career reporting for Reuters from Israel/Palestine. He holds a BA from Yale University and an M.Phil. from the University of Oxford.

ABDELLATIF BENCHERIFA, PH.D.

**Dean, College of the Humanities, Political & Social Sciences; Head, Public Policy Center
International University of Rabat, Morocco**

Abdellatif Bencherifa is currently a Senior Advisor to the President and Dean of the College of Humanities, Political, Legal and Social Sciences at the International University of Rabat (UIR), Morocco. He holds a Ph.D. in Cultural-Social Geography, from the Graduate School of Geography, Clark University (USA, 1986). He has worked as Professor at Mohammed V University in Rabat at the Geography Department from 1976 to 1994. Prof. Bencherifa has had significant experience in top management of higher education, culminating as Moulay Ismail University President (Meknes, Morocco) from 2002-2005. During the following 12 years (2005_2016), Prof. Bencherifa held several high profile Professional positions in Public Administration and Public Affairs Policy in Morocco before joining UIR in 2017.

Prof. Bencherifa is a Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation; he was a Visiting Professor (Spring 1991) at the University of California in Berkeley (Geography Department and Middle Eastern Studies Center), and is the former President of the African Mountains Association, 1990-1993.

Prof. Bencherifa's academic expertise is in Social Geography, Rural Development, International Migrations, Arid Land and Mountain Geoecology, and Social/Institutional change. He has published 4 books, edited 7 books, and had more than 40 articles in referenced journals (in French, English, Arabic, and German).

SERCAN CANBOLAT

**Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Political Science
University of Connecticut, USA**

Sercan Canbolat received his M.A. in Political Science from the University of Connecticut and BA from Bilkent University, Turkey. He is currently a Ph.D. Candidate (ABD) in Political Science at the University of Connecticut. He received a Fulbright scholarship for his doctoral studies in the United States. Mr. Canbolat is currently writing his doctoral dissertation on the patterns of organizational formation and leadership styles of militant organizations in the Middle East and North Africa.

His scholarly works are featured and/or forthcoming in *International Studies Review*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Polity*, *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, and Cambridge University Press. He and his co-authors earned the "Polity Prize" in 2018, which is conferred on the best research article published in the journal's previous volume. Mr. Canbolat received the International Studies Association—Midwest Region's 2020 *Margaret G. Hermann Award* for a paper he presented in St. Louis in November 2019. The paper was entitled "Understanding Extreme Islamists in Their Native Language." The award is given for the best use of text analysis in leadership studies. In 2021, he was awarded a second *Margaret G. Hermann Award* for his paper titled "Deciphering Political Islamists' Rhetoric in Their Native Language: A Turkish Operational Code Analysis Approach." Mr. Canbolat also recently received the *University Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award* from the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at the University of Connecticut.

LOUISE CHALKLEY, PH.D.
Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship
United Arab Emirates University, UAE

Louise Chalkley spent many years working in the private sector, in a variety of roles. In early 2000 she set up a company called The Archaeology Company, which specialized in archaeological and heritage management projects throughout Ireland. This company undertook a number of EU funded projects, particularly in relation to large-scale infrastructure projects. The company worked for a wide range of international engineering consortiums. As a result, she was made a Business Ambassador of Ireland, and an EU Accredited Female Entrepreneurship Mentor.

Professor Chalkley was awarded her Ph.D. in three years (part-time) from DCUBS; and won the Jose Marinos International Award for her research. Her interests include the application of a philosophical approach to entrepreneurship, the deconstruction of the dominant paradigm "opportunity theory", and the development of a practice theory of entrepreneurship.

Professor Chalkley is currently developing a practice-based approach to entrepreneurship teaching - which includes an existential pedagogic approach, developed from Heidegger. She enjoys inter-disciplinary research, has also recently been involved in a consortium for a research institute, thematically based around Food Security in the UAE. She is currently a practice-editor for the Journal of Economics and Administrative Science.

RYAN COLES, PH.D.
Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurial Management
University of Connecticut, USA

Ryan Coles is an Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurial Management whose research program analyzes entrepreneurship, technology commercialization, and firm growth strategies. Dr. Coles has active studies across a variety of national contexts including the U.S., Mexico, Peru, Paraguay, Ghana, China, and the Kingdom of Jordan. His quest to understand the social foundations of entrepreneurship has lead him to Tahrir Square during the Arab Spring, Latin American communities with a history of drug cartel violence, the Amazon rain forest, and more. His goal is apply research in ways that directly helps 100 million + people annually.

Dr. Coles applies his research by teaching Entrepreneurial Management at the UConn School of Business, serving on the advisory board at Old Silvers Venture Capital, and by serving as an Affiliate Faculty at the Sustainable Global Cities Initiative.

