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The COMMENTATOR

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Yeshiva Wrestling Falls to Budget Cuts

By Adir Feifel

On June 8th, Yeshiva University's Director of Athletics Joe Bednarsh sent an email to the members of the Maccabees Wrestling team: "It is with regret that I inform you that YU will not be sponsoring Wrestling this upcoming season. Please know that this was a difficult decision and part of a larger effort to streamline the operations of the Athletic Department." To the shock and dismay of all those associated with it, the Yeshiva Wrestling program had become the latest victim of budget cuts and was suddenly discontinued.

Maccabees Wrestling has a long and storied history at YU, arguably more so than any other sport in the school. Henry Wittenberg founded the team 65 years ago after winning both gold and silver wrestling for the United States in the Olympic Games. One of his top wrestlers was Neil Ellman ('68YC) from Tennessee, who lost only one match in his YU career. Ellman took over the team's coaching duties after Wittenberg retired in 1970 and held that position until being dismissed in the summer of this year. Reflecting on his many years at YU, Ellman says "I wasn't doing it for a legacy. I was doing it because I loved wrestling and loved teaching it at YU, because I really believed in Torah U'Maddah." This belief was not limited to his activities on the mat. According to the Yeshiva Wrestling Association (a non-profit organization that supports Jewish wrestling programs throughout the country), Ellman personally had donated hundreds of thousands

of dollars to YU through his various family foundations, and only a small amount of that money was earmarked towards wrestling.

Ellman was informed about the decision to terminate wrestling in a ten-minute phone call from Bednarsh. "He said he was under a mandate to save money," Ellman recalls, "and that he would save \$35,000 by getting rid of wrestling. Then I asked to just be a club, but he said no that would cost too much. A club doesn't cost anything though, because it has to be independently funded." The conversation concluded shortly thereafter, and with it Ellman's four-plus decades of coaching wrestling at Yeshiva University. *Continued on page 8*



New Year, New Torah Programming at YU

By Eitan Lipsky

As the new school year is set in motion, the feeling of excitement in the air is palpable. Much of that excitement comes as a result of the unprecedented number of new Torah opportunities and personalities at YU this year. After a summer during which many members of the staff and administration spent a great deal of time determining new ways to improve the undergraduate Torah studies at Yeshiva, these ideas are now being put to action. At the Yeshiva's Opening Kennes last Monday, Rabbi Menachem Penner, Dean of Undergraduate Torah Studies, remarked that he was looking forward to the challenge of trying to find room on the doors of the Beis Medrash to post signs about all of the new events and Torah opportunities for the

upcoming year. Here's a breakdown of some of the new features around campus:

- The Isaac Breuer College of Hebraic Studies (IBC) has changed its schedules so that many of its classes will occur four times a week. "So far it's been very positive", said IBC student Yoni Shedlo, "It provides an opportunity to get to know both professors and classmates better and to delve into the course material with more depth".
- The Irving I. Stone Beis Medrash Program (SBMP) has a new Rebbe, Rabbi Jonathan Schachter, who has been a prominent figure in Frisch High School and Camp Morasha in past years.
- The Mazer Yeshiva Program (MYP) has started two new shiurim designed especially for students in their first year on campus, geared towards allowing for an easier transition into the yeshiva program. These shiurim are given by Rabbi Yehuda Willig and Rabbi Netanel Wiederblank.
- Rabbi Binyamin Krohn has been hired as a new mashgiach for MYP. Rabbi Krohn will be stationed in the Fischel Beis Medrash.

In addition, the yeshiva has set its eyes on improving night seder. Under the leadership of new night seder Rebbeim, Rabbi Reuven Berman and Rabbi Yitzchok Radner, the yeshiva has launched an incentive-based bekius program.

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Transition for Directorship at Student Life Office

By Avi Strauss

With the departure of the Director of Student Life Yehezkel ("Hezzy") Jesin this past summer, the Office of Student Life (OSL) has begun the year without a director. Jesin, who served as the Director of Student Life for 5 years, resigned from his post to become Executive Director of the Riverdale Jewish Center (RJC).

Commenting on the work Jesin had done at YU during his tenure, Dean of Students Chaim Nissel was full of praise, exuding "Hezzy was a wonderful member of the Student Life team for 5 years and we are in his debt for all that he did for the student community. He greatly enjoyed his work with students." Given the various faculty departures and changes across the university, there was some speculation that Jesin departed over some dispute with a part of the administration. However, when asked about the circumstances regarding Jesin's departure, Dean Nissel denied those rumors, stating: "He [Jesin] moved on to a new opportunity that came late in the year," adding "we are confident he will be successful there as well."

Mr. Jesin had not responded to The Commentator's request to comment as of publication.

For now, various staff members at the Office of Student

Life have been filling the role and assuming the responsibilities of the Director of Student Life, until a full-time replacement is hired. Dean Nissel stated he has been working closely with the staff at both the Wilf and Beren campuses, and is "confident that we are keeping all aspects of the Office of Student Life and the student experience as great as ever." Dean Nissel continued by saying that the "hard work" of Linda Stone, Aliza Abrams, Tami Adelson, Stanton Fellow Malka Sigal and Rabbinic Intern Zac Katz have kept the OSL running smoothly.

In fact, it seems the Office of Student Life has expanded its operations during orientation. This year, new components like a boat ride for new students with Rabbi Penner, Rabbi Brander, mashgichim, madrichim and Dean Nissel himself were added to orientation week. "It was an enjoyable way to combine sightseeing with good company. Definitely a success!" said new student Josh Blicher (YC '18).

Further, this year the Wilf campus welcomed last year's Beren "on campus" couple, Housing Director Jonathan Schwab and his wife, Dr. Esty Rollhaus, who will be contributing to the Shabbat experience in the coming year. It is developments like these that show, even in the absence of a director, the OSL is as

vibrant as ever.

While other YU positions that were vacated this summer were subject to "rightsizing" according to President Joel, with various positions and responsibilities being integrated and consolidated, it appears the OSL will suffer no such contraction. Rabbi Brander and Dean Nissel have been carefully searching for a new director. Due to the importance of the position they have assembled a committee that includes current OSL staff Aliza Abrams and Linda Stone, as well as student leaders. Student leaders will be working very closely with the new director, and Dean Nissel and Rabbi Brander have been seeking their feedback. More specifically, student leaders on the Wilf campus were invited to meet with a person under consideration for hire. "The idea was not for us to ask him questions as if it were a second interview round, but rather to schmooze with him and try and get a sense of whether or not he was someone we could see ourselves potentially working with" said YSU President Noam Safier (YC '17). Safier added "I certainly think it was a good idea to include us. After all, we are the ones who will be working Transition for

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The EDITORIAL

A Call For Neutrality

By The Editorial Board

We recognize and applaud the University's efforts to facilitate and encourage political activism, specifically with regards to the ongoing Iran Deal. Inviting speakers through the Israel club and YUPAC and arranging transportation to various rallies bespeak dedication and care for these important values. However, these events, and some of the language used to promote them, cater to only one side of this issue, thereby damaging the welcoming political environment of our campus, and marginalizing some students and their views. Though Yeshiva University proudly supports the State of Israel, the Iran Deal is a complex, politically charged issue, and the implication that Orthodox Jews and strong advocates for Israel must subscribe to a particular opinion about the Deal is both unfair and wrong.

Most strikingly, some of the wording in a recent, university-wide email from Vice President of University Life Rabbi Kenneth Brander and Dean of RIETS and Undergraduate Torah Studies Rabbi Menachem Penner took an unequivocal political stance:

We are URGING (*capitalization theirs*) our semikha talmidim and those in the college thinking about entering semikha, TO JOIN (*capitalization theirs*) with us, our Roshei Yeshiva, Torah faculty and hundreds of rabbis in a rabbinic rally and lobbying effort in Washington...We must make our voices heard to urge Congress to reject the deal.

Administrators should not implore students to adopt certain political views. The beautiful atmosphere that this University prides itself on stems from its students' ability to freely form their own views. Emails from administrators "urging" students towards a specific stance detracts from this freedom, and undermines the free-range discussion integral to the university environment. When addressing the student body on issues like these, university administrators should remain neutral, encouraging students to form opinions of their own and (thereby) fostering a dynamic center of learning for our university's diverse population.

We encourage the Administration and the Student Council to remain cognizant of these issues when planning and advertising events. We ask you to exercise foresight and prudence, taking measures to ensure that you do not marginalize students with certain political opinions, and working to contribute only positively towards an environment of flowering debate, informed, nuanced opinions, and passionate activism.

Our Role in Education

By Yechiel Schwab

In a July 23rd article for the New York Times entitled "The Fundamental Way Universities are an Illusion," Kevin Carey discusses the manufactured pride of colleges across America. Analyzing the findings of a new book, "How College Affects Students" by Ernest Pascarella and Patrick Terenzini, Carey notes that among the 848 pages compiling and analyzing decades of data and research about colleges, the authors found little evidence supporting universities' claims of superior "academic rigor." Indeed, despite the advertising of admissions departments and the promises to deliver first-rate educations, the studies found little evidence for differing levels of intellectual development between colleges. Rather, the studies showed that universities offer extremely similar products, but instead the actions and decisions of students play a far greater role in determining success. This research, and Carey's analysis of it, lend an important perspective to our college experience here at Yeshiva University.

Despite the overall trend of their research demonstrating the equal levels of education between colleges, Pascarella and Terenzini found a few components which contribute towards more successful academic environments. Specifically, Carey notes the positive influence of close relationships with faculty and peers. Reading these factors, I recalled many heated late-night discussions in spring of last year about academic changes at Yeshiva College. Over the last five years, the size of the Yeshiva College faculty has decreased, while class size has increased. Last spring in particular, significant reductions were made concurrent with the elimination of the First Year Seminar Program. According to Carey's claims, these changes detrimentally affect our college. Lowering faculty, while increasing class size, hurts our ability to de-

velop close relationships with both professors and peers. The many talented professors who have left this University without being replaced contributes towards this. And eliminating First Year Seminar, a small, discussion based class helpful to the growth and relationships of many first year students, worsens these effects.

Nonetheless, we must contextualize these changes within the broader landscape of Yeshiva College and Pascarella and Terenzini's research. Firstly, in terms of Yeshiva College, despite budget constraints, class sizes remain incredibly small. A simple perusal of the course schedule will reveal the abundance of courses with enrollment in the teens, or even single-digits. Additionally, though some professors have left, excellent professors still fill our halls and classrooms. And while First Year Seminar was cut, the First Year Writing Program and many other great courses still remain. Our college continues to create an environment conducive towards developing close relationship with professors and peers.

Secondly, and more significantly, Carey notes that the contribution of these components pale in comparison with the initiatives of students. Though a low teacher-to-student ratio grants greater opportunities for success, at the end of the day, our education lies in our hands. Carey detects a trend that can be seen in any Yeshiva College classroom. No matter how engaging a professor or subject is, or how many office hours they offer, the students remain in control of their education. The courses we choose, the professors we seek out for conversations, the work and effort we exert into our courses and extracurricular passions, the discussions and debates we have outside the classroom- these determine our college experience. The opportunities for an incredible education exist all around us here at Yeshiva University. But education only happens when we exert ourselves, and we seek out our interests and our passions. The opportunities are here; it is up to us to seize them.

The COMMENTATOR

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The Commentator is the official student newspaper of Yeshiva University.

For 80 years, The Commentator has served students and administrators as a communicative conduit; a kinetic vehicle disseminating undergraduate social, religious, and academic beliefs across the student bodies; and a reliable reflection of Yeshiva student life to the broader Jewish and American communities.

The Commentator staff claims students spanning the diverse spectrum of backgrounds and beliefs represented at Yeshiva.

We are united by our passion for living the ideals of Torah u-Maddah, and a commitment to journalistic excellence.



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- 1 8:30 Minyan**
It's pretty weird to sleep through my alarm and not have to daven next to a garbage can in a lounge that looks like it hasn't been cleaned since last semester.
- 2 Weather**
Coming back to school with temperatures below 90 degrees is pretty refreshing.
- 3 Caf Improvements**
Better Ingredients. Better Food. No more starving till salmon Thursdays.
- 4 Month break for yom tov**
We probably have the shortest winter break of any school in the northern hemisphere, so we'll take vacations whenever we can get them.
- 5 Pictures of the library**
Despite the cloud of dust constantly surrounding the library, those gorgeous pictures of glass windows and wide open spaces give us hope that there's a better future ahead.
- 6 Beginning of the semester**
There are seats available in the library, you haven't fallen behind in your workload, and this semester is going to be the one in which you never procrastinate or skim your class reading. First month naïveté is truly special.
- 7 Ashley Madison**
Amid the constant scandals reported in the news, the Ashley Madison hack has a sort of righteous pleasure associated with it. Let's hope all those cheating husbands get exposed and extorted.





