



Rabbi David Ellenson

President's Message

Dear Friends:

During difficult times, it is hard to imagine that one individual's capacity to take action can make a difference. But the Rabbis understood that even the smallest act of *hesed*, social responsibility, can change the world. After the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E., the Rabbis who succeeded the prophets and priests as the leaders of the Jewish community were able to bring comfort and vision. They pointed to Torah as the core of Jewish experience and the source of values with which to address and surmount the challenges of a destabilized community.

Their teachings, compiled in the *Pirke Avot*, inspired textile artist Peachy Levy's "One *Mitzvah* Draws Another *Mitzvah*" on the cover of this Annual Report. Levy chose the pomegranate to illustrate Rabbi Ben Azzai's words – "Run to fulfill a slight *mitzvah* as if it were a weighty one...for one good deed brings forth another" – because the biblical fruit is said to contain 613 seeds, the number of *mitzvot* in the Torah, and expresses the infinite possibility of individual acts of goodness that can transform our world.

Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkai's response to the crisis of 1st-century Judaism was to create the yeshiva of Yavneh, recognizing that the study of Torah would ensure Jewish survival. His response to the Temple's destruction was the pragmatic agenda of developing the scholars and leaders who would sustain and transmit our ethics and tradition. His vision held true, for no Jewish community throughout history has thrived without a strong center of higher Jewish learning.

Ben Azzai's optimism and Ben Zakkai's pragmatic activism lie at the heart of our mission at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Our students and alumni are builders of a vibrant Judaism, imbued with the commitment to social justice, scholarship, pastoral care, inclusivity, innovation, creativity, and spiritual strength. They extend HUC-JIR's mission in communities large and small throughout North America, Western Europe, the Former Soviet Union, Israel, and around the world.

Our mission has been fulfilled during the 2007-08 academic year through a myriad of academic programs, faculty initiatives, and research resources.

In February we celebrated the conclusion of the College-Institute's first capital campaign; we raised close to \$145 million and exceeded our goal by \$10 million. The campaign enabled us to increase

scholarship support by over \$13 million for our students; to endow 9 new chairs for senior faculty and young emerging scholars; to enhance the academic, intellectual, cultural and religious life of the College-Institute through new programs and innovative centers and institutes; to employ cutting edge technologies for both the academic enterprise *and* the improvement of business, administrative, and student management functions; and to improve the quality of life on our campuses with building and renovation projects, including the new Edwin Malloy Education Building of the American Jewish Archives and a state-of-the-art renovation and expansion of the Klau Library. The funds raised in this historic campaign enabled HUC-JIR to further the goals of our strategic plan emphasizing academic excellence, financial sustainability, and the integration of our four campuses into one institution.

Through a generous gift from Burt and Gerry Belzer we now have electronic classrooms on each of our campuses. These classrooms, which are in constant demand, are facilitating faculty coordination, collaboration, and team-teaching, and are already expanding the student learning experience, enhancing faculty scholarship, and promoting excellence in all of our academic programs. Notably, Drs. Tamara Eskanazi and Andrea Weiss are teaching a class in Bible using the newly published *Torah: A Woman's Commentary* for 4th- and 5th-year rabbinical students in New York and Los Angeles (see page 10).

We have welcomed new members of our administration: Deborah Abelson and Shena Potter Jaffee as Regional Directors of Admissions and Recruitment; J. Thomas Brown as National Registrar; Sheri Sable as Director of Development, Midwest Region; Adam Greenwald as Assistant Director of Development and Public Affairs, Western Region; Rivka Ben Daniel as Educational Director of DeLeT in Los Angeles; and Julie Pelc as Assistant Director of the Kalsman Institute in Los Angeles.

We have renewed our faculty with gifted emerging scholars who will strengthen the teaching and mentorship on all of our campuses: In Los Angeles, Rabbi Joshua Garroway, Ph.D. has been appointed Assistant Professor of Early Christianity and Second Commonwealth and Dr. Leah Hochman is the newly named Assistant Professor of Jewish Thought. They are joined by Dr. Meir Seidler, HUC-JIR's first Visiting Professor of Israel Studies through a generous gift from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, Lief Rosenblatt, and Robin and Elliott Broidy (see page 22).

Supported by a challenge gift from Joseph Neubauer, Chairman of Aramark, we raised \$1.5 million and named a chair in Jewish Communal Service in honor of our rabbi and teacher and former President of HUC-JIR, Chancellor Emeritus Alfred Gottschalk.