Outside of academia, Dr. Coles works with start-ups in the fin-tech, recycling, and hydroponics sectors. He also has advised V.C. firms on investments in the ed-tech, biotech, and fitness sectors. He is a fluent Spanish and Arabic speaker as well as an advocate for equality, sustainability, and scientific exploration.

ZAID EYADAT, PH.D.
Vice President of International Affairs and Director, Center for Strategic Studies
University of Jordan, Jordan

Zaid Eyadat is Vice President of International Affairs, Quality and Accreditation, the Director of the Center for Strategic Studies at The University of Jordan, and a member of the Royal Committee to modernize the political system in Jordan. He is a professor of political science and international relations, and the founding dean of the Prince Hussein School of International Studies at the University of Jordan, where he remains a full-time professor. He has received visiting professorships and scholarships from several American and European universities, including Georgetown University, USA.

His research interests and areas of expertise include: geostrategic shifts, strategic analysis, game theory and modeling, methodologies, human rights, political Islam, Islamic philosophy and ethics, Middle Eastern politics, and refugee and migration issues. He has held advisory roles in governmental and non-governmental institutions, including the Royal Hashemite Court of Jordan, where he worked at the office of H.M. King Abdullah II (2006-2011).

Prof. Eyadat is one of the founders of the "All Jordan Youth Commission", a non-governmental organization that designs policies and programs that encourage political participation and civic engagement, with the aim of integrating Jordanian youth into the political process. Furthermore, he chairs the board of trustees of the Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD), and is a member of the Steering Committee of the Center for Global Ethics and Politics at the University of Rome and the Institute of West Asia and North Africa (WANA), and a member of the editorial boards of several scientific journals.

ITZIK GOLDWASER, PH.D.
Chief Executive Officer, Yissum
Hebrew University, Israel

Itzik Goldwaser is the CEO of Yissum, the technology transfer company of the Hebrew university (www.yissum.co.il), after formerly serving as Yissum's SVP of Business Development & Alliance Management.

Goldwaser has over 25 years of experience in the bio-pharmaceutical industry, spanning executive and R&D management roles in the biotechnology, chemical, and biological drug development markets. He has held a number of leadership positions, including Co-Founder, CEO, and President of NasVax from its founding in 2004 until 2010. Goldwaser joined NasVax from Sol-Gel Technologies, where he served as CTO and Chief Biologist.

Mr. Goldwaser earned his Ph.D. in Biological Chemistry from the Weizmann Institute of Science, his M.Sc. in Medical Science from the Sackler School of Medicine at Tel Aviv University, and a B.Sc. in Chemistry from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is the co-owner of several registered patents in pharmacology and has authored numerous publications in this field.

JONATHAN HEIDEN
Lieberman Program Student Assistant, Peter J. Werth Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship
University of Connecticut, USA

SHKOVA SATTAR KHALID
Manager, Office of the University President
International University Erbil, Iraq

Shkova Sattar Khalid currently works as the Manager for the Office of the University President at the International University of Erbil (IUE). She is also the university liaison with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research-KRG and other organizations. Additionally, she serves as the academic advisor for students in the Department of Accounting.

Prior to joining the International University of Erbil, Ms. Khalid had two years' experience in a public aid organization handling emergency calls from people in distress, especially women exposed to sexual harassment, domestic abuse, and assault. In this role, she recorded cases and reported them to the appropriate authorities, following up as needed. She coordinated with social workers and psychologists, referring cases of trauma and mental health problems. She aided displaced people with resettlement issues ranging from registering children in school and obtaining new documents to receiving health care services and getting legal advice. She worked at the Catholic University of Erbil (CUE) as an Admin. Assistant, Ministry Coordinator and Health and Safety director.

MATTHEW LARSON
Program Coordinator, Global Partnerships and Outreach
University of Connecticut, USA

Matthew Larson joined the UConn Global Affairs' team in May 2018. He holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science from The College of the Holy Cross and a master's degree in Statecraft and International Affairs from the Institute of World Politics. Prior to joining UConn he worked in Washington, DC for Meridian International Center in their External Affairs office, coordinating roundtables and panel discussions convening a cross-section of public, private, and diplomatic audiences, as well as for Bipartisan Policy Center in their Development office. Most recently, he was the Senior Secretary to the Mayor in his hometown of East Hartford, Connecticut.

JIMMY LEVY, PH.D.
Co-founder of Noohra, Yowza, Cannopeia, Galil Software & Al Bawader
Advisor to the Vice President for Research, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel

Jimmy Levy is the Managing Partner of Al Bawader, the first investment fund focused on the Arab private sector in Israel. Al Bawader was founded in partnership with Pitango Venture Partners with the vision of serving as a catalyst for the economic development of the Arab community in Israel. Dr. Levy is also the founder of Galil Software, the leading software R&D service provider for Israel's high tech sector. The company is headquartered in Nazareth and employs some 200 engineers. Dr. Levy previously served as VP Mobile Internet and VP Legal at Comverse Ltd. (1995 and 2006). He was the co-recipient of Israel's Prime Minister's Prize for Initiatives and Innovations, and the co-recipient of Israel Management Center's CEO of the Year Award in the category of "Business Breakthrough".

