

President's Message

In his historic address “*Kol Dodi Dofek*” on Yom Haatzmaut 1956, Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik pointed out that the Jewish people were a people both of fate and common purpose. His observation continues to be pertinent as we consider our lives individually, as a community, and as part of the larger Jewish people. As a people of fate, we are inextricably bound to our past and the circumstances that have brought us to our condition today. As a people of common purpose, we are active and take steps in the present that chart our vision for our future.

On September 12, 2009 we lost a champion of the Jewish people, Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, z”l, whose life’s work was a powerful reply to Rabbi Soloveitchik’s query on fate and purpose. For Dr. Gottschalk, who emerged from the destruction of European Jewry and devoted his entire being to regenerating Jewish life and learning, the past was the foundation upon which he forged his vision for a dynamic Jewish present and a vibrant Jewish future in North America and his beloved Israel. His legacy is a source of inspiration, as we channel our energies toward strengthening the College-Institute’s academic excellence and financial sustainability.

The College-Institute stands poised to be an institution of destiny and purpose. Emerging from an intensive period of self-study, we have embraced “A New Way Forward,” a five-year plan designed to put the Reform Movement’s seminary on a firm financial foundation while enhancing student learning, strengthening faculty teaching and scholarship, developing relationships with academic partners, and reinforcing vital links with Reform congregations throughout the world. Based on three principles – attaining financial sustainability; building academic excellence; and preserving presences in Cincinnati, Jerusalem, Los Angeles, and New York that serve Reform congregations around the world, “A New Way Forward” provides for:

- implementing e-learning classrooms, cross-campus learning, and consistent curriculum across campuses;
- a synergized HUC-JIR and Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) relationship aspiring toward joining together in a shared Center for Reform Judaism in New York;
- a new endowment campaign;
- reductions in administrative expenses;
- faculty reduction through voluntary separation, attrition, and retirement, while sustaining emerging junior faculty; and
- restructuring and sale of non-core real estate holdings.

In partnership with the URJ and the other arms of the Reform Movement, we are committed to addressing the vital needs of a changing Jewish community. As we continue to enhance teaching and learning at the College-Institute, our goal is clear: to prepare men and women of vision who are steeped in Jewish knowledge and blessed with creativity and passion to lead and shape communities of meaning and transform congregations, schools, institutions, and agencies of Jewish life for the 21st century.

Despite the challenges that HUC-JIR has faced this year, we have had great success in fundraising. At the outset of the economic downturn, we made the decision to focus on our annual fundraising (rather than larger endow-



ment gifts) so that we could further secure our annual operating budget. I am proud to say that with the able planning and hard work of our development team, we raised almost \$17.5 million during the 2008-09 fiscal year and an additional \$9.8 million in pledges.

I would like to share with you some of the highlights of HUC-JIR’s 134th academic year:

- The Jim Joseph Foundation made an historic gift of \$3.7 million for our Schools of Education to provide full scholarship assistance and stipends to every student studying to become a Jewish educator. The gift, which was also made to the Jewish Theological Seminary and Yeshiva University, recognized the vital role that the seminary plays and must continue to play in building strong Jewish leadership for the future. We are now engaged in an intensive strategic planning process with the JIF to expand the reach of our Schools of Education, attracting greater numbers of students, enriching the curriculum, upgrading recruitment and marketing strategies, and extending the use of technology to educate students both on and off campus. We are very grateful to the Trustees of the Jim Joseph Foundation for the confidence in our work that this gift represents.
- We celebrated the rededication of the Klau Library and Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati Library Pavilion, with a gala day of festivities including a formal rededication ceremony and evening program that welcomed over 1,000 friends of the College-Institute. The Governor of the State of Ohio Ted Strickland; the Mayor of Cincinnati Mark Mallory; former Congressman Rob Portman; and Dr. Gregory Williams, the new President of the University of Cincinnati, joined us to mark this momentous occasion (see page 10).
- Through the commitment of Rabbi Irwin Zeplovitz and Alumni Relations Director Joy Wasserman, we launched a Rabbinic Alumni Invest-in-a-Student initiative that raised in its first year over \$700,000. Our goal is to achieve 100 percent participation from every ordination class and to raise an additional \$1 million in the next year. This initiative was instrumental in increasing our alumni giving to the College by 10 percent in just one year (see page 17).
- We welcomed new members of our administration: Rabbi Dr. Michael Marmur, formerly the Dean of the Jerusalem School, as Vice President of Academic Affairs; Rabbi Naamah Kelman, formerly the Director of the Year-In-Israel Program, as Dean of the Jerusalem School; Dr. Dvora Weisberg, Professor of Talmud, as Director of the Rabbinical Program in Los Angeles; Dr. David Dirlam as Coordinator of Institutional Research, a national position based in Cincinnati; Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback as Director of the Year-In-Israel Program in Jerusalem; and Rabbi Marc Rosenstein as Director of the Israeli Rabbinical Program.

