

Inspirations, AND EXPECTATIONS, Aspirations:

In order to best serve Reform Judaism and *klal yisrael*, HUC-JIR has made recruitment a priority.

We are proud to say that our efforts have paid off with an extremely promising and *large* incoming class. In fact, this year's rabbinical admissions of 65 students is the largest in 25 years and both the number of applicants and the number of students accepted to the rabbinical program has increased 57% in the past 5 years.

Our cantorial, education, Jewish communal service, and graduate studies programs have also seen increases in applications and acceptances, and we are committed to advancing their continued growth.

The Chronicle surveyed our incoming students to get an idea of who they are, why they are attending our programs, and what their aspirations are. Their responses were as varied and as interesting as they are.

Because HUC-JIR's programs attract students of all ages and from varied backgrounds, their life experiences and skills are extremely diverse.

Our incoming students come from all over the country and the world, including Houston, TX, Atlanta, GA, New York, NY, Epernay, France, Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Toronto, Canada. They come to us with degrees from institutions such as Amherst College, Colgate University, Dartmouth College, Harvard University, Indiana University, Northwestern University, University of California - Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of Cologne, University of Pennsylvania, Wellesley College, and Yale University; they have com-

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By Sarah H. Schriever

pleted their undergraduate degrees in a variety of majors, for example, African studies, Japanese studies, chemical engineering, human development, and theater. Many have advanced degrees in fields such as social work, education, and law. It is no surprise that many of our incoming students have had first careers as attorneys, journalists, social workers, opera singers, and educators; we also welcome a former international film distributor, an epidemiologist, and a press secretary to a U.S. Senator.

For both first and second career students, the decision to enter HUC-JIR's programs has been influenced by many factors.

For Rachel Greengrass, an entering rabbinical student, the decision to follow this career path was simple: "Being a rabbi combines all the

things I wanted to be when I grew up." Andrew Goodman concurs: "All of the important aspects of my life are encompassed by this career path, and any other career would not have provided me with the balance of education, spirituality, politics, Judaism, and interpersonal work." Other students came to this decision through a less direct path. Lisa Helfman, who is entering our School of Jewish Communal Service, was working as a Health Educator. She explains, "I realized that I was enjoying my volunteer work in my synagogue and with the UAHC and found it to be more rewarding than my professional job. I decided to turn my volunteer work into a profession." Similarly, Rachel Pasternack, who is entering our School of Sacred Music, explains, "I have enjoyed cantorial soloing for some years now and I would like to become a full-fledged cantor."

For many of our incoming students, the decision to pursue a career as a rabbi, cantor, Jewish educator, or Jewish communal service professional has been influenced by other Jewish professionals.

Joanna Mass Alexander wants to be a congregational cantor. She explains that her synagogue did not have a cantor until she was 16, when Cantor Deborah Bard (N '85) began working with her congregation. "I found an outlet and career prospect for my love of Judaism, one that was connected to my love of singing." For Joshua Strom, the person who most influenced his decision to become a rabbi is his father "a rabbi in the Movement, who has been a first-rate example of a wonderful rabbi who touches the lives of his congregants and friends. He is there to console people in times of unimaginable loss and rejoice with them in beautiful *simchas*." Ariana Silverman, an entering rabbinical student,

PICK YOUR FUTURE COLLEAGUES

see the insert above to find out how



HUC-JIR's delegation of 70 Year-in-Israel and Israeli rabbinical program students, joined by administration, Governors and Overseers, were welcomed by Jerusalem Mayor Uri Lupolianski. Inset: Mayor Lupolianski and Rabbi Ellenson.

attributes her decision to become a rabbi to her experiences at UAHC summer camp, her involvement with Hillel, and her year as a legislative assistant for Coalition for the Environment in Jewish Life and the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

Other students have decided to become Jewish professionals after realizing that they want more fulfilling careers or that they want to serve their people.

Dean Shapiro, an entering rabbinical student who was working in international film distribution, explains, "I decided to look for another career which I thought would give me a stronger sense of fulfillment, allow me to explore my interests in depth, better utilize my skills, and encourage profound encounters with people." Thomas A. Gardner, also an entering rabbinical student, was helping foreign nationals in his job as a consular worker when he realized that he would like to apply his efforts towards helping his own people. Cookie Lea Olshein, also an entering rabbinical student, states, "I wanted to be able to incorporate Judaism into my professional life and make more of a difference than I was able to make as an attorney."

Many of the students in our School of Graduate studies are of other faiths. Entering student Chad Bird explains that by studying at HUC-JIR he hopes to deepen his knowl-

edge of the Hebrew Bible, especially as it was interpreted by Jews and early Christians in order to better instruct the seminary students he teaches.

Our students come with high expectations for their studies at HUC-JIR and we look forward to meeting them.