7 UP 7 DOWN

- 1 Ystuds**
Granted, the lack of emails over the summer was pretty disappointing. But ignoring 60 emails every day can be pretty overwhelming.
- 2 Library Construction**
Among the many difficulties with the library are not getting to see Marco each morning. And once upon a time a student could study in the library without getting an asthma attack. But no more.
- 3 Homework**
No elaboration necessary
- 4 Syllabus Week**
Yes. I know how to use Angel. Thank you very much.
- 5 Iran**
Whether you're for or against the deal, those guys are up to no good.
- 6 Starting school in August**
It's not fun. Trust me.
- 7 The Subway**
Waiting for the 1 train in the summer time is kind of how most people imagine the lowest rings of Hell. But hey, maybe that'll count as repentance for our sins over the past year.

[Sstud mailing list
Sstud@lists.yu.edu](mailto:Sstud@lists.yu.edu)

[Click here for a Guided Tour of Angel.](#)

University Registrar to Resign

By David Tribuch

YU has recently announced that the University's Registrar, Diana Chadi, will be stepping down after four years of service. Ms. Chadi explained that she wishes to pursue other opportunities in the field of higher education. Upon her departure Ms. Chadi will be focusing her energies in attaining her doctorate from Columbia University's Teacher's College.

Chadi herself had only good things to say regarding her tenure here at YU. "I have spent the last 15 years at YU both as a student and as an administrator and they have been some of the most fulfilling and exciting years of my life. I will miss YU dearly and plan to be engaged as a proud alumna". Before

her time as Registrar, Chadi attended Stern College for Women from 2002-2006, and earned degrees in biology and sociology. After that, she split her time between studying at Wurzeiler School of Social Work and serving as the Associate Registrar.

With YU's budgetary concerns, some people viewed Chadi's departure as an opportunity to downsize the Office of the Registrar, like had been done previously with the departure of Dean Eichler in the Dean's Office. In response to these concerns, Provost Botman stated that the University's main goal is to ensure that students have all of the services necessary to succeed, and that Student Affairs has no intention of downsizing the department.

When asked for comment regarding Chadi's departure, Botman responded that "Diana Chadi has contributed to student success and to the university in countless ways over the years of her service. We are deeply appreciate of all that Diana has done to improve the registrar's office and attend to students. We will miss her and wish her well".

NEWS BRIEFS

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

Dean Koller on Sabbatical

Yeshiva College Associate Dean Aaron Koller went on Sabbatical this year as his time in the administration came to an end. After what he dubbed as "fulfilling but consuming administrative work at YU," Dr. Koller is in Israel for the year with his family. Primarily, he will be serving as the Lady Davis Visiting Professor at the Hebrew University, where he will be teaching a graduate seminar on the history of the alphabet in the Department of Hebrew Language. He was also granted a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship at the Albright Institute for Archaeological Research, where he will be preparing an edition of part of Papyrus Amherst 63, an ancient Aramaic text written in Demotic (Egyptian) script. (This fascinating but challenging text was deciphered decades ago by Prof. Richard Steiner, professor emeritus at the Revel Graduate School, but has never been fully published.) Also on his agenda is working on a book about a Jewish, anti-Kierkegaardian, reading of the Akeda as a Fellow at the Hartman Institute. His non-academic plans include biking and walking everywhere he needs to go, rather than commuting by car or subway, experiencing Israel with his kids, cooking many of Ottolenghi's recipes, having a havruta with his wife, Shira Hecht-Koller, and spending time with the family that both he and his wife have in the country. Furthermore, although Dr. Koller is not on campus, he has not removed himself from the campus conversation, penning a response, together with his wife, to Rabbi Willig's recent controversial comments regarding women's talmud study, entitled "New Circumstances Demand New Halachic Views."

Minyanim Changes Around Campus

Among the numerous changes on the Wilf Campus this year, both architecturally and in programming, are various changes to the shacharit minyanim. In addition to several new gabbaim, the locations of minyanim have been altered, primarily in an effort to ensure all minyanim take place in a Beit Knesset, as opposed to a dormitory lounge. Location changes include the 7:00 AM minyan ("Rav Moshe Tzvi" minyan) being moved from the Morg Beis to Rubin Shul, the 7:45 minyan being moved from Rubin Shul to Morg Beis, the 8:10 minyan being moved from Morg Beis to Rubin Shul and the 8:30 minyan being moved from the Morg Lounge to the Morg Beis. Both the 7:45 and 8:10 minyanim will now begin with "Rabi Yishmael". The gabbaim for the year will be Isaac Rosen (7:00), Daniel Shlian (7:45), Jacob Herenstein (8:10) and Gary Feder (8:30). Minyanim not mentioned will remain in the same place they have been in the past. Additionally, all the minyanim mentioned here will have defined women's sections in which men will be restricted from praying.

Directorship at Student Life Office

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with him very closely on a variety of issues that will likely test our emotional and intellectual competence and it's important to make sure we'd feel comfortable bringing them up with him and asking for advice."

YCOSA President Josh Nagel echoed the sentiment: "It was important for the Office of Student Life to observe us schmoozing with the candidate to evaluate the candidate's demeanor and interactions with students. And it was important for the candidate to meet us to decide whether the job fits expectations and that this student population will be appropriate to work with. Nagel went on to say: "I think students should be included in important decisions more often throughout the university. Student Life's insistence on not making a decision without our input is a great first step for empowering students more on campus."

Certainly, it seems, all due diligence to ensure the new Director will be fit for the position and that the foundation for any future director will be properly laid prior to his or her arrival, has been paid. Now it's just a matter of finalizing who it will be.

All Roads lead to Rome for YU Students in Honors Courses

By Hillel Field

Gazing at a magnificent sunset at the Bay of Naples. Standing at the foot of formidable ancient architectural masterpieces. Sampling the wild varieties of mouth-watering Gelato in the streets of Rome.

These are only a few of the endless highlights myself and fourteen other Yeshiva University students experienced by taking part in last summer's Yeshiva University Honors travel courses in New York and Italy. Last summer's courses included Classical Jewish History, taught by both Professors Joseph Angel and Steven Fine, and Classicism: From Antiquity to the Age of Revolt (CUOT), taught by Professor Marnin Young. The program was run flawlessly by Honor's Program Director Dr. Gabriel Cwilich, with the assistance of Honors Program coordinator Ms. Hannah Rozenblat. With knowledge of the city of Rome like the back of his hand, resourceful thinking, and sagely advice, Dr. Cwilich's presence on the trip guaranteed a worthwhile experience for all.

The program began with the typical format of summer courses at YU, with classes taking place at both Wilf and Beren campuses for the convenience of students from both schools. During the program's limited amount of time spent in New York, from May 27th to June 12th, Professor Young and Professor Angel masterfully delivered intense "crash-course" lectures, making sure the students absorbed as much as we could handle. Although Professor Angel was only present during the New York portion of the program, the class had the privilege of learning for two weeks from one of the foremost experts in the world on the Dead Sea Scrolls, who literally

has hands-on experience with the subject. Both professors customized the structures of the courses to blend seamlessly with the real life encounters the students experienced in Rome regarding Classicism and Jewish History.

There is no question that the "travel" aspect of the program was the most engaging and memorable part of the trip. For the two full weeks we spent in Italy, the majority of the time we stayed in a hotel located in the Jewish Ghetto of Rome. This was the perfect location to gain a sense of the history of Jews in Rome, with the Great Synagogue of Rome in the heart of the ghetto. A truly majestic structure, this place of prayer stands as a modern day testament to the Jewish legacy of the city. When

"Both Professors customized the structures of the courses to blend seamlessly with the real life encounters the students experienced in Rome"

it came to exploring the annals of ancient Jewish history, we couldn't have asked for a better mentor than Professor Steven Fine, an intellectual giant with down-to-earth compassion for his students. A particularly memorable moment was hearing from Professor Fine at the Arch of Titus, one of his areas of expertise.

Professor Fine has worked up close and personally with the monument while discovering its original color composition. One could not hold back an ironic smile as a modern day Jew standing at the foot of something celebrating what was thought to be the ultimate demise of the Jewish nation.

When there are countless world famous works of art located in a 3-mile radius from your hotel, the task of gaining a firsthand education in Classicism may seem overwhelming. Thankfully, Professor Marnin Young handled this undertaking with incredible efficiency and his laid back delivery of a superhuman amount of art history expertise. We gained an appreciation of the development of the classical tradition, tracing the process from the forums of the Roman Empire and the massive amount

of ancient sculptures contained in the Vatican, to modern day world class galleries such as the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples, Palazzo Barberini, and Museo Nazionale Romano. Perhaps most valuable was what we gained from Professor Young in terms of art appreciation. Even those who aren't fans of art can learn its internal language and try to understand the message the artist is trying to transmit, a message professor Young made sure to impart.

Of course, the trip would not have been complete without the amazing, truly intellectual, curious, and adventurous group of students that participated. Somehow, we found the time to bond as a group, making lifelong friends within our day-long exhausting and incredible excursions. The experience of spending Shabbat together added a spiritually profound layer to the trip, adorning our educational endeavors with meaningful divrei torah and ad hoc seudah shlishit meals set up in our hotel rooms, complete with harmonious group melodies. There are not many experiences that epitomize the ideal of Torah U'Maddah as well as this trip, and I hope students will continue to take advantage of such opportunities.



Science, Israel, and Yeshiva University: Summer Research at the Bar-Ilan Program

By Ariella Levie

Twenty-seven young undergraduate science students arrived in Bar Ilan on Tuesday July 23, 2015. These students, all participants in the 5th annual Yeshiva University-Bar Ilan summer research program, were eager to delve into a summer of exploration in many nuanced areas of science. Each year a group of Yeshiva University students pack up their bags and leave their homes in America to come to Israel to spend their summer working in a high-level research lab in Bar Ilan. For seven weeks the program participants boarded the bus early in the morning to make the trek from the dorms at Yeshiva University's Gruss campus in Bayit Vagan, Jerusalem to Bar Ilan, located in Ramat Gan. This year, selected students were chosen for research in all areas of developing science. Students worked in labs ranging in topics from biology, chemistry and physics to psychology, computer science, and atmospheric science.

Day-to-day activities within the lab varied depending on each individual area of study. Elisheva Jacobov, a senior at SCW, worked in a psychology lab doing research on social anxiety disorder. Each day, Jacobov worked to read through personal accounts of patients with the disorder to try to ascertain if there was a difference in anxiety levels when patients interacted with close family versus strangers. Jacobov describes her experience in the lab as "enlightening" and truly "an incredible opportunity to be immersed in a high-level science lab while developing important Hebrew skills and a deep love of Israel."

Outside of the daily lab work, students

in the program were afforded many unique opportunities over the summer. Every Tuesday the program went on special trips throughout Israel to learn more about connections between science and the land. One particularly enjoyable trip was taken to the Volcani Center, the institute for plant sciences in Israel. While there, students were shown a video about how plants can be genetically engineered to grow with different colors and smells in order to make them more appealing to buyers. On a tour around the facility grounds they were shown a special area where studies are being done to genetically engineer some of the arbah minim (four species) used on Sukkot to make them easier to harvest and sell--a true Torah u'Maddah experience. Additional trips included a trip to the Israeli Aerospace Industries and Sheba Hospital where they were shown the rehab facilities where many wounded soldiers come to recover from their life-altering injuries.

One truly special trip was taken to Tell es-Safi/Gath, the town where the biblical Goliath lived. At the site, students were given the chance to participate in the archeological dig, working to uncover details about the city from the time of Goliath. Dr. Jill Katz, an archeology professor at Stern College for Women and area supervisor at the site, gave the students a tour of the area. It was truly a special opportunity to learn both inside and outside the lab.

In addition to the weekly trips around Israel, students also participated in a weekly luncheon on the Bar Ilan campus where an array of different professors spoke about their areas of expertise. Prof. Shmaryahu Hoz, the senior advisor to the President of the University and the

head of the renowned Bar Ilan Responsa Project, gave a particularly compelling presentation. Prof. Hoz explained the process of how computer programming is used to create the large search engine which enables people everywhere to pinpoint trends within the vast array of Jewish writings starting from tanach and continuing to the modern writings of today's Rabbinic figures. Additionally, Prof. Hoz explained what plans they have to further expand the search engine by employing developing technology. What students found most intriguing about the presentation was that Prof. Hoz has no formal training in Computer Science. He teaches Chemistry at the university and served as the head of the Department of Chemistry in the

past. Benny Aivazi, a junior at YC, reflected on these luncheons saying, "it was an eye opener to see professors who were deeply involved in their areas of interest, even when those interests were far removed from their field of research." Professors like Prof. Hoz served as role models for the students who wanted to see their paths in science merge with their Judaism. The summer ended on a high note with a two-night science symposium where each student got a chance to present the work they had done over the summer. It was interesting for the students to see what their peers were working on the entire summer. Overall the students enjoyed a summer that embodied what it means to be a Jew working in a high tech lab in the State of Israel.