(continued on next page)

President's Message (continued from page 1)

We have broken ground in Cincinnati for the \$12 million Klau Library Renovation and Expansion Project and will construct a new "Library Pavilion" to house library collections, administrative offices, and exhibition space for treasures from the rare book collection.

We have admitted 95 students (30 stateside rabbinical, 10 Israeli rabbinical, 10 cantorial, 10 education, 6 communal service, 10 Doctor of Ministry, 5 Ph.D., 3 Doctor of Hebrew Letters, and 11 DeLeT certificate program participants), and we are proud to have 41 first-year students at our Jerusalem campus, where they are studying side-by-side with 24 Israeli rabbinical students.

We have ordained 55 new stateside rabbis and 6 Israeli rabbis, invested 6 cantors, graduated 10 communal service professionals and 26 Jewish educators and bestowed 105 Master's and Doctoral degrees on students in our graduate and professional programs. At Ordination in Jerusalem, we presented certificates to the first class of *Mezorim*, a program of the Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Center for Pastoral Counseling. Eleven pioneers, including rabbis, medical and mental health professionals, and educators, are helping to define Jewish religious outreach, grounded in the values of the Reform Movement (see page 18).

We have continued to raise funds for scholarships to attract the best and the brightest. Through the generosity of Ruth Ziegler's \$1 million endowment, we will create 4 new scholarships for communal service students (see page 13). Mrs. Harriet Stern of Memphis endowed a scholarship for a rabbinical student and named it in memory of her great-grandfather, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise.

We offered a rich and varied program in leadership for our Tisch and Mandel Fellows, and selected the second cohort of students to receive these prestigious fellowships. Tisch and Mandel Fellows were joined by the first cohort of Schusterman Rabbinical Fellows, a groundbreaking interdenominational five-year pilot program for rabbinical students at HUC-JIR and the Jewish Theological Seminary, sponsored by the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation.

In Cincinnati we launched an historic collaboration with Xavier University to create a Jewish and Interfaith Studies Program that will be offered to undergraduates at Xavier and rabbinical and graduate students at HUC-JIR (see page 8).

In Los Angeles Leona Aronoff-Sadacca endowed a rabbinical mentoring program that bears her name and planning has begun to create an interactive training program for rabbis serving as mentors. The program will focus on mentoring skills, professional development, supervision of field placements, and coaching (see page 4). With a substantial grant from the Jim Joseph Foundation, we have renewed our commitment to day school education by assuring the

continued and increased funding for DeLeT – Day School Education through Leadership and Training. The excellence of this program was recognized by the State of California when HUC-JIR's DeLeT was approved to offer the California State Teaching Credential.

In New York the HUC-JIR Museum presented a diverse array of exhibitions, covering a broad span of Jewish history and experience, including "Rosalyn Engelman: Dry Tears," "Peachy Levy: Threads of Judaism," "Elements of Alchemy: Prints by Paul Weissman," "10-6-73 – The Yom Kippur War: Photographs by Tom Heyman, and "Albanian Muslim Rescuers During the Holocaust: Photographs by Norman Gershman." Faculty and students on the Los Angeles campus have benefited from study with four artists – Peachy Levy, Andrea Hodos, Judith Margolis, and Stacie Chaiken – in the Artist-in-Residence Program to Enhance Jewish Education, partially funded by the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Los Angeles.

In Israel we inaugurated a two-year Master's Program in Pluralistic Jewish Education, HUC-JIR's first partnership with Hebrew University, and recruited 17 women and men who are working in Israeli public schools and other educational venues. Initial funding for this groundbreaking program was provided by Richard Scheuer, z"l, his wife Joan, and their family, and the Chais Family Foundation.

We have accomplished all this through remarkable gains in our development effort. This year we raised over \$25 million – \$19 million in cash and an additional \$6 million in pledges – to ensure the vibrancy of our programs and our ongoing commitment to excellence in educating Jewish leaders.

In conclusion, we at the College-Institute are the heirs of Ben Azzai's optimism and Ben Zakkai's pragmatism. Our goal is clear. The future of Jewish leadership in the United States, Israel, and throughout the world depends upon our ability to maintain our programs, faculty, and resources to produce the next generations of educated, dedicated, empathetic, and caring clergy, educators, and heads of Jewish communal institutions and organizations.

With your generous help, we can and will fulfill this mandate. Thank you for supporting the training of the kinds of Jewish leaders that are so sorely needed during challenging times, so that our children and grandchildren will be the beneficiaries of the wisdom, tradition, culture, and values that provide infinite moral, intellectual, and spiritual fortitude to tackle the real world.

Let us continue to work together, and strengthen each other, as partners in this sacred task.

Rabbi David Ellenson, *President*
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