Nicole Leiser, an entering rabbinical student, says, "I hope to meet incredible people who will become friends and colleagues, to learn from some of the brightest Jewish scholars of today, and to begin my journey to become the best rabbi and educator that I can be." Brian Stollar, an entering rabbinical student, adds, "I expect that I will have intense intellectual and spiritual experiences. I look forward to learning all that I possibly can about Jewish history, tradition, and religious thought, and to developing the skills I will need to be an effective rabbi." April Quinn, an entering Rhea Hirsh School of



First-year rabbinical student Marshal Klaven greets Mayor Lupolianski.

Education student, tells us, "I expect a quality education that will enable me to secure an excellent job in the Jewish community while enriching my own personal experience of Judaism. I hope to be guided in a nurturing environment that encourages individuality."

Foremost on many of our incoming student's minds is the Year-in-Israel Program, which is required of all first year rabbinical, cantorial, and Rhea Hirsch School of Education students.

Notwithstanding our student's concern for a successful resolution of the current conflict, they are approaching the Year-in Israel Program with enthusiasm and excitement to be living and learning in the land all Jews can call home. Entering rabbinical student Deborah Michelle Marcus tells us, "I am eagerly awaiting the start of my studies in Israel. There is no better place to begin rabbinical training than in the very heart and home of the Jewish people. I believe it is extremely important as future leaders to show solidarity with Israel, not only in good times but in difficult times, not only with financial contributions, but with presence of mind and body."

Our students' career aspirations are varied and we are proud to see that they will bring the skills they learn here to communities throughout the world.

Grant Tetsut is entering our Graduate Studies program in order to study the original languages in which the Bible was written. He plans to work in East Africa translating the Bible. Delphine Horvilleur, an entering New

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York School of Education student, wants to return to her native France to create adult Jewish studies programs and help bring the Reform Movement to Europe. Ariel Jenick is entering our School of Jewish Communal Service in order to help the Jewish community in his native Argentina. Gersh Lazarow hopes to “return to an Australian congregation and grow old as its rabbi.”

Lisa Helfman hopes that her studies in the School of Jewish Communal Service will prepare her “to work in a synagogue or JCC as a program/membership director. My special areas of interest include doing outreach to Jews in their 20s and 30s to keep them connected to Judaism.” Entering rabbinical student Esther Lederman is also interested in outreach; she tells us “I want to work with young Jews, especially those who believe that Judaism has nothing of value to them. I want to show how Judaism can allow us to make more meaningful life choices.” Entering rabbinical student Daniel Mikelberg sees himself as a congregational rabbi. Andrew Gordon is not yet certain where his rabbinical studies will lead him, but he would like to “work in a small congregation or to explore his love of informal Jewish education, perhaps through camping or youth work.”

Entering rabbinical student Laura Baum sums up the feelings expressed by most of our students when she says, “It will be an honor and a privilege to serve the Reform Movement and *klal yisrael*.”

Faculty and Administration APPOINTMENTS

For faculty and administration appointments, visit our website at www.huc.edu/kesher

The National Office of Admissions and Recruitment surveyed the entering rabbinical class. We thought you would be interested to know what we found out about these students.

All percentages are based on 65 respondents.

Age:

20-22	17%
23-25	34%
26-29	15%
30-39	18%
40-49	14%
50-59	1.5%

Citizenship:

United States	91%
Canadian	8%
Israeli	5%
German	1.5%
British	1.5%

(students with dual citizenship have been counted in both categories)

Are you...?

Single	77%
Married	20%
Partnered	1.5%
Engaged	1.5%
Divorced or Widowed	0%

Do you have children?

Yes	12% (children's ages range from 6 months to 26 years)
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Highest degree obtained:

Bachelor's Degree	63%
Master's Degree	20%
J.D.	5%
Ph.D.	3%

Affiliation of Childhood Congregation:

Reform	75%
Conservative	14%
Reconstructionist	3%
Orthodox	5%
Secular Israeli Household	1.5%
Not Raised Jewish	5%

Did you attend the following?

Sunday School	83%
Afternoon Hebrew School	62%
Jewish Day School	23%
Jewish High School (full-time)	1.5%
Jewish High School (part-time)	23%
Adult Education Programs	54%
Seminary: HUC-JIR	8%
Leo Baeck	1.5%

Did you attend a Jewish Summer Camp?

Yes 66% (34% attended a UAHC Camp; 58% worked as a counselor or staff member)

Did you belong to a Jewish Youth Group?

Yes 72% (49% belonged to a Reform Movement Youth Group)

Were you involved in a Jewish organization on your university campus?

Yes 68% (49% were involved in Hillel; 54% held leadership positions)

Were (are) you involved in leadership positions in your congregation?

Yes 54%

Have you ever visited Israel?

Yes 86%

Rank the influences that were most important in your decision to follow this career path:

Rabbi
Parents
Israel
Congregation
Camp
Adult education

26% are relatives of a rabbi, cantor, educator, or Jewish professional

List what attracted you to HUC-JIR:

I wanted to attend a Reform Seminary
Reputation
Faculty
Year-in-Israel program

List your preferences for your future rabbinical career:

Congregational rabbi
Rabbi in organizational position
Hillel Rabbi
Rabbi/Educator
Professor/Academia
Hospital Chaplain
Military Chaplain