Undergraduate Enrollment Trends on the Wilf Campus

By Benjamin Koslowe

Current data from Yeshiva University's Office of Institutional Research (OIR) indicates that there are 1,177 currently registered undergraduate male students on-campus. With 323 first time on-campus students (FTOC's), the Wilf Campus is seeing a positive trend of enrollment growth. In the years after the recent fiscal collapse, enrollment suffered, with on-campus male undergraduates dropping from 1,218 students in Fall 2008 to as low as 1,046 students in 2011. Since that time though, male undergraduate enrollment has made a steady comeback. By Fall 2014 Wilf Campus enrollment was up to 1,111 students, and this semester numbers 1,177 students, the highest enrollment since 2008. If this rate continues, enrollment will soon be back to pre-recession levels.

During the years of decline, when on-campus totals dropped significantly, enrollment at Yeshiva College (YC) actually slightly increased, from 736 students in 2008 to 752 students in 2011. The major loss was incurred by the Syms School of Business (SSB), dropping from 482 students in 2008 to only 294 students in 2011. In 2011, under 30% of male undergraduates were registered in SSB. But since 2011 there has been a major shift.

"We are accepting very strong students to the Wilf Campus and have not compromised on the academics."

By Fall 2014 YC was down to 648 students, while SSB was up to 463 students (over 40% of total male undergraduate enrollment). Although the data for the current semester is only preliminary and will change in the next few weeks, there are currently 538 students, or 46% of total male undergraduates, registered for SSB. Yeshiva College enrollment is down to 635 students, or 54% of total male undergraduates.

Another significant trend is enrollment in Yeshiva College honors courses. In 1999 there were only 110 students on Wilf Campus enrolled in one or more honors courses. Even by 2008 there were only 237 students, or less than 20% of male undergraduates, enrolled in honors courses. Over the past few years this number has risen tremendously. The current Fall 2015 semester has 411 students, or 35% of male undergraduates, enrolled in at least one honors course. This large increase in honors enrollment has occurred mostly under the auspices of Professor Gabriel Cwilich, director of the Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein Honors Program.

"The fact that we are recruiting larger classes than we are graduating is why the on-campus number is larger," said Rabbi Kenneth Brander, Vice President for University and Community Life. Rabbi Brander added that "the average GPA score of the incoming class this year is 90.5 for YC and 88.5 for SSB. We are accepting very strong students to the Wilf Campus and have not compromised on the

academics."

When asked about significant enrollment trends, Rabbi Brander points out that "in some of our key feeder schools the class size in the past two years has dropped between 7 and 33% and only a few have grown." While he would not release more information about these feeder schools, several local high schools' college guidance departments had what to add. Dr. Gary Katz, Director of College Guidance at Torah Academy of Bergen County (TABC), informed that "Yeshiva University enrollment from TABC has gone down from over 70% a few years ago to less than 50% in the class of 2015." Mrs. Laura Miller of The Frisch School provided that over the past four years, matriculation from Frisch into YU/Stern has remained steady (between 16 and 23 students each year). Mr. Rafael Blumenthal of The Ramaz School noted similarly that "in looking at our recent graduating classes, I can summarize and tell you that we haven't noticed a drop off in the Ramaz enrollment to YU." And according to Mr. Murray Sragow, "as far as MTA (Marsha Stern Talmudical Academy) is concerned, we are proud of the fact that year in and year out a higher percentage of our seniors apply to YU than those of any other high school. Not only that, but I believe this is true throughout our student population, from the ones who can get in anywhere to the ones who get rejected by YU. And as far as applications go, our numbers have been pretty consistent. Our class sizes have been inconsistent, but the percentage has been almost exactly 80% each of the last five years."

Some indicated that major feeder schools' matriculation to YU may be down due to financial difficulties. "We have an extraordinarily large number of students who attend YU," said Mrs. Madeline Rosenberg of Davis Renov Stahler Yeshiva High School for Boys (DRS). "Our relationship with YU remains warm, supportive, and encouraging. If the numbers have gone down, then my guess is the reason is probably economic. This not a scientific opinion but rather my perception, as director of college guidance."

"Over the past two years our Net Tuition Revenue has gone up," said Rabbi Brander in discussing how Yeshiva University is attempting to affect enrollment trends, "which is different than the trend seen in other private colleges. We are still giving in excess of \$46 million in scholarship. We have worked very hard to make sure that the amount of need-based aid we give out is appropriate. However, people who are trying to make financial deals when they report that they have the funds to pay for university are not getting special deals. Yet we are careful and aggressively helping students that have need. Of course we continue to offer merit aid to our stronger academic students."

Yet despite this apparent decline in matriculation from some top feeder schools, the data shows that male undergraduate enrollment is on a healthy climb. Provost Selma Botman positively remarked that "we are delighted with the class of students enrolling at the university."

Going forward, Rabbi Brander suggested that there are initiatives being made to continue the current enrollment trends. "We have not focused on the Anglo populations in the UK or Australia or the South American community – this includes the student from these countries/regions studying in Israel as well as students in their high schools. Our goal is to reach out more effectively to this population."

Controversial Rabbi Willig Statement Prompts Conversation on Women's Talmud Study

By Darren May

There's one certainty about the Yeshiva University faculty: it is not homogenous. In no area is this more apparent than when it comes to views about feminism and religion. There are egalitarian members of the University's faculty who want total equality between the sexes in all religious arenas, and there are those who would like nothing better than to revert to the practices of yesteryear, where women had very little say in Jewish communal life. Of course, most of the religious leaders within the University fall somewhere between these two ends of the spectrum, but the best place to be seems like a point of constant contention. This tension came to the surface this summer when a Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Mordechai Willig, wrote an article on TorahWeb.com about re-evaluating the norms of religious society.

"What makes YU such a remarkable institution is that it allows so many different voices to coexist under one roof."

The article discusses the importance of following the dictates of the Torah, and how terrible it is that some people are not careful when it comes to Torah observance. "We must obey all of Hashem's laws, especially those that others trample upon," Rabbi Willig wrote. He writes that one of the sources of rampant transgressions among many in the Modern Orthodox community is due to blurred lines in gender roles as they concern religious practice. He talks about how many may not like the message that he is spreading, and that issues such as gender equality may lead to a "schism" among Orthodox Judaism.

"This phenomenon (feminism within orthodoxy) may lead to a schism within Orthodoxy. In a very recent article (Ha'aretz July 27, 2015 - available without login from The Forward), Israeli Orthodox scholars indicate that the beliefs of liberals are really Conservative but they publicly cling to Orthodoxy because of its identity ("lifestyle, ideology, value system, social ties") and its association with authenticity. However, the "blurring of boundaries between Conservative and Modern Orthodox Judaism" undermines the very authenticity of self-defined Modern Orthodoxy."

The most significant line of the article, however, came at the end of his discussion of women and Talmud study. Rabbi Willig wrote, "the inclusion of Talmud in curricula for all women in Modern Orthodox schools needs to be reevaluated. While the gedolim of the twentieth century saw Torah study to be a way to keep women close to our mesorah, an



egalitarian attitude has colored some women's study of Talmud and led them to embrace and advocate egalitarian ideas and practices which are unacceptable to those very gedolim."

The idea of reevaluating women's education elicited a multitude of reactions amongst many people in the Modern Orthodox community. President Richard Joel said, "there's no limit to what women can do and learn. This is a university that honors thought, even when there is profound disagreement about that thought. Universities should be safe spaces where its scholars and faculty can express themselves civilly and be free to

disagree. Yeshiva University has to honor that, even as it says clearly that statements of faculty, whether religious or secular, are statements of their own, and in no way represent the policies of the university. The president speaks for the University. Within halacha, there should be no limits to what women can learn and achieve."

Other members of the YU community also penned responses to Rabbi Willig's stance. Dr. Aaron Koller, last years' Associate Dean of Yeshiva College, along with his wife, Shira Hecht-Koller, wrote a response entitled "New Circumstances Demand New Halachic Views," which applauded the progress made in the Modern Orthodox community in general and in regards to women's study of Talmud. Similarly, Rabbi Jeremy Wieder, another Rosh Yeshiva at YU, issued a response entitled "Re-evaluating Talmud Torah for Women?" Although there seem to be many details of Rabbi Willig's nuanced opinions about women and Judaism that are not totally fleshed out within this article, it is clear that he has a more right-wing stance in relation to some of the other religious leaders in the YU faculty. What makes YU such a remarkable institution is that it allows so many different voices to coexist under one roof. We must guard this intellectual openness, as it is the key for future growth not just for Yeshiva University, but for the Modern Orthodox community in general.

Deal With Iran: Worry Remains While Activists Continue Their Efforts

By Arel Levkovich

On July 14th, the nuclear agreement - officially dubbed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action - arranged between Iran, the European Union, and the United States and its fellow P5+1 nations was signed in Vienna. However, the deal must still officially pass through Congress in order for it to be completed. For the past couple of months, media throughout the country have been focused on reactions to the deal and its potential implications. While many Americans approve of the deal, a recent CNN poll shows that opposition to the deal has increased since it was first negotiated. For instance, telephone interviews with 1,001 American adults conducted by ORC International from August 13-16 showed that 60% of the respondents disapprove of the way Obama has been handling the U.S. relationship with Iran, while 56% want Congress to reject the deal, percentages that were lower earlier in the year.

Here at Yeshiva University, both faculty and students have been closely monitoring the situation – and concern certainly exists. On August 24th, the day before start of the fall semester, Rabbi Kenneth Brander, Vice President for University and Campus Life, sent out a university-wide email offering people a chance to register for a live broadcast later that week of a special address by President Obama, in which Obama spoke to North American Jews about the Iran deal. In Rabbi Brander's email, he explained that “the challenge of the Iran deal to the safety and security of Israel and the West brings a threat that is unparalleled.” He added that “we have responsibility to call our members of Congress and Senators and share with them our feelings on this deal with Iran.”

On a similar note, leaders of the Israel Club - who work with Israel advocacy groups and interact with prominent governmental figures – organized an important event on campus regarding the deal with Iran, which featured Shimon Mercer-Wood, the spokesperson for the Consulate of Israel in New York. The event, which took place on September 2nd in Weissberg Commons gathered more than 200 people. Shlomo Anapole (YC '17) who runs the Israel Club on the Wilf campus, stated: “We very much appreciate Mr. Mercer-Wood taking the time to inform the students about the Israeli government's position on the deal and what we as a Jewish community can do to create change.” In particular, Mr. Mercer-Wood discussed the details of the current deal, why it will have severe negative effects, better alternatives, and why it is necessary for us to continue protesting against it. He added, however, that despite the disagreements between U.S. Administration and many Jews, we must still remember that the enemy is the Iranian regime – and it is therefore essential that the bond between the U.S. government and the Jewish population, and Israel specifically, remains strong.

Social media has also become a popular resource to encourage people not to sit idly by. Over the past few months, many students have posted the phone numbers and emails of Congressmen, urging their friends to dial in. One of the university's most-used Facebook groups, Yeshiva University: In the Know, even included a message notifying students that the website MoveOn.org was initiating a demonstration on August 26th in front of Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney's New York office encouraging her to vote in favor of the Iran deal, and that in response, students should show up and push for her to remain steadfast in her opposition to the deal. Additionally, in another YU-related Facebook group, Matix Axel (Syms '16) pointed out that a gathering on September 1st would be taking place on the corner of 49th Street and Third Avenue in order to thank Senator Schumer for his position on the deal and express disappointment with Senator Gillibrand's decision, with the goal of prompting her to change her vote and garner the votes of others around the globe. An email sent out by a different student reinforced the message.

It is important to note that even before the fall semester began, students in YU had been taking action. Harel Kopelman, a recent graduate of YC ('15) who is adamantly against the Iran deal, was one of thousands of individuals to have attended a summer rally in Times Square. Kopelman is “skeptical of this deal because it seems to completely ignore Iran's past behavior. Iran's continued use of proxies to wreak havoc in the Middle East only makes the prospect of it gaining

nuclear weapons more frightening.” Kopelman continued, “That's why I, as an American not to mention Israeli citizen, am doing whatever I can to make my voice heard.” Zach Neuman (YC '16) shared a similar sentiment and pointed to the deal's inspection details surrounding Iran's facilities as most troubling to him. “It is shocking that Iran will be allowed to have its own people inspect its sites, which could lead to biased reports,” Neuman asserted.

While nobody can predict the future in terms of how the Iran deal, if approved by Congress, will affect Israel's security or other nations worldwide, the worries people have are legitimate. While President Obama says the deal “will remove the specter of a nuclear-armed Iran, an outcome in the national security interest of the United States and Israel,” as he told Israeli Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu in a phone call hours after signing the deal, Netanyahu vehemently disagrees, calling Iran a “rogue regime” that shouldn't be trusted.