Dr. Levy earned his BA from McGill University, his LLB from Osgoode Hall, his Ph.D. from Clark University, and his MBA from the Tel Aviv International School of Management.

SHEIKH TALAL AL MADI
Former Member of the Jordanian Senate, Jordan

His Excellency Sheikh Talal Al-Madi is a prominent leader throughout Jordan and the Middle East, exhibiting a deep commitment to people and politics. He serves as the Sheikh and leader of the Al-Issa Tribe and is recognized as one of the most prominent sheikhs of Northern Badia. He was appointed by King Abdullah II to serve as a member of Jordan's twenty-fifth Senate in 2011. He was a founding member and Secretary General of the Jordanian United Front Party which maintains goals of building a state of institutions and law, and to preserve the nation's sovereignty and aspirations. His Excellency has also worked in Jordan's Ministry of the Interior and as a member of the Advisory council for the Mafrq Governorate of Jordan. Sheikh Al-Madi also has been very involved in education serving as a school principal and has been involved in the founding of schools, particularly one founded for refugees.

Sheikh Al-Madi holds a high diploma in Islamic History from Saint Joseph University in Beirut, as well as a Bachelor's degree in History from Beirut Arab University and a Diploma in Accounting from Ibn Khaldoun College.

NASSER AL MOUGRABI
Regional Investment Manager
EcoPeace Middle East - Amman Office, Jordan

Nasser Al Mougrabi is the Regional Investment Manager at EcoPeace Middle East in Jordan. He focuses on creating sustainable environmental business models that attract the public and private sector, in order to achieve the target of a clean planet. Mr. Al Mougrabi has 17 years of professional experience in banking, real estate, wealth management, and sustainability and circular economy. He has worked as regional investment program manager for various organizations and across sectors. He holds a BA from Yarmouk University in Accounting.

DAVID NOBLE, PH.D.
Director, Peter J. Werth Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship
University of Connecticut, USA

David Noble was appointed the inaugural Director of the Werth Institute in January 2018, and previously he served as the co-director of the Entrepreneurship & Innovation Consortium and the Xcite: Women in Innovation, Technology, and Entrepreneurship Conference. As a faculty member in the School of Business, he teaches courses on technology innovation and entrepreneurship. He is an active mentor at UConn, and has recently founded Zatoichi Co., a blockchain based startup.

Prior to UConn, he was a securities and corporate finance attorney, with experience representing startups from formation through the IPO process. He has extensive non-profit board experience. He holds a Ph.D. in Management from the University of Alabama, a J.D. from the University of Miami, an M.B.A. from Elon University, and a B.S. in Political Science from Northeastern University.

ONYEKA OBIOCHA
Executive Director, CT Next, USA

Onyeka "Ony" Obiocha is the Executive Director of CTNext, Connecticut's go-to resource for supporting entrepreneurs and fostering innovation. In this work, he leads a \$70M quasi-public organization in realizing a vibrant, diverse, entrepreneurial ecosystem throughout the State of Connecticut.

Prior to assuming his role at CTNext, Mr. Obiocha was the Managing Director of the Tsai Center for Innovative Thinking at Yale (Tsai CITY), where he deployed capital, developed programming and attracted resources to help students launch and scale for-profit and non-profit organizations. In this role, he also served on the Advisory Council for the \$3.75 million College Street Innovation Fund, which invests in qualifying Yale startups. He also recently served as the Director of Integrated Capitals and Learning at the Heron Foundation, implementing practices to embed Heron's emerging principles into the communities, investments and operational strategies of the organization. As a leader in operationalizing equitable entrepreneurial ecosystems, Mr. Obiocha has collected several noteworthy achievements. He is the recipient of the Connecticut Magazine's 40 Under 40 award, recognized as a Next City Vanguard, Nantucket Project Scholar, and a 100 Men of Color honoree. In his continued effort to support entrepreneurs, he has served as a mentor, judge, and consultant for entrepreneurship service organizations in Connecticut, Budapest and Beijing. His work has been featured in Fast Company, Stanford Social Innovation Review, and Take Magazine.