(continued on next page)

President's Message *(continued from page 1)*

- Our faculty has been enriched immeasurably by the presence of two Israeli Visiting Professors in Israel Studies. Dr. Larissa Remennick, an expert in gender studies, women's health, and immigration/integration, holds a joint appointment with HUC-JIR and the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS). Dr. Martin Sherman, an expert in strategic and foreign policy, Israeli intelligence, and counter-terrorism holds a joint appointment with HUC-JIR and the University of Southern California. Funding for the Schusterman Visiting Faculty in Israel Studies was made possible through the generosity of the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, Lief Rosenblatt, and Elliott and Robin Broidy.
- We have admitted 96 students (35 stateside rabbinical, 5 Israeli rabbinical, 6 cantorial, 11 education, 11 rabbinical/education Mandel Fellowship, 8 communal service, 5 Ph.D., 2 Pre-doctoral M.A. in Jewish Studies, and 13 DeLeT certificate program participants, and we are proud to have 51 first-year students at our Jerusalem campus, where they are studying side-by-side with 23 Israeli rabbinical students.
- We have ordained 43 new stateside rabbis and 6 Israeli rabbis, invested 11 cantors, graduated 12 Jewish communal service professionals and 17 Jewish educators, and bestowed 125 Master's and Doctoral degrees on students in our graduate and professional programs. At Ordination in Jerusalem, we presented certificates to the first 7 graduates of our Master's Program in Pluralistic Jewish Education, a first-time collaboration with the Hebrew University (see page 20).
- We have continued to focus on scholarships to enable us to attract the best and the brightest students. The Shapiro Foundation (see page 26) has made its 26th annual gift to fund scholarships for first-year students in Israel. Generous donors too numerous to mention have invested in our students by pledging multi-year scholarships.
- Our rich and varied leadership programs – the Tisch Fellows, Mandel Fellows, and Schusterman Rabbinical Fellows – have been joined by the School of Sacred Music Leadership Fellows Program, endowed by an anonymous gift from a generous donor.
- With a generous two-year challenge gift from an anonymous foundation, we added over \$250,000 to our annual giving this year, and expect to do the same in 2009-10.
- 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. This initiative was launched with a generous gift from Macy's, Inc., and Norma and Donald Stone.
- In Los Angeles we initiated the Aronoff Rabbinical Mentoring Program, focusing on mentoring skills, professional development, supervision of field placements, and coaching.
- In Los Angeles we completed the Artist-in-Residence for Jewish Education Program with artist Stacie Chaiken, funded partially by a Cutting Edge Grant from the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles.
- Our DeLeT Program – Day School Education through Leadership and Training – received a substantial grant from the Jim Joseph Foundation, enabling HUC-JIR to increase the number of students being trained to be day school teachers. The excellence of this program was recognized by the State of California when DeLeT was approved to offer the California State Teaching Credential.
- In New York we celebrated Jewish music and our renowned School of Sacred Music with "Debbie and Friends," a gala concert held at Central Synagogue. Playing to nearly 1000 guests, Debbie Friedman, special guests, faculty, cantorial alumni, and students interpreted Debbie's music and sang the many songs that are the hallmark of Debbie's distinguished career. The concert was the largest fundraiser in the SSM's 60-year history, raising over \$450,000 for HUC-JIR.
- We continue to be an innovator in congregational education through our Leadership Institute for Congregational School Educators, a joint program with JTS, funded by the UJA-Federation of New York. Through this collaboration, we offer an intensive program of leadership skill-building to principals in the New York metropolitan area, enabling them to strengthen all aspects of the religious schools in their congregations.
- In New York, the HUC-JIR Museum presented a diverse array of exhibitions, including "Envisioning Maps" and "Arbit Blatas: A Centennial Celebration." The Anti-Defamation League, with the assistance of Abraham Foxman and Regina Resnik, generously donated Blatas's renowned bas-relief sculptures, entitled "Memorial to the Holocaust," to HUC-JIR. These sculptures, which were exhibited across from the United Nations on the façade of the ADL's former headquarters for many years, are in an edition of four sets; the three other sets are the permanent Holocaust memorials of Paris, Venice, and Kaunas, Lithuania.
- To be of service to our donors and friends, the Development Office created and launched a Planned Giving Website (see page 14) to encourage and assist donors in making transformational gifts to the College at low cost. We welcome all of our donors to make use of this new site.

We have accomplished all of this through the remarkable support of our Boards of Governors and Overseers and wonderful and loyal donors and alumni who understand that HUC-JIR is at the heart of the Reform Movement and represents the hope and the future for the American Jewish community.

With your continued generous help, we can and will fulfill our mandate to educate the kinds of Jewish leaders that are so sorely needed during these challenging times. Thank you for making it possible for our children and grandchildren to be the beneficiaries of the wisdom, tradition, culture, and values that provide the moral, intellectual, and spiritual fortitude to tackle real issues in the real world.

With sincere appreciation for your great support and with warm wishes for health, fulfillment, peace, and joy,

Rabbi David Ellenson, *President*
March 2010 *Nisan 5770*