As it stands, AIPAC and other lobbying organizations have been coordinating efforts to sway each and every Congressional vote possible, against the deal. Given President Obama's promise to veto any congressional vote against the deal or bill to maintain sanctions on Iran, opponents of the deal recognize that they need 67 votes in the senate to strike a fatal blow to the deal. However, in recent weeks, at the behest of the Obama administration's entreaties, many Democratic senators have expressed their support for the deal. On September 2nd, Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) voiced her support for the accord, making her the 34th senator to do so, virtually denying the deal's opponents a chance to override the president.

Yet, the deal's opponents have still steadfastly continued to rally people against the deal, organizing more rallies and urging people to call their elected representatives to have their voices heard. At an event on September 1st, Evan Ribbot, the AIPAC field organizer for YU gave a presentation against the deal and then opened the floor to questions. In response to queries about the possible failure of AIPAC's efforts, he strongly affirmed that every vote in opposition to the deal, regardless of the final tally, is a vote expressing a segment of the country's disapproval of the deal. He also stated that every vote against the deal will strengthen opponents of the deal efforts going forward, as they try and mitigate the potential negative outcomes it may have. It is this same sentiment that has overtaken many in the YU community, and, until the vote is held, it seems many students will continue to advocate their beliefs and rally as much opposition against the deal as possible, all while hoping for the best.

Library Construction Inching Towards

By Aaron Szydlo

As students arrived for orientation on August 19th, and returning students a week later, they noticed a change on campus--the Mendel Gottesman Library was under construction. Prompted by a donation aiming to change the overall decor of the library, the renovations began last May. Some changes will make a tremendous difference for students who wish to use the library in the future.

For starters, side rooms are being added for group study. These rooms will benefit both those who wish to converse with their fellow classmates, as well as those who enjoy studying in the library for its peace and quiet. Additionally, more tables are being added to give more students the opportunity to study in the library. This should prove most beneficial during the library's busy seasons, during mid-terms and finals, when library attendance peaks. Capping off the renovations will be the addition of windows as well as more floor space and new furniture. These changes are all targeted at improving the atmosphere of the library.

However, despite the renovations' intent, many students have been irked by the inconveniences that the renovations have triggered. Some of these inconveniences include, the closing of all floors except for 5 and 5A, the difficulty of uploading documents from an outside computer, the general lack of study space and the periodic malfunctioning of the printers. . The temporary closure of the corridor between Glueck and the library and the

frequent closing of the Heights Lounge have been taxing on the student body as well.

Although the construction has temporarily inhibited everyday life at the Wilf campus, some students expressed optimism about the future library. “While the renovations may be inconvenient now, and the fifth floor has been a little more crowded than usual, I know when they're done the overall atmosphere of the library will be greatly improved,” said 5th floor library dweller Jesse Silverman (YC '18). The library is expected to fully reopen on October 9th, after the holiday break.

Some students expressed dismay at improvements being made to the library when they felt other areas on campus should be the priority. “I feel like the funds should be used on the Rubin dorms,” said Jake Rimberg, (Syms '19). Fellow Syms student Liam Shapiro echoed Rimberg's sentiment: “I do not see why the library gets renovations when the Rubin dorms need some work” (Syms '17). However, while many students may be upset that the money was not directed towards other construction, the money for the renovations was specifically donated to the library.

Overall, as the opening date for the newly renovated library slowly approaches, many students wait in angst. The library will be a haven when tests approach and papers are due. “I can't wait until the library opens so I have a quiet place to do work. The dorms can be loud and distracting” said David Ferber (Syms '17). With expanded study areas, improved services and a fresh look, the renovations should prove worth the long wait.

New Year, New Torah Programming at YU

By Eitan Lipsky

Continued from front page

Almost one hundred people have joined in to attempt to cover all of Mesechet Sanhedrin this year while taking bi-weekly tests along the way with cash prizes for those who maintain a certain average score. Rabbi Radner exclaimed, “You can feel the excitement when you walk into the Beit Medrash at night. It will be amazing to see so many guys learn Mesechet Sanhedrin and know it cold in just a few months' time”. Another new night seder initiative is night seder chaburahs for first-year students. The chaburah groups a handful of students together with an older student who has already spent a few years learning in YU. The goal is to make sure that nobody feels out of place in what is to them a new, large, and potentially overwhelming atmosphere. Each Rosh Chaburah is designated to help make new students feel comfortable and answer any questions they have.

There is also a new Friday morning learning program. L.A.B, or Learning and Breakfast, will occur every week and feature a shiur from one of the Roshei Yeshiva. In the first week of this program, after a breakfast of delicious bagels, Rav Mordechai Willig gave shiur to nearly 40 students who came seeking to add a little voluntary extra Torah to their Friday mornings.

A new group of people in the Beis Medrash are the members of the new BA/Semicha program. This is a six year program, with students taking 3 years of full college, followed by a fourth year in which they complete their college studies while also beginning their Semicha study, followed by another 2 years of only Semicha study. This year's inaugural class features ten motivated students who are learning a full three Sedarim a day while also taking a fairly light course load of college classes in their introductory semester. “It's really the best of both worlds to be able to get exposed to secular knowledge from college classes while still spending the majority of your day focused in Torah”, said Avrumi Schonbrun, one of the pioneer students of this program. “It's also great how they keep trying to test out and tweak various parts of the program in an attempt to make it perfect”.

All of this may seem a bit overwhelming. But don't worry, you can follow all of the events throughout the year on the yeshiva's new twitter page @YeshivaLink. Following the yeshiva's twitter page might prove useful, because as opposed to the doors of the Beis Medrash, this page has unlimited space within 140 character units.



Updates on Nagel Bagel, the Sky Cafe & More

By Elie Lipnik

Whether it be an early morning snack before shiur, a quick lunch on the way to class, or a midnight ice cream indulgence while slaving away in the library, Nagel Bagel is a staple source of nourishment for the YU community. Early last March, plans were made to renovate the bustling store. Due to an exceptionally high volume of shoppers, the administration decided to redesign the shop by adding both more inventory and more space. Now, construction is underway to enlarge Nagel Bagel to more than double its original size.

The current plan will feature a modern design including new tiled floors, dropped ceilings, and a freshly installed lengthy L shaped cabinet to hold pizzas, coffee, utensils, and a meat warmer. Moreover, Nagel Bagel will now have three large, double door refrigerators that will carry a multitude of beverages, sandwiches, and wraps. Unlike before, Nagel Bagel is designing the layout to create a large, open space in the middle of the store to accommodate a large crowd, enabling many students to shop at the same time. All of the food, snacks, and beverages that were previously carried by the store will continue to be available--but now there will be a much more elaborate selection, including meat options.

Nagel Bagel, now better than ever, is thrilled for its grand re-opening to take place after the high holiday

break. Their absence on campus has not gone unnoticed by the students; in fact, some students are so excited that they are virtually counting down the days until it opens. Akiva Marder (YC '17) claims that "Nagel Bagel is honestly the best store in the Heights. It is open whenever I need something and it is centrally located so it's easy to get to. Last year, I had class in Glueck right after my lunch period and I conveniently picked up a slice of pizza from Nagel Bagel on the way each day. I cannot wait for it to re-open!"

Another area of YU subject to the renovation frenzy at YU was the Sky Cafe on the 12th floor of Belfer, which has also been through quite a transformation. On a superficial level, the restaurant has gotten a new paint job, chic Tiffany lighting, state-of-the-art machinery, and an eye-capturing mural in front of the restaurant. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, the Sky Cafe has changed from a dairy restaurant to a meat restaurant, with a completely new and expanded menu. With additional lunch hours and an excited staff, the Sky Cafe is now open for business.

This past academic school year there were strong reactions when the Sky Cafe changed their salad tossing policy to that of self-serve. The restaurant is now happy to announce that the professionals will once again serve and toss the customer's salad. Also, new to the Sky Cafe

is a hot dog warmer, a sushi display, a grab n' go fajita/sandwich/pastrami-burger carrier, and an omelet station. In addition, every day there will still be multiple soup options with breadsticks and crackers, a wide variety of beverages including the highly requested Hal's Seltzer, and a parve ices freezer. Food Services is enthusiastic about this change and hopes to see an influx of student customers at the Sky Cafe. Bruce Jacobs, the Director of Food Services at YU even mentioned that "if warranted, the Sky Cafe would potentially stay open for dinner, as well as lunch."

Like Nagel Bagel and the Sky Cafe, Morg Cafe will not be what it once was. Rather than a late night oven-baked pizza and day-old sushi provider, it will be completely converted into a 24-hour vending lounge, with new machines on the way. Much like the vending lounge on the ground floor of Rubin, Morg Cafe will feature a couple of beverage machines, a snack machine, and a circular food machine.

Having an abundance of meal and snack options on campus is essential to the productivity of college students. With the construction of a new Nagel Bagel, the revamping of the Sky Cafe, and the transformation of Morg Cafe into a vending lounge, these institutions will surely have a strong impact on the YU community.

Optimism Perseveres Despite Class Cancellations

By David Rubinstein

Students scrambled to rearrange their class schedules as several courses slated to be offered this fall were cancelled due to insufficient enrollment.

According to Dr. Karen Bacon, the Dr. Monique C. Katz Dean of Undergraduate Faculty of Arts and Sciences, classes that "could not be justified from a budgetary standpoint" were pulled from the offerings roster. Among the classes cancelled were the English department class "Writing about Medicine and Illness," Professor Neer Asherie's course in Biological Physics, and the first year seminar "East/West," which would have been taught by Professor William Lee.

Despite the inconveniences the cancellations caused, cooperation between administrators, faculty, and students helped maintain a positive attitude. "Students are working with us; they're not naïve and they understand the circumstances," Dean Bacon remarked. "The faculty is cooperative, too. Over the summer, there were advisors making calls to students who might enroll into classes that were too small," she reported.

Yair Strachman, YC '17, was thankful for the flexibility he experienced from the University. "YU has been incredibly accommodating," he remarked. "My schedule was actually made easier by the fact that so many administrators were so willing to help me fulfill my last-minute needs, sometimes even having to bend the rules to do so." Strachman is majoring in philosophy, a department whose classes tend to keep small student-instructor ratios.

Stern College for Women also cut some of its classes originally offered, but the sentiment is optimistic there as well. Sophomore Liorah Rubinstein, whose freshman honors seminar was cut two days before Orientation, had to practically remake her schedule to take one of the two remaining freshman honors seminars offered. Nonetheless, Rubinstein says her new seminar "is enjoyable and" that she can "only speak well" of it.

Even as awareness grows about the University's budget constraints, the number of class cancellations is nothing out of the ordinary. Associate Registrar Rabbi Akiva Koenigsberg, who is at the helm of Wilf Campus registration, reported that with the exception of last spring (which appears to have been an anomaly), "for the past many semesters there have been several course cancellations each term." Jacob Herenstein, the Yeshiva Student Union Vice President of Classes and a junior majoring in accounting, reminded students that "things like these happen at every university."

Even with the remarkable cooperation between administrators, faculty, and students surrounding class cancellations, some students are disappointed by the larger class sizes and smaller selection of course offerings. "Classroom discussions are suffering from large class sizes," a junior taking several liberal arts courses lamented. Senior Darren May commented that making his class schedule has become "significantly more difficult than it was" when he started his undergraduate studies. May is studying marketing in the Sy Syms School of

Business.

Not all classes with insufficient enrollment were cut. Thanks to a partnership forged between Yeshiva College and the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies, courses in Greek, Latin, and Arabic were preserved despite low numbers of students taking them. One course was cross-listed as a sociology and political science course but was later consolidated into solely the sociology department since not one student enrolled through its political science listing.

In order to avoid the inconveniences of class cancellations in the future, Dean Bacon urged students to "vote with their feet," meaning that students should "enroll in classes early on." This would ensure that classes that would eventually become populated are preserved and not cut due to a perceived lack of interest.

Higher enrollment minima and fewer course offerings are one symptom of the difficult financial position out of which Yeshiva University is fighting to climb. "Every aspect of University life is tightening its belt," Mr. Herenstein reminded his fellow students. More scrupulous fiscal responsibility has led to the cancellation of athletic programs and a tighter budget for extracurricular activities. "Wasting our resources hurts everybody," Dean Bacon explained. Staying optimistic in the midst of challenging financial times has been an all-hands-on-deck effort, as well. As the Dean reflected, "there is a spirit of collaboration among the faculty and students that is truly heartening."

Yeshiva Wrestling Falls to Budget Cuts

By Adir Feifel

Continued from front page

The decision to cut wrestling has ramifications that extend far beyond its student-athletes and coaches. Every February, YU hosts the Henry Wittenberg Wrestling Invitational through the Office of Admissions with hundreds of Jewish wrestlers from 15 different yeshiva high schools competing. This significant event has now been cancelled and will instead be taking place at The Frisch School without any YU affiliation. In addition, there is an active group of wrestling alumni who were fundraising for YU, but the cancellation of the wrestling program has left them angry at the university's administration, particularly about the way that Coach Ellman was fired. The Athletics Department has previously faced heavy criticism over the way it handled the dismissal of longtime basketball coach Jonathan Halpert, and many alumni felt that the institution again disrespectfully parted ways with a longtime employee who passionately dedicated himself to YU and his students.

