

Jim Joseph Foundation makes \$5.2 million grant to DeLeT

WALTHAM, Mass.– The Jim Joseph Foundation has awarded a three-year, \$5.2 million grant to the DeLeT teacher education program at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles and Brandeis University.

The grant extends a donor relationship between the foundation and DeLeT that began two years ago. According to an evaluation commissioned by the foundation, DeLeT represents a “paradigm shift” in the preparation of Jewish day school teachers, integrating graduate coursework with a yearlong immersive field experience in partner schools. As of this summer, the program will have prepared almost 140 Jewish day school teachers, working in 40 schools across the U.S.

DeLeT, the Hebrew word for “door,” stands for Day School Leadership through Teaching. Philanthropist Laura Lauder founded the program in 2000, in response to a looming shortage of well-educated, highly qualified Jewish day school teachers.

“What began as a response to a crisis quickly grew into an innovative, vision-driven approach to Jewish teacher education,” said Michael Zeldin, director of HUC-JIR’s Rhea Hirsch School of Education, where DeLeT is headquartered. “And now with the support of the Jim Joseph Foundation, we can continue to provide day schools with teachers who can inspire students to live as knowledgeable and committed Jews in America.”

DeLeT graduates benefit from a yearlong internship under a trained, experienced teacher, guidance from field instructors, and rigorous academic coursework. “It’s an intense, transformative experience that is both personal and professional,” said Sharon Feiman-Nemser, Mandel Professor of Jewish Education and director of the Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education, which administers the DeLeT program at Brandeis in cooperation with the university’s Education Program. “The Jim Joseph Foundation has systematically sought out partners in every arena of Jewish education, as it pursues its mission of creating compelling learning experiences for young Jews, and we’re honored and proud to be among those partners,” Feiman-Nemser said.

Jim Joseph Foundation Executive Director Chip Edelsberg noted that DeLeT graduates are reported to be making significant contributions to the schools at which they teach. He added, “High quality, dedicated day school educators are critical to the foundation’s effort to increase the number of young Jews committed to living vibrant Jewish lives.”

For more information about the DeLeT program at HUC-JIR or Brandeis, visit www.huc.edu/delet or www.brandeis.edu/mandel/delet, respectively.

About the Rhea Hirsch School of Education, HUC-JIR

Founded by Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 1970 in Los Angeles, the Rhea Hirsch School of Jewish Education has provided four decades of national leadership in preparing professional Jewish educators for the Reform Movement and klal yisrael. As a center for advanced research, pedagogy, and training, the RHSOE has been a pioneer in re-envisioning Jewish education in a broad array of contexts: from congregational schools through the Experiment in Congregational Education to day schools through DeLeT – Day School Leadership through Teaching and Jewish Day Schools for the 21st Century. The RHSOE faculty’s research and publications are on the cutting edge of new strategies for congregational education, interfaith religious education, day school teaching and learning, Jewish identity formation, and informal learning. Together with its partner program, HUC’s New York School of Education, the RHSOE offers MA and Executive

MA degree and certificate programs, with over 400 graduates serving educational institutions and organizations throughout North America and around the world. For more about the RHSOE, please visit: www.huc.edu/academics/education.

About the Mandel Center at Brandeis University

Founded in 2002 as the first academic center of its kind, the Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education is dedicated to transforming the quality of teaching and learning in Jewish education by supporting practice-centered research, pioneering new models of professional development, and shaping discourse in the study and practice of Jewish education. The Mandel Center is a partnership between the Mandel Foundation of Cleveland, Ohio, and Brandeis University. For more information, please visit www.brandeis.edu/mandel.

About The Jim Joseph Foundation

The Jim Joseph Foundation, established in 2006, is committed to a sustained program of grant making in pursuit of a vision that leads to ever-increasing numbers of young Jews engaged in ongoing Jewish learning and choosing to live vibrant Jewish lives. The Foundation manages close to 700 million dollars of assets, using all of its resources to foster compelling, effective Jewish learning for young Jews in the United States.