

# פנים אל פנים: פנים אל פנים FACE TO FACE: פנים אל פנים FACULTY RETREAT FOSTERS PLANNING AND KINSHIP



**N**inety members of the faculty convened for the fourth HUC-JIR Faculty Retreat, which took place June 11-13 at the Hickory Ridge Conference Center in Lisle, Illinois. This gathering, which was made possible by a generous grant from Burton Lehman, Chair of the Board of Governors, fostered substantive faculty dialogue on issues of critical importance to the College-Institute.

Rabbi Shirley Idelson, Associate Dean and Director of the Rabbinical Program, HUC-JIR/New York, and Retreat Planning Chair, was assisted by a planning committee — Dr. Sarah Bunin Benor, Assistant Professor of Contemporary Jewish

Studies, HUC-JIR/Los Angeles; Dr. Dalia Marx, Lecturer in Liturgy and Midrash, HUC-JIR/Jerusalem; Cantor Benjie Ellen Schiller, Professor of Cantorial Arts, HUC-JIR/New York; and Cantor Yvon Shor, Director of Liturgical Arts and Music, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati.

They organized a program that encompassed strategic planning, preparation for accreditation, group meetings for academic teaching areas, presentations on student assessment, discussion of the Year-In-Israel Program and the coordination of Hebrew language study throughout the curriculum and across the campuses, pedagogy workshops, worship experiences,

and informal moments of kinship.

Rabbi Ellenson welcomed the faculty, praising them for their “talent, wisdom, and knowledge and their role as *shutafim* (partners) in HUC-JIR’s mission as the intellectual center for liberal Jewish thought and the training ground for students as *klei kodesh* (consecrated leaders) of the Jewish people.”

Dr. Norman Cohen, Provost, noted HUC-JIR’s academic growth through the significant strengthening of faculty and enhanced support for students. Citing Moses in *Parshat Naso*, he noted that “just as the *mishkan* (altar) built by Moses was a place of holiness only if everyone

brought their offerings there, HUC-JIR’s vital future can and will be ensured by the offerings of the heart of each faculty member.”

Dr. Dvora Weisberg, Assistant Professor of Rabbinical Literature at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles, summed up the success of the retreat in saying, “This retreat was an incredibly important part of realizing our vision of ‘one institution.’ I appreciated the opportunity to meet with colleagues from other campuses, to be reminded that we share a common mission, to learn from the experiences of others, and to take comfort that my challenges are shared by others.”



*(From left) Rabbi Ellenson; Dr. Norman Cohen, Provost; Dr. Aaron Panken, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives; Michael Cheney, Vice President for Finance; and Gary Bockelman, Vice President for Administration, updated the faculty on the Strategic Planning Process and its goals of academic*

*excellence and financial sustainability. Faculty breakout groups discussed a broad range of HUC-JIR's key needs, including the Library, Recruitment, Technology, the Graduate School and Graduate Studies, Education Programs, Excellence, and Leadership Preparation.*



*Rabbi Shirley Idelson launched the Retreat with an orientation welcome that set the tone of warmth and inclusivity for the next few days.*



*The presence of faculty from Jerusalem facilitated key discussions of new directions for the Year-In-Israel Program, the enhanced integration of Hebrew language instruction and competency throughout the core curriculum and across the campuses, and the coordination of Hebrew text study from the first year in Jerusalem through the culmination of stateside studies.*



*Members of the Board of Governors joined the faculty for a discussion of Strategic Planning: (from left) Barbara Friedman, Chair-Elect, Board of Governors; Burton Lehman, Chair, Board of Governors; Jerome Lerner, Sheila Lambert, and Frederick Lane.*

*Dr. Eugene B. Borowitz, Distinguished University Professor, engaged the faculty in an interactive discussion on "Teaching in a Reform Seminary: What's the Difference?"*



# FACULTY RETREAT *(continued)*



**Sheila Yarbroch, Associate Dean, University of Chicago, presented a workshop on "Graduate Students with Learning Disabilities: Learning from the University of Chicago Model," offering constructive ways in which to help students learn.**



**Professor Sara Lee, Director of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education (left), and Dr. Richard Sarason presented a workshop on "Confronting Teaching Challenges in the Classroom: Case Studies." Working in small groups allowed for closer interaction between faculty from a variety of disciplines, generating different perspectives and responses to challenging classroom situations.**

**Gregg Alpert, National Director of eLearning, presented a multi-media workshop on "Using eLearning and Educational Technology in Courses...NOW!" that introduced the faculty to exciting new opportunities to enrich their teaching, made possible by innovative technologies (see page 25 for more on eLearning at HUC-JIR).**



**Faculty convened in their respective academic area groups for collegial discussions that were informative and engaging and offered opportunities for integration of teaching and curriculum: Hebrew (top), Rabbinics (middle), Religious Thought (bottom), Contemporary American Jewish Studies, Education, History, Professional Development, and Bible.**



**Dr. Mark Klíman, Professor of Jewish Musicology, introduced the keynote speaker, Dr. Norman Stillman, Professor and Schusterman/Josey Chair in Judaic History, Department of History, University of Oklahoma, who spoke on "Teaching the Sephardi/Mizrachi Heritage and Reform Judaism" to provide a historiographical context for HUC-JIR's Sephardic Studies Initiative, made possible by Maurice Amado Foundation.**



**Members of the national administration and faculty discussed planning for accreditation across the stateside campuses.**





*(Below, from left) Dr. Richard Sarason and Dr. Edward Goldman, editors of the Hebrew Union College Annual, convened a meeting of this internationally renowned publication's Editorial Board.*

*(Clockwise from left) Dr. Norman Cohen led a plenary session on assessment, noting that the assessment of students and mentorship by faculty were key components of the newly implemented rabbinical core curriculum. Stating that "we are responsible for judging the holistic suitability of students for their viability in careers as Jewish leaders," he announced the creation of a faculty-generated matrix of criteria to assess students' knowledge, skills, character, and spiritual growth and stressed the importance of students' self-reflection as part of their search for meaning in their lives and professional aspirations. The assessment process was illustrated by presentations on mentoring protocols at HUC-JIR/New York by Dr. Andrea Weiss, Assistant Professor of Bible, and Dr. Wendy Zierler, Assistant Professor of Modern Jewish Literature and Feminist Studies, and by a narrative assessment case study presented by Dr. Dvora Weisberg, Associate Professor of Rabbinical Literature. The faculty continued their discussion of summative assessment of students and its implementation during their area group meetings.*



*Cantorial faculty discussed curriculum, welcomed Dr. Bruce Ruben (standing, at left), the new Director of the School of Sacred Music (SSM), and organized a faculty choir that performed "Shomer Yisrael" by Cantor Israel Goldstein, the retiring SSM Director. They led worship services that were diverse in style, spiritually elevating, and added a unique dimension to the retreat.*



*Rabbi David Levine, Ph.D. (second from right), newly appointed to the David and Roslyn Sonabend Associate Professorship of Talmud and Halakhah at HUC-JIR/Jerusalem, established by Sheila Lambert (right) in honor of her and her sister, Erica Frederick's (second from left) parents, was introduced to his new colleagues by Dr. Michael Marmor, Dean, HUC-JIR/Jerusalem (left).*

