

## **Opening new academic year, President Peres announces plan to jointly host President's Conference with Hebrew U.**

### ***Calls Hebrew U. to be intellectual center of Jerusalem, Israel & Jewish world***

Jerusalem, November 2, 2008 – President of the State of Israel Shimon Peres opened the new academic year today at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. During his visit, to the Mount Scopus campus, where he met with students and staff, President Peres announced that the President's House will partner with the Hebrew University in the future organization of the President's Conference.

Calling for the Hebrew University to be the intellectual center for Jerusalem, Israel and the Jewish people, President Peres also announced a plan for the university and the President's House to jointly organize a series of conferences with leading figures from around the world.

Congratulating the university for its inclusion in the world's universities' top 100 list, he told students that in the past, there was an emphasis in humanity on trying to achieve equality for all people. "Today," he said, "everyone has the right to be different. We must stress the individualism of every person, with each striving to achieve his full potential."

The new academic year opened today as scheduled at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem after the Council of University Presidents reached an agreement with the Finance Ministry over additional funds that will be transferred to the universities and institutes of higher education.

President of the Hebrew University Prof. Menachem Magidor said "I'm very happy that Prime Minister Ehud Olmert got involved to help us open the academic year. I hope that during this year there will be a serious discussion concerning the future of higher education in Israel. It is important to bring higher education to the fore again."

Over 23,000 students will be studying this year at the university - among them 11,900 undergraduates, 7,300 master's degree students, and 2,800 Ph.D. degree candidates, with the remainder registered on various programs. In addition, approximately 1,100 students are enrolled in preparatory programs and at the Rothberg International School.