

Welcome to the May issue of the OFEA faculty newsletter.

May marked an important milestone for MBZUAI with Commencement 2026, where the University celebrated 140 graduates from the Class of 2026 and the faculty who supported them throughout their journey. As the summer term begins, it also provides a chance to reflect on the academic year, revisit ongoing research ideas, and think about adjustments and new approaches for future courses. This issue highlights recent events, faculty achievements, and upcoming activities and announcements relevant to our faculty community.

Welcome to our new faculty



Shai Carmi

Affiliated Associate Professor of Human Genetics

[Full bio](#)

Faculty achievements and highlights

Research influence on global policy

MBZUAI research continues to inform high-level policy and strategy discussions across government and international organizations.

Recent analysis by the Institutional Research Office, based on Scopus/SciVal and Overton data, identified 43 MBZUAI scholarly publications cited across 79 policy documents between 2022 and 2026.

One notable example is the [United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report 2025](#), A Matter of Choice: People and Possibilities in the Age of AI. MBZUAI research was also referenced in policy work by organizations including the Japan Science and Technology Agency, the European Union, OECD, WHO, UNESCO, the World Bank, and the UK Parliament.

Together, these references highlight the relevance of MBZUAI faculty research beyond academia and its contribution to evidence-based policymaking across areas including AI-enabled healthcare, scientific discovery, language technologies, computer vision, education, responsible AI, digital twins, and biosecurity.

If you are interested to learn more, please reach out to InstitutionalResearch@mbzuai.ac.ae.

Congratulations go to...

Mladen Kolar

Department Chair and Visiting Professor of Statistics and Data Science

who was elected Fellow of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics (IMS).



MBZUAI's Commencement Ceremony



MBZUAI celebrated its commencement ceremony on 7 May 2026, recognizing the University's largest and most diverse graduating cohort to date. The Class of 2026 included graduates from 23 nationalities and marked the first graduating cohorts from the Computer Science and Robotics programs. The graduating class included 140 students across master's and PhD programs, with Emirati students representing the largest single nationality in the cohort.

The ceremony also reflected MBZUAI's continued growth as a global center for AI research, education, and innovation.

Important dates and upcoming events

June

Faculty Career Progression
24 June | 8:30 am | OFEA Office

MidTerm Review Notification and Interfolio Link – Spring Starters
30 June | via email

Faculty Information Session – MidTerm Review – Spring Starters
Faculty will receive a calendar invitation closer to the date

July

Promotion and/or Tenure Notification and Interfolio Link – Fall Starters
15 July | via email

Faculty Information Session – Promotion and/or Tenure – Fall Starters
Faculty will receive a calendar invitation closer to the date

OFEA in action

Faculty Mentee Session



OFEA hosted a faculty mentee session focused on supporting faculty participating in the mentoring program.

The session provided an overview of:

- The many-to-one mentoring model
- Expectations from mentors and the program
- Strategies for actively engaging in mentoring relationships
- Available development tools and resources

The session formed part of OFEA's broader efforts to strengthen faculty development and peer support structures across career stages.

Women Faculty Lunch & Session: Effective Public Communication



OFEA hosted this month's women faculty gathering as a lunch session focused on public communication in academic settings. Led by Nancy Gleason, Director of Undergraduate Academic Excellence and Professor of Practice of Political Science, the session explored:

- Structuring academic talks
- Engaging diverse audiences
- Communicating complex ideas clearly across conferences, teaching, media, and outreach settings

The session followed recent faculty feedback requesting more practical development opportunities around communication and visibility.

MBZUAI initiatives

Office of Student and Postdoctoral Affairs (OSPA) Announcements:

This Incentive Program aims to support faculty in undertaking targeted student recruitment activities while traveling for conferences or academic commitments. Approved activities may receive up to AED 10,000 toward travel costs. The program prioritizes outreach in Tier 1 and Tier 2 markets, at top 100 ranked universities (CSRankings), target universities, and target high schools to recruit for both our Graduate and Undergraduate programs.

Please review the [policy](#).

If you have any enquiries, please feel free to write to Madeline.Springate@mbzuai.ac.ae.

[Interested in applying for the incentives? Click here!](#)

Community

Faculty Spouse and Family Program

For information on the Faculty Spouse and Family Program contact Maria Takacova at maria.takacova@mbzuai.ac.ae and join the Whatsapp group:



Meet the OFEA team



Professor Thamar Solorio

Vice Provost of Faculty Excellence and Advancement, Professor of Natural Language Processing

"OFEA serves as MBZUAI's central hub for faculty lifecycle support and institutional excellence. Our mission is to support faculty at every stage of their careers, promote high standards across academic practices, and foster a strong sense of community and belonging."



Luisa Vallory

Associate Director for Faculty Excellence and Advancement



Felicity Harding

Faculty Review Specialist



Sharon Cavlovich

Faculty Review Specialist



Ana Blatnik

Policy Development Officer



Iman Farah

Program Manager – Strategic Pipelines & Academic Development



Maria Takacova

Consultant for the Faculty Spouse and Family Program



Aashraya Dutt

Department Coordinator

Looking ahead and getting in touch

Faculty are always welcome to share ideas, suggestions or questions by reaching out to any member of the OFEA team or by contacting OFEA@mbzuai.ac.ae.

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