Now that a few months have passed since the termination of the wrestling program, Bednarsh admits that mistakes were made in the process. He states, "Cancelling wrestling was, in fact, the right decision. But, I must say, we implemented the decision in the wrong way. I wish we could have a do-over. We should have done a better job discussing this with Coach Ellman and the students. On behalf of YU, I apologize for not taking more time to review and consult with the Coach, and rushing to communicate this news to the YU community. Truly, we cherish Coach Ellman and revere YU's wrestling's history. However, out of our 16 NCAA teams, it was the smallest program and affected the fewest students."

Of course, those affected the most by the cancellation of wrestling at YU are the students who can no longer compete for the Maccabees. Daniel Gordiychuk ('19SSB), an accomplished high school wrestler from Ukraine, was recruited to wrestle at YU. He arrived on campus this semester as a true freshman with fellow recruit Alan Mashkovich ('19SSB), only to find out that they would not be able to participate in the now-defunct wrestling program. "[Alan] and I were both extremely excited to be a part of YU this year in addition to representing YU on the wrestling team which has been around for decades," Gordiychuk said, "We are immensely upset that the team has been cut from the athletic program."

Yonah Stromer ('18YC) started YU a few months ago in the Post-Pesach Program and immediately began practicing with the team. He echoed the frustrations of the other wrestlers about never getting the chance to wrestle at the NCAA level, saying "I came to YU intent on having a full college experience; to me, part of that experience meant being a Student-Athlete. When wrestling was cut, I felt as if part of my potential YU experience was taken away from me." First-year students were not the only wrestlers who saw their dreams of victory fall apart. Last year there were seven wrestlers on the Maccabees, none of whom were seniors. This season would have been Chaim Metzger's ('16YC) fourth on the wrestling team. He also expressed his disappointment with the decision, saying, "I am upset the administration failed to communicate with the wrestling team at all, cutting the team without warning."

Taken aback by the loss of the wrestling team, its former members have regrouped in an attempt to form a wrestling club instead. Collegiate wrestling clubs are quite common in universities without an NCAA team, and the wrestlers at YU want

"I came to YU intent on having a full college experience; to me, part of that experience meant being a Student-Athlete. When wrestling was cut, I felt as if part of my potential YU experience was taken away from me."

to be able to practice so they can maintain their skills and perhaps compete elsewhere. However, as was the case with Coach Ellman, lobbying the athletics department for a club has thus far been unsuccessful and the wrestling room remains locked without any student access.

At this point, the future of wrestling at Yeshiva University is unclear. No one can say for certain whether it will be able to continue as a club or even brought back fully as a team in the years to come, but at the present time the once-proud program has unquestionably been decimated. All that remains is a departed tournament, an angry group of students unable to wrestle, and a longtime coach forced to ponder the legacy he never cared to create.

New Students Eased Into College Life with Successful Orientation

By Uri Shalmon

On August 19, the first of the FTOCS (First Time on Campus Students) arrived on campus. Move-in day was a blur, but less so for those who arrived later and experienced slightly longer lines and waiting times. At one point the line for the elevator in Rubin reached the street. Later that day, the freshmen took their Hebrew Placement Exam in the luxurious Blefer 218. During dinner, with its delicious Schnitzel, Caesar salad and chocolate chip cookies, Associate Dean of YC, Joanne Jacobson, Dean Pava of Syms, and Ms. Weiler, the Director of the Career Center, shared words of encouragement with the new students. Before the night ended,, Mr. Jonathan Schwab, Associate Director of University Housing and Residence Life, touched upon the Safety and Security Protocols on campus.

Thursday was highlighted by an amazing cruise on the Hudson with Rebbeim and Mashgichim. As the wind blew in the students' hair, with sea mist on their face, some joined for a beautiful Kumsitz while admiring the skyscrapers. Jacob Penn, a freshman coming from Yeshivat Har Etzion in Israel and before that LA, said that the boat ride was

"I really enjoyed being a part of orientation for my 3rd year. I think orientation was a lot of fun, well organized and a lot less scary for the incoming students than expected."

"a wonderful way to meet people and it gave us a great view of the NYC skyline."

On Friday afternoon, true freshmen registered for classes while other FTOCS headed to Midtown and the Beren campus for a fun-filled afternoon traversing the streets of New York City. The key spots visited were Times Square, the Highline and the NYC Farmer's Market followed by an Omni-plan eligible restaurant near Stern.

Shani Klein, a junior at Stern and a Student Leader for Orientation, expressed that Beren Campus Orientation went smoothly as well. She explained, "I really enjoyed being a part of orientation for my 3rd year. I think orientation was a lot of fun, well organized and a lot less scary for the incoming students than expected."

Rather than a boat ride on the Hudson, the young women went to see Matilda the musical on Broadway. Broadway's accessibility to Stern College is one of the many benefits the women receive by living in the middle of the hustle and bustle of NYC. Their orientation included a few more tours than the orientation uptown, due to the layout of their campus. Student Leader Yaelle Kassai, who experienced some orientation anxiety when she was a freshman, revealed the benefits of being and having Student Leaders. "Being a Student Guide this year was super rewarding. When I was new I definitely needed that person to help me plan my schedule and not have a meltdown. Knowing how much the student guide program helps the new students is pretty awesome and it's fun being a part of that."

Up on the Wilf campus, our first Shabbat was a relaxing and enjoyable way to meet our fellow freshmen. Tishes, Kiddushes and Melaveh Malkas paired with tours and Divrei Torah made Shabbat an all around uplifting experience. "Shabbat was filled with energy and Ruach." said Leiby Deutch, a true freshman from Passaic, NJ. Several Roshei Yeshiva, including Rav Goldwicht, Rav Willig and Rav Blau, shared their words of wisdom with us, both during the meals and after. On Shabbat afternoon, Mr. Jonathan Schwab led an engaging tour around Washington Heights to discuss its history and geological nature. Last Sunday, to start off the year with a bang – or a Bash, YU held its annual Welcome Bash And Lunch. While the returning students met up with old friends and laughed at the awkward freshman, the incoming students tried their best to make friends with their counterparts on the Beren campus.

Linda Stone, Assistant Director of Student Life, who organized this event, described the barbeque from behind the scenes: "Our Annual Welcome Back Bash is the finale of the five-day Fall Orientation program. The Student Life team was thrilled to see hundreds of new and returning undergraduate students, faculty and staff from both campuses enjoying the event. It was a celebration of the start of the new school year, of our vibrant campus life, and of the Yeshiva University spirit."

Tenzer Gardens was filled with fun activities, good food, and even better company. A giant chess set, reminiscent of Harry Potter, tie-dyeing YU Orientation shirts (who wouldn't want a free shirt?), and a nearly life-size Jenga were some of the awesome attractions available. These attractions, along with the great food and company, made the barbecue the perfect transition from orientation and summer to the start of a wonderful college year.

BMP: "The Best Midrash Program"

By Ofir Afenzar

As a new student at Yeshiva University, my first few months were a blur. The only thing that made sense to me at the time was my shiur. My Rebbe in the Stone Beit Midrash Program (BMP) instantly became my mentor, and the talmidim became my friends. To this day, even though our particular shiur is no longer offered, our shiur's WhatsApp group is still alive and well. This type of unique kesher between a Rebbe and his talmidim is the real focus and highlight of the BMP program.

This approach is far different from that of The Mazer School of Talmudic Studies, better known as YP. YP, with over 500 students divided into 24 shiurim, is a very large program and gives students the chance to learn from the Roshei Yeshiva in a rigorous format. In contrast, BMP has just over 300 students divided into 9 shiurim, with levels ranging from beginner to advanced. The goal of BMP is more of a gap-year yeshiva style program. For example, BMP has seder in the morning from 9AM to 1PM, just like at many yeshivot in Israel. As in Israel, I take my learning very seriously and so do the 30+ talmidim in my shiur. Most importantly, my learning at BMP offers a foundation to my both my secular and Judaic learning here at YU.

BMP is a program where students who appreciate the Torah learning style they experienced in their year in Israel can continue that. The warmth that the Rebbeim in the program provide is unmatched, and the chevrah that are created through that warmth last a lifetime. Its Monday through Wednesday night seder with Yehuda Meyers offers both a refreshing and a modern take on halacha. BMP is truly a diverse program with many fulfilling opportunities for any student.

So why is there this stigma of BMP that it is comprised of the "lesser" half, the so-called "second class"? Obviously, BMP and YP are two different programs, with two very different focuses. One reason that this stigma exists could be that BMP finishes at 1PM, whereas YP finishes at 3PM. This might lead to the idea that students in BMP are less motivated to learn and just want to get on with the rest of the day. While the ad-

vantage of a more flexible schedule is existent, I would argue that no matter what morning program a student is in, we all have the same challenges with balancing our busy schedules. While studying in the library one day, I was speaking with a new student on campus who was bogged down with many pages of readings due for next class. He was asking me how the professors expect him to finish all these readings while devoting half his day to studying Talmud in YP. I told him that it is all part of a balancing act. Every student at YU, no matter what morning program they are in, needs to decide at one point



or another where their focus lays. Yeshiva University is just that, a Yeshiva and a University, and YP and BMP are both equal morning programs for students whose focuses on learning differ.

Another possible reason for the stigma could be coming from the student council. The Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY) president is chosen from the morning program with the

most students registered for it. Since there are more students in YP, the student president of YP is also the SOY president. That technicality could be costing the students of BMP some of their integrity. However, this situation is completely fair because if one day BMP grows larger than YP, the SOY president would come from BMP.

After speaking with a few UTS (Undergraduate Torah Studies) administrators, I heard yet another perspective. The way they see it, students come from over 50 yeshivot in Israel to be funneled into 2 different programs. There is bound to be overlap and competition when it comes to interests.

We must also remember that BMP has been around for many years, and the stigma precedes any of us here now. While the true reason for the stigma might only exist in the past, we live in the present, and right now defines us. As a Yeshiva, it is our job to see to it that every student feels comfortable. There should not be this feeling of duress that BMP students feel when answering the question of "What morning program are you in?" As a University, there needs to be an understanding that our time here is a time for students to find themselves and to discover where in life they want to go; that too needs to be respected, even if people have different priorities than we do.

The UTS administrators I spoke to point out that in their estimation, the stigma is about five times less what it was two years ago due to efforts in improving the cohesiveness of the Yeshiva. The point of this piece is to push even further, to shed more light on this stigma and to raise awareness about its presence. But even more so, my goal is to explain the differences between the two programs in order to weaken and ultimately destroy this stigma. Students in BMP are excited to be in BMP for what it is: The best Beit Medrash Program for them.

Author's Note: IBC and JSS, the two other morning programs at YU, are structured in a vastly different way from BMP and YP. Therefore, for this piece's purpose they are not relatable. It is not my intention to ignore and or to look down on these programs.

The Real Reason We Shouldn't Like the Iran Deal

By Joey Chesir

While reading through the Iran Deal, it is easy to see why many people in the Jewish community feel incensed at President Obama's decision to move forward with the nuclear deal in its current state. Iran remains one of the biggest threats to the State of Israel's safety, and the Iranian government has repeatedly welcomed and housed a variety of Holocaust deniers, anti-Semites, and other dangerous people. Additionally, Iran has sponsored several terrorist groups, including Hezbollah, a group which has openly committed acts of violence against Israeli citizens. It is certainly not unreasonable for Jews to feel threatened by an American relationship with such a hostile state. While some would argue that a nuclear deal was necessary, even withstanding the lethal nature of Iran's leadership, the current stipulations of the deal leave a lot to be desired from America's perspective. The prospect of fostering a positive relationship with Iran in the fifteen years that their nuclear program will be halted is an extremely difficult one. If President Obama (or his successors as president) doesn't succeed in making friends with Iran in that period of time, Iran's legitimized nuclear program will be highly dangerous. In many ways, the deal President Obama wants to make is a big mistake. There is nothing stopping Iran from simply resuming its nuclear progress as soon as the fifteen years are up. And if in fifteen years, Iran feels the same way towards America that it does now, the current hostility between the two nations could escalate to a highly dangerous situation.

