

From the inception of American Reform Judaism, its founder, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, understood that a vital partnership of institutions was indispensable in ensuring a flourishing, progressive, and enlightened American Judaism in sync with modern life. Wise's conviction that an institution of higher Jewish learning would guarantee Jewish survival in America led him, together with representatives of 28 congregations, to establish the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (today known as the Union for Reform Judaism - URJ) in 1873 for the purpose of establishing a "Hebrew Theological Institute." In 1875 Hebrew Union College was launched as the first permanent Jewish institution of higher learning

in the New World, and in 1889 Rabbi Wise established the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) to sustain HUC-JIR's graduates.

This 19th-century blueprint has succeeded in propelling Reform Judaism into the largest growing Jewish denomination in 21st-century North America. The Reform Movement continues to be sustained and advanced by the powerful, ongoing partnerships that exist

among its core institutions, with each providing its own vision, leadership, and initiative to address the shared challenges of contemporary American Jewish life.

The Reform Movement: Partners in the Jewish Future

The URJ, CCAR, and HUC-JIR have launched a Think Tank comprised of representatives of each of these three core institutions to address the conflicting sociological, technological, and financial forces that will shape Reform Judaism's future. During an 18-month period leading up to the URJ Biennial Convention in 2011, public forums with leading thinkers, which are broadcast on the URJ website, and interactive blogs are designed to engage the participation of the entire Movement.

This past year, HUC-JIR's campuses have begun to serve for the first time as central addresses that have physically integrated the institutions of Reform Judaism. The Western Center for Reform Judaism, dedicated in March 2010 on the Los Angeles campus, houses the administrative facilities for the URJ and the CCAR's Pacific Association of Reform Rabbis. HUC-JIR's Jerusalem campus, shared with Beit Shmuel-Mercaz Shimshon of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, is now the home to all the arms of the Israeli Progressive Movement with the dedication in January 2010 of the Rabbi Amy and Gary Perlin Israel Religious Action Center, now joining the headquarters of the North American Federation of Temple Youth and Netzer Olami. Looking ahead, the URJ, CCAR, and HUC-JIR are working to further strengthen the inseparable bonds that unite them.

URJ and HUC-JIR



"The Union came into being to create a Reform seminary that would educate our rabbis — and later cantors, educators, and communal workers — in the principles of liberal Judaism," says Rabbi Eric Yoffie, N '74, President, Union for Reform Judaism.

"Since 1873, supporting HUC-JIR and providing a network of synagogues to receive its graduates have been among the Union's most important tasks. The Union and the College-Institute nurture one another because they need one another, and together we convey the collective nature of the Reform enterprise."

The generous support of the URJ's 900 Reform congregations and their congregants is indispensable to both HUC-JIR and the URJ. One-third of HUC-JIR's annual operating budget is supported by the MUM (Maintenance of Union Membership) dues, contributed to the URJ by individual members of Reform synagogues, which are divided between the URJ and HUC-JIR. These dues provide the necessary resources to sustain HUC-JIR's preeminent faculty, programs, research centers, and outreach to communities throughout North America, Israel, and around the world. Without the URJ and the support of Reform congregants, HUC-JIR would be unable to prepare the next generation of professional leaders for the 1.5 million Reform Jews in North America today.

HUC-JIR's students serve over 350 pulpits and internships in the URJ's congregations, schools, organizations, and institutions each year, including small congregations that would otherwise lack professional leadership. Students also serve Reform Movement summer camps and Israel programs for teenagers, and NFTY youth groups in congregations. They support the needs of Reform Jews through their work in chaplaincies in hospitals and homes for the aged, Hillel and Jewish student centers on college campuses, and Federations and other Jewish communal and social service agencies. HUC-JIR's nearly 4,000 active alumni serve in key professional leadership positions in the URJ and its 900 congregations.

Under the URJ umbrella, Jews are able to connect with communities, governments, and leaders to make a meaningful impact on spiritual, ethical, and social justice issues. The URJ also provides spiritual direction for Reform Jews and those interested in Reform Judaism, and unites them with a shared sense of vision and values. The URJ and HUC-JIR are linked in mission and purpose as together we strive to strengthen and support Reform congregations, Reform Jews, and k'lal Yisrael.