Over the course of his entrepreneurial career, Mr. Obiocha has worked in various roles, from designing a corporate social responsibility program for a food startup, to launching Sharelogical, an e-commerce platform empowering consumers to make charitable donations by leveraging affiliate marketing. Most notable was his time as co-founder and COO of A Happy Life, a coffee roasting company and coffee shop with the mission to create a happier world for all. For this work, Mr. Obiocha was recognized by the National Retail Federation for exemplifying excellence in careers, community, and innovation, and was awarded an official citation from the Connecticut General Assembly for his "significant contribution to Connecticut's entrepreneurial ecosystem." Most recently, he co-founded Breakfast Lunch & Dinner, a startup studio that starts, supports, and scales community ventures.

He holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of Connecticut and lives in New Haven, CT.

RANA QAIMARI
Program Manager
EcoPeace Middle East - Ramallah Office, Palestine

Rana Al Qaimari is the Program Manager at EcoPeace Middle East, Ramallah Office. Originally from Ramallah, Palestine, Ms. Qaimari holds an MA from Birzeit University in Water Science and Technology. She has fifteen years of professional experience in education directly related to water and environmental education. Prior to joining EcoPeace, Ms. Qaimari served as a Program Officer for the EU Erasmus+ Office in Palestine for three years, monitoring the implementation of Erasmus+ projects at Palestinian higher education institutions and contributing to the dissemination of results. She has been an Environmental Coordinator for youth environmental awareness programs for a organizations including the Palestinian Academy for Science & Technology, the Royal Society for Protection of Nature, Latin Patriarchate Schools and the Hellen Medien Projekte/ Peter Maffy foundation.

RONA SAMLER
General Manager of T3
Technion Israel Institute of Technology, Israel

Rona Samler is the Chief Business Officer of the Technion R&D Foundation and the General Manager of T3 - Technion Technology Transfer. Ms. Samler oversees and leads the entire commercialization spectrum and is in charge of forming and shaping commercialization vehicles and policies enabling innovations to maximize their market potential. She is also the CEO of AMIT, Technion's investment arm in Health-Tech, and serves as a Board Member at strategic Technion companies including Bio-Convergence, Medical Device and Biotechnology.

Prior to joining Technion's management team, Ms. Samler served as VP of Business Development at Ramot, Tel Aviv University's technology transfer office, where she initiated and oversaw a long list of investments, licensing agreements and joint ventures with tech companies in Israel and worldwide. Other positions held include Head of Business Development at Syneron Medical (NASDAQ: ELOS); CEO at Cupola Medical for the Offer Brothers Group's Naiot Venture Accelerator; and VP of Global Business at Colbar LifeScience (acquired by Johnson & Johnson in 2006 for \$160 million).

She holds a Chemistry degree from the Technion and an MBA from Haifa University, both summa cum laude.

SALMA TBER
Researcher & Lecturer, Public Policy Center
International University of Rabat, Morocco

Salma Tber is a research officer at the Public Policy Center and teaches economics in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at the International University of Rabat, Morocco. After her bachelor's degree in economics, she obtained a master's in international economics and management at Université Moulay Ismail. Her research about an econometric assessment of the impact of public debt on economic growth earned her a nomination for *l'Economiste Research Award* in 2016.

Passionate about development economics, she started a Ph.D. thesis in 2016 about the role of Moroccan universities in regional development, an assessment through their territorial anchoring; defense of the thesis is due in July 2022. She has received the award of excellence from the CNRST for the first three years of her Ph.D. research. In 2019, she received a grant from Centre Jacques-Berque Institute for Research Abroad. Her research areas cover specific fields in the Moroccan context such as the geography of higher education, the third mission of universities and universities in the triple helix model.

DANIEL WEINER, PH.D.
Vice President for Global Affairs
University of Connecticut, USA

Daniel Weiner joined the University of Connecticut (UConn) in 2012 as Vice Provost for Global Affairs and Professor of Geography. In February 2016, he was promoted to Vice President. Prior to joining UConn, Prof. Weiner spent four years as Executive Director of the Center for International Studies at Ohio University and eleven years as Director of the Office of International Programs at West Virginia University. He earned a B.A. in 1979, an M.A. in 1981 and a Ph.D. in 1986, all in Geography at Clark University.

In his role as Vice President, Prof. Weiner serves as the University's Senior International Officer (SIO) and leads the UConn Office of Global Affairs. With more than two decades leading as a public research university SIO, he is one of the longest serving SIO's in the country. Prof. Weiner serves as Chair of the Global Business Council of the Metro-Hartford Alliance, as well as on the Board of Directors of the World Affairs Council of Connecticut, for which he is a former President.

Prof. Weiner is a development geographer with area studies expertise in Eastern/Southern Africa and Appalachia. He is a specialist in the theory and practice of participatory geographic information systems (GIS). His research areas include agricultural geography, climate and society, energy, GIS and society, land reform and political ecology. He has received 15 externally funded grants totaling over \$2.5 million, published three books, 30 journal articles and 29 book chapters. Prof. Weiner lived in Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe for almost three years during the 1980s.

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