Judging by the behavior of certain Iranian leaders, they are surely not in any hurry to form a positive relationship with America any time soon. Iran's anti-American sentiment is well-documented. A short time after the deal was announced, Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini tweeted an image that showed Obama pointing a gun at his own head, and referred to America as the "aggressive and criminal" United States. At a rally in March, the Ayatollah responded to crowds chanting "Death to America" by saying "Of course yes, death to America, because America is the original source of this [economic] pressure!" By all accounts, Iran's leadership is hostile to America's interests. But despite Iran's highly apparent dislike of America, that particular sentiment pales in comparison to Iran's hatred of the State of Israel. Just this week, an Iranian official stated that Iran's "fight against the illegal Zionist regime is one

of the immutable policies of Iran, which has always been maintained." A tweet from the Ayatollah in November 2014 referred to Israel as "barbaric, wolflike, and infanticidal", and claimed that Israel "has no cure other than annihilation". While what it is exactly that Israel needs to be cured of remains ambiguous, Khomeini's point is abundantly clear: if given the chance, Iran will make every effort to destroy Israel and its citizens. From an Israeli (as well as American) perspective, the potential prospect of a nuclear Iran in 15 years is extremely frightening. Therefore, President Obama's decision to only postpone Iran's nuclear capability, rather than to eliminate it, is not wise.

Anyone who feels threatened by Iran's hostility holds the right to be against this deal. It is important, though to be against the deal for the right reasons. For example, it is foolish to



assume that President Obama is incorrect in attempting any deal with Iran in the first place; his error is simply in accepting the deal in its current state, with many stipulations that go against our best interests. Iran is arguably both America and Israel's greatest enemy, which is precisely why our government needs to be negotiating with Iran: to categorically eliminate the threat Iran represents, and not simply to delay it for a time that they deem convenient. It is either highly ambitious or highly stupid to think that such a belligerent relationship will sweeten in a short fifteen years, and either way, we are definitely far away

from that point today. We should be negotiating with Iran, but unfortunately, the terms we have agreed to don't serve our best interests in the long term. For the alternative to rejecting this deal isn't war, it's simply a better deal.

Additionally, President Obama's policies towards Israel, especially within the Iran deal, have received a large amount of scrutiny, but it is important to distinguish between malevolence towards Israel and general miscalculation. President Obama may be making a huge mistake, but he also realizes that America benefits significantly from having a positive relationship with Israel, the sole bastion of democracy in the Middle East. He may have worsened that relationship on a number of occasions, (especially when he bemoaned "having to deal" with Benjamin Netanyahu to Nicolas Sarkozy in 2011), but to accuse him of making this deal with the intention of incensing Israel is an unrealistic stretch. Ultimately, President Obama truly believes that this deal is what's best for peace in the Middle East, a region that incidentally also has Israel in it. Malignant intentions and mistaken intentions are very different, and the distinction is vital here. President Obama is just inaccurate and unrealistic if he thinks that the bad blood between Iran and the US, or Iran and Israel, will be solved in a decade and half. It seems highly unlikely that Iran can go from openly and consistently threatening the US and Israel to being their partners in such a short period of time.

That being said, we must understand that while criticizing our president's policies may be necessary, there is never a doubt that he has America's best interests in mind. What President Obama considers to be in America's interests may be very different from our own perspectives, but we must understand that misguided policies are very different from what some have labeled "dishonest arguments". Ultimately, Obama is acting in accordance with what he believes is best for the United States. While it may appear that he is totally incorrect, Obama's decisions should be criticized, not his intentions. This distinction is important in reflecting on Obama's presidency. While his decision-making in important junctures may be questionable, it is unfair to accuse Obama of acting against what he believes is best for the United States. The problem, unfortunately, is that in this instance, his feelings seem to be mistaken.

Yes: Painful Political Truths, and Historical Context

By Anonymous

The Iranian Nuclear Deal may be unpopular among some Orthodox Jews, but efforts to protest the deal are unwise and may have far-reaching negative consequences.

The best reason to vote “yes” is purely political. That is to say, President Obama already has the votes to win this battle. The strident opposition of Jewish groups in the face of this foregone conclusion will hurt Israel’s long term interests, as well as those of the American Jewish community. Support for Israel, which has been a bipartisan issue for the last 67 years, now risks transformation into a partisan issue. The inflammatory rhetoric used by Jewish groups threatens to polarize the political landscape, erode the bipartisan consensus on Israel, and demonstrate a fundamental unsoundness of judgement that will increase the skepticism and cynicism of reasonable external observers.

Surely, Jewish advocacy groups should have calculated the cost of fighting a losing battle. Perhaps the loss of credibility, time, money and communal energy to a cause that frankly cannot be won, a true lost cause, could be somehow justified or accepted. But the way that this losing battle is being fought will undermine the long-term political viability of bipartisan support for Israel, undermine the reach of Jewish political groups, and undermine the credibility of individuals who support Israel. What benefits outweigh these costs?

Shlomo HaMelech said, “A wise man has eyes in his head” (Kohelet 2:14). Chazal said, “Who is wise? One who sees the results” (Tamid 32a). Other cultures offer similar wisdom. Sun Tzu said, “The general who wins the battle makes many calculations before the battle is fought. The general who loses makes but a few.” The aphorism “look before you leap,” had it been heeded, would have saved us much communal pain and embarrassment.

If there was a time for Rabbis and Rabbinical students to march on Washington, it was 10 years ago. Then, if the same amount of effort had been put into Iran then as was put into the rescue of Soviet Jewry, it is reasonable to suppose that a bipartisan consensus might have emerged that would have made the settlement now under consideration by the Senate a nonstarter. Furthermore, such bipartisan consensus may very well have enabled American negotiators with Iran to drive a tougher deal.

The sudden, far too-late expenditure of so much political capital shows a lack of proper planning and leadership on behalf of major Jewish institutions. Without proper deliberation, they have created much sound and fury, and will certainly not achieve their stated goals. The lack of reflection can be seen in the shortsighted attacks by Jewish political groups on cherished long-time supporters of Israel.

Is it possible that there are ulterior motives here? Is it at all possible that a certain level of hysteria is being whipped up

by Republicans who would like to drive a wedge through the Democratic Jewish voting bloc by politicizing the previously bipartisan support for Israel? And is it possible that what is good for the Republican party might not be good for Israel, especially in the long run? Such a hypothesis makes far more sense than the knee-jerk response by those who urge a veto override, and may explain why we are not seeing a more calculated or effective response.

Many reasonable observers will find it difficult to trust Jewish institutional groups in the future simply because of their demonstrated lack of ability to reasonably assess the pros and cons of political action. This lack of calculation becomes more obvious when one considers that even among American Jews, opponents have not managed to build consensus against the Iranian deal. Even within the Orthodox world, we ought to be

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troubled by the politicization of our religious institutions, such as the Orthodox Union and Rabbinical Council of America, for shamefully allowing reputedly religious, apolitical organizations to be co-opted by narrow, partisan purposes. If the OU and RCA are indeed groups only for Republican Orthodox Jews then we have seen a communal failure of these groups, and the long-term damage resulting from this unnecessary and inappropriate partisanship has yet to be assessed or considered. Yet, I warn that it cannot be a good thing.

It would be a different situation altogether if a majority of American Jews agreed that this agreement was a bad, even terrible decision, for the best interests of United States. In that case, we would be justified in arguing against it, using all lawful means of political expression and protest. It is thus ironic that a compelling foreign policy argument that can be made to justify the existence of this foreign policy decision by the

United States.

After all, what do the five permanent members of the UN Security council (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and Germany agree about Iran? That Iran’s nuclear ambitions must be held in check. For that reason, since 2006 the P5+1, in response to the UN Atomic Energy Commission’s reports, pursued a strategy of sanctions whose purpose is to force Iran to the negotiating table. UN Security Council Resolutions Nos. 1696, 1737, 1747, 1803, 1929, 1984, 2049, all passed between 2006 and 2012, reflecting strong international consensus imposing trade embargoes on bringing weapons and nuclear enrichment technology into Iran.

In contrast, America’s foreign policy strategy has been punitive, using a wide variety of financial sanctions against Iran, beginning in the immediate aftermath of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, when President Jimmy Carter signed Executive Order 12170 in November 1979 freezing about \$12 billion in Iranian assets. It is clear that US sanctions alone have not, and will not, accomplish regime change, no more than the our long embargo of Cuba. Wishful thinking cannot cloud our judgement on communal, national, and international issues, and therefore America ought to take advantage of this chance to accomplish one concrete goal: preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.

America’s foreign policy goal of opposing Iran by all means, in all theaters, has been our lonely cause in the international stage for the past 36 years. In contrast, international consensus of all the world powers, including China, Russia, and Germany, has only built up since 2006 around the limited issue of stopping Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. Under the current agreement, Iran will be held responsible by all of the world powers, were it to pursue obtaining a nuclear weapon. It is hardly irresponsible of America to take advantage of this rare crystallization of international consensus by preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.

Critics of the agreement correctly point out that it is not perfect, which seems to mean that all of America’s demands were not met. That is certainly true, yet those same critics do not engage in the intellectually honest exercise of considering the alternative, war, or of justifying the steep costs in blood and treasure of that alternative. Unlike war, negotiation cannot force another country to conform to our will, and the results will necessarily not satisfy all of our demands. But those who wish to avoid war must acquaint themselves with the taste of compromise.

The author, a Yeshiva College student, has asked to remain anonymous due to the fact that this political issue, while certainly worthy of open and honest debate, has already seen far too many personal attacks by both sides.

On Opinions and Yeshiva University

By Yadin Teitz

Having an opinion is a right, and expressing an opinion means that you care. Even if it’s negative.

One of the hallmarks of our legislation is the First Amendment, which protects many of our liberties as citizens of the United States. Arguably, the most important tenet of this amendment is the freedom of speech clause, and its important corollary, freedom of the press. It’s hard to imagine life without these two freedoms. Can we fathom being afraid to truly speak our minds, or writing things in print that we do not believe simply out of fear of retribution? Undoubtedly, our entire society would be far different without this amendment. These laws, simply put, establish our right to hold opinions, and to express our opinions freely.

You may already be sensing the connection between well-known legislation protecting our ability to hold individual ideas and opinions and the section of the Commentator in which this piece is published. Indeed, as the new Opinions editor of this newspaper, I am honored to say that this section

of the paper, and I daresay, this entire newspaper, is governed primarily by the First Amendment, although it is coupled with own personal taste and judgement. That is to say, while a newspaper that is being completely honest in adhering to the law as written would be bound to publish anything and everything that comes its way, at the Commentator we have limits regarding what will and what will not be published. You will not find, for example, pro-Nazi or anti-Israel or anti-Semitic

writings expressed within these pages, simply because these beliefs are anathema to our own ideals and to the ideals of our community.

But you will find a variety of opinions on nearly any other subject. Sometimes, we feel stifled by the opinions of an overwhelming majority and are reluctant to share our own dissenting ideas. Here is a chance to let your voice be heard.

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This portion of the newspaper is intended as a center of discussion for students at Yeshiva and beyond, as an outlet for those who would like to criticize YU and for those who would, by the same token, like to praise YU. This section is for those who don't want to talk about YU at all: for those who would like to discuss current events, or political views, or the Jewish world, or anything at all that they are passionate about and have opinions to share. Most importantly, this is a section that is respectful and open to all views and completely free of biases.

Some of you may have misgivings about the veracity of the above statement, particularly regarding YU. Indeed, I strongly fear that due to my own writings in the past and to the writings of others this newspaper has unfortunately become synonymous with anti-YU propaganda and bitter feelings and has therefore become easily dismissed by those holding dissenting opinions. While I do not underestimate the importance of having a newspaper that is independently run and can proudly critique this university, I also recognize that, as students of YU, we all have a deep affinity and love for this place, and therefore, praiseworthy material about our university is equally integral to our newspaper in its role as a university publication that represents the diverse views of our entire student population. I want to invite all of you to tell us why you love YU, and to elaborate on why you choose to study here. Please don't be afraid to speak out: it is your Opinions section, too.

But for those who are still distrustful, I would like to take a moment to explain the basis behind writing negative opinions about our institution. Last year, while showing a group of high school students around the campus as a student ambassador, a friend noticed me and started snickering. "You? You're giving a tour of YU? What are you telling them about this place?" I laughed at the time, and explained that I keep these two parts of me completely separate, knowing when to lavish praise on the school and when to vocalize criticism in turn. But there's really no need for them to be separate. To me, loving YU and complaining about it really do seem to go hand in hand. Furthermore, it seems to me that simultaneously being an outspoken knocker and an ardent defender of YU is a trait that is shared amongst many of our students. And it all stems from a strong overarching interest and loving concern for the wellbeing of this place.

In talking to my friends in other colleges, I've asked them about how much they like their respective places of learning. Are there university policies that they dislike? Do they approve

of their administration? How about their curriculum? How happy are they with their chosen university? More often than not, the answers I've been given are vague and generalized, with an overall air of disinterest. I have perused student newspapers at other colleges, and I've found few that compare to the Commentator in terms of direct school-related content, rather than material intended purely for entertainment.