Peter Weidhorn, URJ Chairman



Michael Roth, Chair, URJ, Western District, about to affix the *mezuzah* at the dedication of the Western Center for Reform Judaism, which brings together the arms of the Reform Movement – HUC-JIR, the URJ, and the CCAR – under one roof on HUC-JIR's Jack H. Skirball Campus in Los Angeles.

HUC-JIR's faculty teach thousands of Reform Jewish leaders and congregants each year as scholars-in-residence at the URJ's Biennial and Regional Conventions, *kallot*, and other life-long learning programs. They serve on URJ Task Forces and contribute their scholarship and research through educational resources posted on the URJ website, books published by URJ Press, and articles featured in *Reform Judaism* magazine.

Reform congregants are welcomed onto HUC-JIR's campuses for a rich array of educational and cultural programs and are invited to access the resources of HUC-JIR's internationally renowned Klau Library, American Jewish Archives, campus museums, and research centers advancing Judaism and health, inclusivity, ethics, and pastoral care.



CCAR and HUC-JIR



"The Central Conference of American Rabbis and HUC-JIR are inexorably linked by history, mission, and, most importantly, the personal relationships that help provide an almost seamless transition from seminary life to professional life for our rabbis," explains Rabbi Steven A. Fox, C '80, CCAR Chief Executive. **"Following ordination, the CCAR serves our rabbis with multiple opportunities for a lifetime of Torah study, professional education, and spiritual and emotional support."**

Led by distinguished HUC-JIR rabbinical alumni, the CCAR represents more than 2,000 Reform rabbis (including 582 women rabbis) serving communities across the U.S. and Canada. The CCAR works closely with HUC-JIR in transitioning graduates of the Rabbinical Program into their first professional placements. It continues to guide alumni throughout their careers and sustains and enriches their lifelong learning through a broad array of continuing education programs. HUC-JIR faculty members serve as instructors in these programs and annual CCAR conferences, while also publishing their scholarship in the *CCAR Journal: The Reform Jewish Quarterly*.

The CCAR and HUC-JIR enjoy a partnership in the development of strong rabbinic leadership for the Reform movement. Rabbis in the field help recruit the next generation of Jewish leaders to study at HUC-JIR. As partners along with the URJ in the Reform Leadership Council, HUC-JIR and the Conference benefit from this significant and symbiotic relationship.

Rabbi Ellen Weinberg Dreyfus, N '79, CCAR President



WRJ and HUC-JIR

The Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ; formerly the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods) is the single largest cumulative organizational donor to HUC-JIR since 1913. Shelley Lindauer, WRJ Executive Director, notes, "WRJ's mission of ensuring the future of Reform Judaism is most concretely manifested in the education of Reform rabbis, cantors, educators, and Jewish communal professionals at our Movement's seminary."

The WRJ provides annual scholarship aid to North American rabbinical, cantorial, and education students studying at the stateside campuses, scholarships for Israel Rabbinical Program students in Jerusalem, and cantorial prizes to students in the School of Sacred Music. In addition, it subsidizes HUC-JIR's *Pesach* Project in the Former Soviet Union, which has enabled over 200 students to date to lead worship and multi-generational educational programs during Passover throughout Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.

HUC-JIR's close partnership with the WRJ in its educational programs, materials, and biennial convention, is evident in the WRJ's groundbreaking publication of *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*. Co-edited by Dr. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, Professor of Bible, and Dr. Andrea Weiss, Assistant Professor of Bible, this volume includes scholarly essays, interpretations, and reflections by 40 members of the faculty, alumni, and students. With the support of Arthur and Elizabeth Blaustein Roswell, all second-year students have received a copy of this volume to date, and the WRJ will continue to make this essential commentary available to all HUC-JIR students on an ongoing basis. Students also benefit from the opportunity to work with the WRJ as part of their professional development fieldwork.

When the WRJ Board met in Cincinnati this past year, they explored the treasures of the American Jewish Archives to see where the WRJ archives are being preserved for future generations of researchers. "Since our inception in 1913, the women of our Movement have recognized the importance of well-educated and trained Jewish professionals," says Lynn Magid Lazar, WRJ President. "I am exceedingly proud of our ongoing commitment to HUC-JIR and value our very special partnership."

[From right] Lynn Magid Lazar, WRJ President, and Shelley Lindauer, WRJ Executive Director, with HUC-JIR faculty Dr. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Dr. Andrea Weiss, co-editors of the WRJ's *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*.