The conclusion that I've come to is that our students are far, far more involved when it comes to crafting our own edu-

"SIMULTANEOUSLY BEING AN OUTSPOKEN KNOCKER AND AN ARDENT DEFENDER OF YU IS A TRAIT THAT IS SHARED AMONGST MANY OF OUR STUDENTS. AND IT ALL STEMS FROM A STRONG OVERARCHING INTEREST AND LOVING CONCERN FOR THE WELL- BEING OF THIS PLACE."

cational experiences. Perhaps it's because we're a relatively small university, and we can be on top of all the changes and everything that's happening within our walls. Perhaps it's because we have the privilege of having close relationships with our faculty members, who are often willing to tell us what they think and are eager to voice their own opinions. Perhaps it's because our administration is wonderfully accessible and ready to talk, unlike at behemoth universities where layers of bureaucracy protect senior officials. Perhaps it's because we're Jewish, and Jews are notoriously good at complaining when need be (and have the chutzpah to do so). But mostly I think it's because we see ourselves as having the responsibility to shape our unique institution, and to secure it for future generations of Jewish leaders. That is to say, by playing active roles within our university, we are essentially molding the future of American

Jewry and ensuring its survival. A bit heavy? Maybe. But I'm convinced that our collective cause is much, much larger than any individual grievance about a canceled class or an accolade about our uniqueness.

We, as students, have plenty to be angry at YU about. We could go on and on complaining about budgetary cuts and how they have impacted our faculty, class offerings, sports programs, desperately needed capital improvements, and leisure and student life. We could wax on poetically about what we thought YU would be from a religious perspective, how we thought that we would all find the perfect niche here. We could talk about all of the bureaucratic messes and disorganizations, the lack of communication, and the ineffective business plans. But we also have plenty to be proud of YU for. We can be proud of the time we spend learning Torah, with our university's rigorous emphasis on Jewish education and Jewish values that is simply unrivalled anywhere. We can be proud of the Jewish environment here, where being Jewish is our strongest and finest asset rather than an obstacle to be circumvented or a burden to be hidden away. We can be proud of the top-notch educations we are receiving here, and of the opportunity we have to learn from and interact with some of the highest respected professors in their fields. We can be proud of our student body, filled with some of the most exceptional and outstanding people from all around the globe. We can be proud of the achievements of our YU graduates and faculty, and proud of YU's distinguished position as one of the top 50 universities in the country. We can be proud of the role YU plays in bringing Torah thought and Judaism to the greater community in America, Israel, and around the world. We can be proud of the Yeshiva name and of the choice we made to attend this university, a commitment which reflects our desire to maintain a dual lifestyle anchored by the intertwining pillars of Torah and Madda.

So please write. Write about our university, and what makes you happy, and what makes you sad. Write about politics, and where you stand on the upcoming elections. Tell us about what's going on in Israel, and share your take on world events. Talk about what bothers you, what drives you, what thrills you and what enrages you. It is my sincere hope that this year will bring nothing but good tidings, healthiness and happiness for our university and for all of us.

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Why Hillary is in Trouble

By: Jonathan Livi

The 2016 Presidential election race is shaping up to be quite different from what we are used to. This is because what people are looking for in the candidates, at least at this early stage in the race, is unlike anything politicians have offered for a very long time. People on both sides of the political aisle are looking for basically one thing -- authenticity. And that is not something politicians are particularly known for. The narrative that career politicians are incompetent and have no interest in the betterment of the people has largely caught on. Which explains why people like Donald Trump, Ben Carson, and Carly Fiorina are rising in the polls.

Interestingly, the people's interest in an authentic candidate is coming at the expense of what in the past was of the essence: policy. People seem to be a lot more interested in the character of the candidate than in what he stands for. For example, Donald Trump is no conservative on healthcare. His lack of opposition to Canadian style single payer healthcare would make any true conservative cringe, but that didn't stop him from getting a thirty thousand-person crowd in Alabama. Conservatives are just so enamored with his strong and authentic personality that they are missing the fact that he is not a conservative Republican, but merely a patriotic American.

The same holds true on the Democratic side. Bernie Sanders is an avowed Socialist. Enough said. Yet, he too is able to draw crowds of over twenty thousand people. The ecstatic fans at his rallies seem not to care that socialism has and will

never work. That is irrelevant to them. His followers simply see him as an honest man who wants to create prosperity for those who don't have it. As much as you may dislike the man for his extreme economic vision for the country, it is impossible to say he is not genuine. He is authentic, he says what he means, and he truly cares for the American people. That is why he, too, is climbing in the polls.

None of this bodes well for Mrs. Hillary Clinton. She lacks all the qualities that have newly become fashionable. She is a politician, she is inauthentic, she has no charisma, and she clearly can't relate to the vast majority of the American people. If that is not enough, she is now ensnared in a scandal that accentuates all of these qualities. As much as the majority of Americans can understand of the ongoing email scandal from watching the news, which is not much, they can understand that she is hiding something. The whole scandal is turning her into the poster boy (or girl) for the now vilified "establishment politician." She is beginning to exemplify the non-transparent, untrustworthy, disconnected, and uncaring politician, and more and more people are starting to lose faith in her. Putting her up against the likes of non-politicians like Donald Trump or Carly Fiorina will not make her image look any better, which means that unless the climate of disillusionment with the political class fades in the coming months, Hillary Clinton is in deep trouble.

The Democratic Party sees this. It realizes that people are not all that excited with Hillary. And in an election that will probably be extremely close, excitement means everything. The side that has more people excited to vote will win the

election. This means that the Democratic Party has a choice to make: either stick with Hillary and risk losing an election which up until recently looked like a sure win, or get another candidate in the race to compete with her. The latter option, in my opinion, is the correct route, and will be the route Democrats will take. Joe Biden, the only establishment candidate who can compete with her, will jump in the race in the coming weeks. This will give the party the ability to see which candidate can get the base more riled up, and the candidate who does that will win the nomination. The candidate could still end up being Hillary, but it doesn't hurt to have someone else enter the race just to make sure the party isn't selling itself short.



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חברון
מאבק ואהבה...

right? We surely would not like to be similarly dismissed by our great-grandchildren.

This trend also appears in polemical use of metaphor. Perturbed by a piece I published last year, one petulant fellow noted that the ideas I expressed are easily criticized, since “creaky and outdated modes of thought break easily under the slightest consideration.”

This got me thinking about the use of imagery in political arguments. Metaphors can easily obscure the truth. Take the example of my disgruntled commenter. As far as I can tell, the point that he was trying to make is the following: The ideas in the article are old ideas that have been believed by many for thousands of years; old things are creaky and break easily; therefore the ideas in the article are also creaky and break easily.

Thus presented, the argument is exposed as embarrassingly defective. First off, why think that moral truths age in the same way that physical objects do? Mathematical truths surely don’t age; last I checked, the multiplication table was alive and chipper. And if moral systems really do age, then what is their lifespan? Do geriatric wheelchair-bound moral principles spend their dying years populating subtropical retirement communities? The comparison quickly breaks down.

Ok, maybe I’m not being fair. Our hapless commenter was not offering a rigorous argument, but rather a soft comparison between two rather elderly things. And some things do indeed weaken with age. Couches become dusty and threadbare, air

conditioners begin to sputter, and the human body slowly deteriorates.

But other things improve with time. Whisky grows increasingly smooth and rich with the passing of years; aged cheese sprouts delectable mold. Most of our beautiful natural land-

“WHY THINK THAT MORAL TRUTHS AGE IN THE SAME WAY THAT PHYSICAL OBJECTS DO? MATHEMATICAL TRUTHS SURELY DON’T AGE; LAST I CHECKED, THE MULTIPLICATION TABLE WAS ALIVE AND CHIPPER.”

marks have taken eons to form: California’s giant sequoias are thousands of years old and the Grand Canyon was slowly carved out of solid rock over millennia. The mind often mentally matures with age – venerable elders tap into wellsprings of wisdom even as their bodies decay. Whether age weakens or strengthens depends on which metaphor you choose.

This misappropriation of metaphor feeds into the larger

modern trend we observed earlier. People generally seem to be preoccupied with the future. Traditional religions are encouraged to “get with the times” since universalism and social equality are the “wave of the future.” People who opposes same-sex marriage are often accused of being “on the wrong side of history,” as if an ideology should be endorsed because of its growing popularity. But historical facts alone cannot vindicate or falsify an ideology.

The word “progress” also plays into this trend. In contemporary parlance, the word “progressive” is practically a synonym for “morally good.” But to describe an ideology as “progressive” is only to say that it is going somewhere. G.K. Chesterton put it nicely: “The modern man says..., ‘Away with your old moral formulae; I am for progress.’ This, logically stated, means, ‘Let us not settle what is good; but let us settle whether we are getting more of it.’” Progress depends on where you started and where you’re heading. The improving righteous man is progressive, but so is the motivated madman.

In short, the notion that old ideologies are obsolete bespeaks a self-righteous overconfidence in our slim slice of history. Age can lead to obsolescence or wisdom. The world may be steadily progressing towards universal eudaimonia, or progressing in a deeper and deeper descent into the depths of depravity. The truth is likely somewhere in between, but amidst this muddled confusion one thing is certain. Civilizations age, people age, sneakers age, and even cheese can eventually become too aged, but ideas do not age. The truth is timeless.

Hail to the Chief: What Donald Trump Teaches us about the Presidency

By Hilla Katz-Lichtenstein

My Israeli father always says the following about Americans: when it comes to politics (and many other things), we are simplistic, binary and positive. Take the elections, for example.

When watching presidential debates, how often do we actually hear a straight answer from any of the 17 Republican candidates about their plans for immigration or health care reform? The answer is almost never: they give us a soundbite, they tell us what we already know. They speak simplistically and say nothing, causing the American who is ignorant about politics to become even more ignorant. But those of us who actually want to hear more get frustrated.

Even more frustrating, is trying to get a straight yes or no answer out of these politicians. A simple question at a debate could turn into three minutes of skating around the main point; whether in regards to Iraq, abortion, or marriage equality. Americans are binary, we want a yes or no answer, and we want it now; nuance is not in our nature.

On the question of whether Americans are positive, I might disagree with my dad. Sure, we all want to hear Obama tell us how we are moving in the right direction at the State of the Union address, but when it comes to the elections, we turn on the television and watch a slew of negativity at every debate. We eat it up, watching the candidates deflect responsibility and point their fingers at each other and the President. We accept negativity in the form of criticism of others--and not necessarily the constructive kind. Positivity is only allowed at the inauguration speech.

Enter Mr. Donald Trump. The man with “no time for political correctness”. Many have speculated as to how a businessman with a not-so-cheery disposition suddenly became the frontrunner for the Republican primaries.

While many (myself included) may have found his comments about Mexicans, Megyn Kelly, and Rosie O’Donnell vulgar and offensive, it is possible that he has managed to create a perception of himself as the first authentic candidate that America has seen for quite some time. Americans are frustrated with the vague and obscure sound bites they are used to hearing from our senators and

governors. Trump may be many things; vague and obscure he most certainly is not.

In addition to his supposed authenticity, Trump is, as the saying goes “the man of the hour”. Every election has that memorable moment that we all point back to and laugh. Take Sarah Palin’s entire political campaign in 2008 (which SNL wasted no time capitalizing on), or Mitt Romney’s 47% zinger in 2012. So in 2020, when we’re all either mocking or applauding Kanye West’s campaign,



our memories of Trump will suddenly be triggered--even before we remember who actually won this election.

So, unlike the more credible candidates this election season, Trump is our entertainer. He is so blunt and unapologetic that it is almost laughable. And as part of his routine, he capitalizes on the American tradition of pointing fingers at others. Only he does it so much better than the other politicians, in a less “politically correct” manner.

So what’s the issue here? Why can’t we have a presidential candidate who (supposedly) tells it like it is, someone who is a little bit more entertaining than usual?

Because watching the Republican primary debate felt like watching a comedy show. It was almost too ridiculous to actually be taken seriously. It may be shockingly ridiculous to hear Trump rant about Mexican rapists for now, but we are still early in the game. Come November 2016, we will all be eating our words about how fresh and necessary and exciting Trump was because, no matter who we all vote for, it will still be a politician (rather than a businessman), who we may not entirely like or trust, but who will certainly be a lot more credible than Trump. Trump may be funny now, but his rhetoric is not exactly Oval Office material. Whether we like it or not, being in the public light requires having some sort of filter, and it seems unlikely that that is something that Trump will suddenly develop by Inauguration Day.

I think that we might be taking Trump seriously for now because we seem to no longer take the position of President seriously. If you have missed the fact that Obama is not the president who, as a country, we Americans have treated with the most respect, then you have probably been living under a rock. Whether its Congress, Fox News, or your doctor ranting about how Obamacare will ultimately bring about the apocalypse, our Commander-in-Chief has his fair share of critics, but respectful, they are not.

While Obama may be the target of this criticism, it seems that the position of the President of the United States is no longer as revered as it used to be, both worldwide and nationwide. And nothing highlights the downgrade of that seat in the Oval Office like the current election. Barring Trump, the Republican Party has become so divided that it has another 16 candidates vying for the position of nominee. And things haven’t been too pretty for the Democrats either, with Hillary once again in the midst of a scandal.

So whoever wins this election, I hope that we can all see through the simplicity and vagueness of the promises made by our candidates in order to make the right decision. I hope that as a country, we learn how to once again look up to and respect the President of the United States. And I hope that we can all vote for someone who gives us a reason to respect them.

From the Presidents' Desk

By Josh Nagel, *President of Yeshiva College Student Association.*

Ycsapres1@gmail.com

The student council presidents thank The Commentator for offering us this regular column to update the student body on Student Government's activities, share our thoughts and goals for the future, and contribute to a dialogue about issues on campus. We hope this window into Student Government inspires students to engage with life on campus.

For those unaware, the Wilf Campus Student Government consists of four undergraduate student councils whose presidents work together to create a vibrant student experience. The Yeshiva Student Union (YSU), headed by president Noam Safier, represents the extra-curricular life for every undergraduate male; Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY), headed by president Tuvy Miller, represents the religious life for Wilf Campus students; Sy Syms School of Business Student Council (SYMSSC), headed by president Josh Teller, represents the academic interests of the male students of the business school; and the Yeshiva College Student Association (YCSA), headed by yours truly, represents the academic interests of the students of Yeshiva College.

Since the year began, we have been working hard to get the day-to-day student life running. Following the directives outlined in the Wilf Campus Student Constitution, the Wilf Campus General Assembly (which includes the 4 council presidents and senior co-chair of the Student Life Committee, Ariel Aker) met this week to discuss which new clubs on campus to accept or reject. We also confirmed the new appointments for the Student Court, Canvassing Committee, and Amendments Committee.

At the same time, we organized a successful club fair with the help of the Office of Student Life, where clubs recruited new members and advertised their exciting upcoming events. Every student who attended received a free reusable hot cup, courtesy of Student Government. If you didn't receive a cup, you can pick one up in the Office of Student Life.

Coming up, we have planned in conjunction with the Beren Campus Student Government a meaningful program to commemorate the tragic events of September 11th, 2001. Because 9/11 this year is on Friday, immediately before our long break, we decided to have the event on Thursday night, September 10th, to help us prepare for the day. We encourage all students to remain on campus on Thursday night to unite with the rest of the university for this important event. We hope to see you there.

In our role as advocates for and facilitators of vibrant student life, we sometimes have the opportunity to engage in discussions that touch upon questions fundamental to who we are as a community. In recent weeks, we had such a

"ONE PRACTICAL WAY IN WHICH WE CAN ALL ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTE... IS TO AVOID USING LANGUAGE OR TONES THAT MIGHT SEEM TO EXCLUDE OR DELEGITIMIZE OTHERS ON CAMPUS, AND INSTEAD RECOGNIZE THAT SOME OF OUR PEERS MIGHT NOT SHARE OUR VIEWS ON CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES."

conversation revolving around the student response to the Iran deal. At the beginning of the semester, a few student groups and administrators asked us to help them in offering students opportunities to protest the nuclear deal with Iran. Like we

would for any student group, we encouraged these students to pursue what they feel passionate about and to reach out to other students to join them in assorted protests and lectures.

Yet we were aware that the events advertised on our campuses these last two weeks advocated for only one side and that some of our constituents don't necessarily agree with that side or are undecided. Regardless of our own personal opinions about the deal, we feel that in this university, students should feel safe to openly voice their opinions on various issues, including this one, while staying mindful of the university's Torah-informed value system. As student leaders, we felt it our responsibility to ensure that students know they have that space. Therefore, we tried to organize a balanced program that would offer students a chance to hear multiple perspectives on the issue, to help them develop informed opinions, and to ensure that both those who support and those who oppose the deal feel comfortable and included in their university. Unfortunately, due to a number of circumstances, we were unable to organize an event like that in time before the break.

Nevertheless, I hope my openness about our discussions and thoughts has shown you that Student Government wants all students to feel they have a stake in the university. Undergraduate life should teach us to understand differing viewpoints, avoid generalizations, and recognize the nuance in issues. So if there is programming you think needs to happen on campus, to add an important voice or perspective not currently acknowledged in the conversation, approach us and we will help you make it happen. One practical way in which we can all actively contribute to this environment is to avoid using language or tones that might seem to exclude or delegitimize others on campus, and instead recognize that some of our peers might not share our views on controversial issues. As we work together on this, let's keep in mind that we are all still students of Yeshiva University, healthily grappling with our community's core values, trying to lead meaningful lives infused with the wisdoms of the world.

Have a great holiday break and we look forward to an amazing year on the Wilf Campus.

GMOs: What's all the Hype?

By Kochava London

Genetically modified organisms, also known as genetically engineered organisms, are one of the latest targets vilified by the health world. "Non-GMO" health claims appear prominently on numerous popular food products, including Kashi cereals, SkinnyPop popcorn, and Chloe's soft serve ice cream. A recent poll conducted by ABC News revealed that 93% of Americans support federally mandated labeling of genetically modified food products, and over 50% of Americans believe that GMOs are not safe to consume. So what exactly are GMOs, and are they really as bad as people believe?

GMOs are created using an artificial breeding process in which the DNA from one organism is interwoven with the DNA of another organism to create a new organism with a desired trait. Genetic engineering can also be used to turn off specific genes in DNA, a technique known as gene silencing. This method was recently implemented by scientists to engineer an apple that does not brown when exposed to the air. In February 2015, the USDA approved the safety of non-browning apples, which are expected to appear on grocery shelves within a few years.

Today, most crops are genetically modified to be able to withstand pesticide use or thrive despite extreme climate change, but farmers have been altering crops for thousands of years. For example, most carrots used to be purple until Dutch farmers bred them with other varieties of carrots in the 1600's to produce the ubiquitous orange hue that we recognize today. However, these types of modifications occurred gradually and on a much simpler scale. The genetic modification performed today is incredibly sophisticated.

Critics of genetic engineering cite numerous animal studies that link serious health problems, such as cancer, infertility, and organ damage, to the consumption of GMOs. The recent uptick in food allergies is also thought to be

related to GMOs. In addition to health concerns, GMOs have a major environmental impact. "Super bugs" and "super weeds" become resistant to pesticides and require extremely toxic poisons to be eliminated. Additionally, because of crosspollination, the genetic material from GMO crops is transferred to non-GMO crops. GMOs also affect biodiversity as they can be toxic to bees, birds, and butterflies.

On the other hand, there are also many benefits to genetic modification. Crops that have been genetically modified are usually able to thrive with less water and fewer pesticides, which in turn reduces the cost of production. Genetic modification also produces greater crop yields, which is crucial for countries where many people are starving. According to Greg Jaffe, the director of biotechnology at the Center for Science in the Public Interest, "[T]here is abundant evidence that currently grown GE [genetically engineered] crops have major benefits worldwide and that foods made from those crops are safe to eat." Genetic modification can also be used to prevent plant species from dying out. Scientists have proposed using genetic engineering to save the banana crop in Central America from a fungus currently destroying it.

Given the two sides of the debate, should consumers steer clear of GMOs? Unfortunately, there is not enough conclusive evidence to fully demonstrate the potential health risks. Thousands of studies conducted by the World Health Organization, the Food and Drug Administration, and the United States Department of Agriculture have demonstrated that GMOs are perfectly safe for human consumption. Although more research is needed to determine the potential long-term effects of consuming GMOs, there are many steps people can take to reduce their consumption of GMOs.

The simplest step is to eat fewer processed foods, since 80% of processed foods produced in the United States contain GMOs. Most processed foods contain genetically

modified corn and soy, which means that people are consuming GMOs on a regular basis without even realizing it. Unlike many European countries, such as France and Germany, the US does not require companies to label foods that have been produced using genetic modification. The Non-GMO Project, a non-profit organization that values consumer awareness, labels products that have not been genetically altered in any way. For example, Crisco, Domino's sugar, KIND granola bars, and "Cuties" clementines all carry this stamp of approval. Additionally, all produce certified organic by the USDA is required to be free of genetic modification.

Although there are an abundance of non-GMO food products on the market, it is important for consumers to realize that the non-GMO stamp of approval does not necessarily mean that a product is healthy. GMO foods have the same nutritional value as non-GMO foods, so it is important to beware of marketing techniques that advertise non-GMO products as healthier alternatives. While there are many ways to limit consumption of GMOs, a healthy, balanced diet based on the principle of moderation is always the optimal approach to leading a healthy life.

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Rightsizing and Downsizing: Analyzing Trends in the Yeshiva College Course Offerings

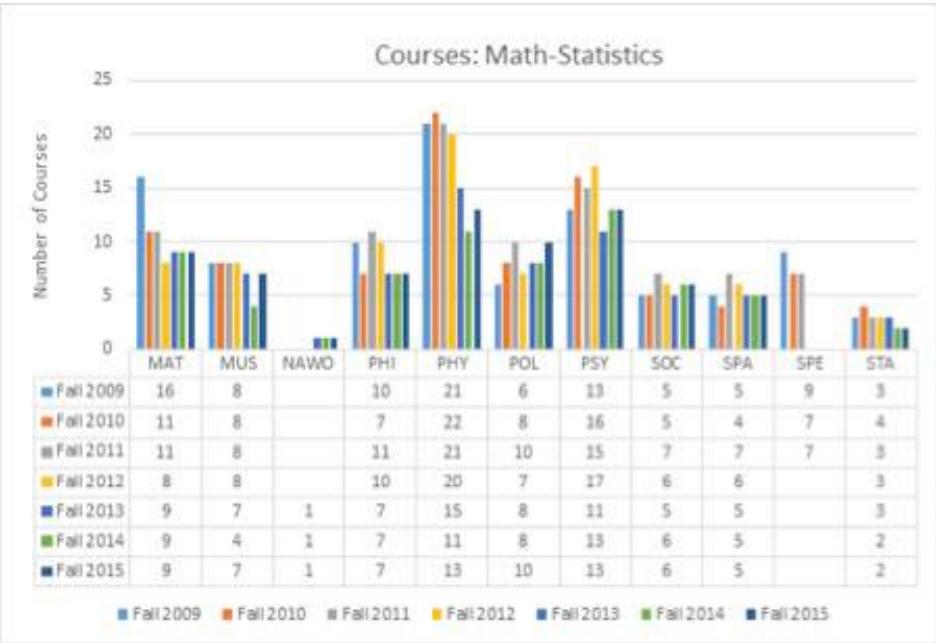
By Yechiel Schwab and Shlomo Friedman

Author's note: A former version of this article was published late last year. We expanded the scope of the article from 2012 to 2009, among other changes, for this re-publishing.

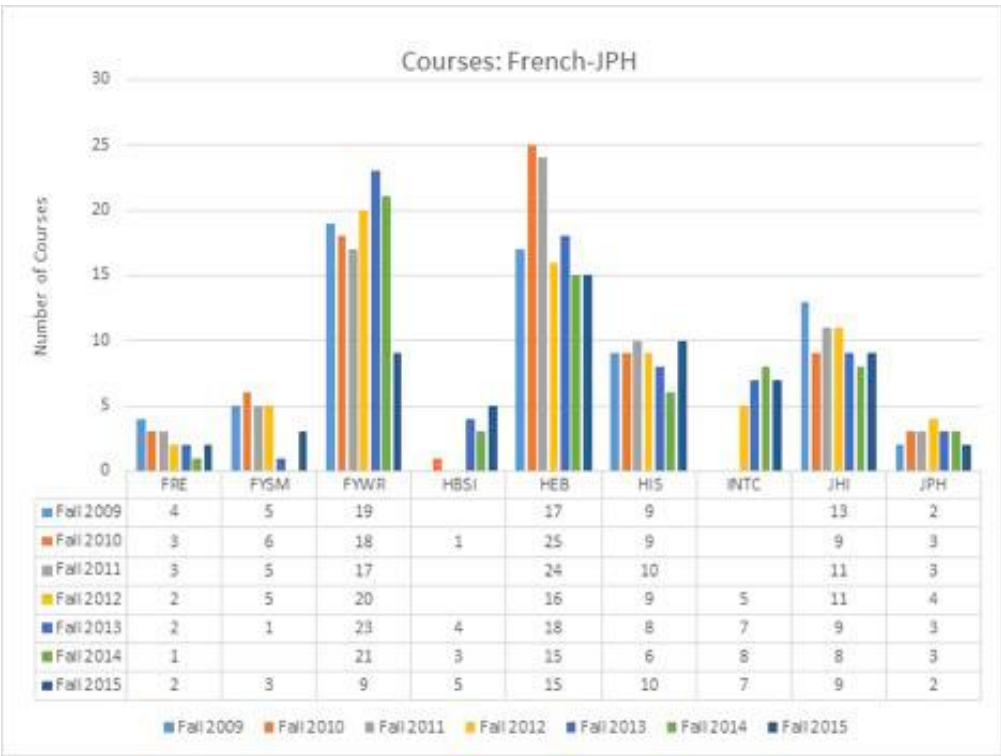
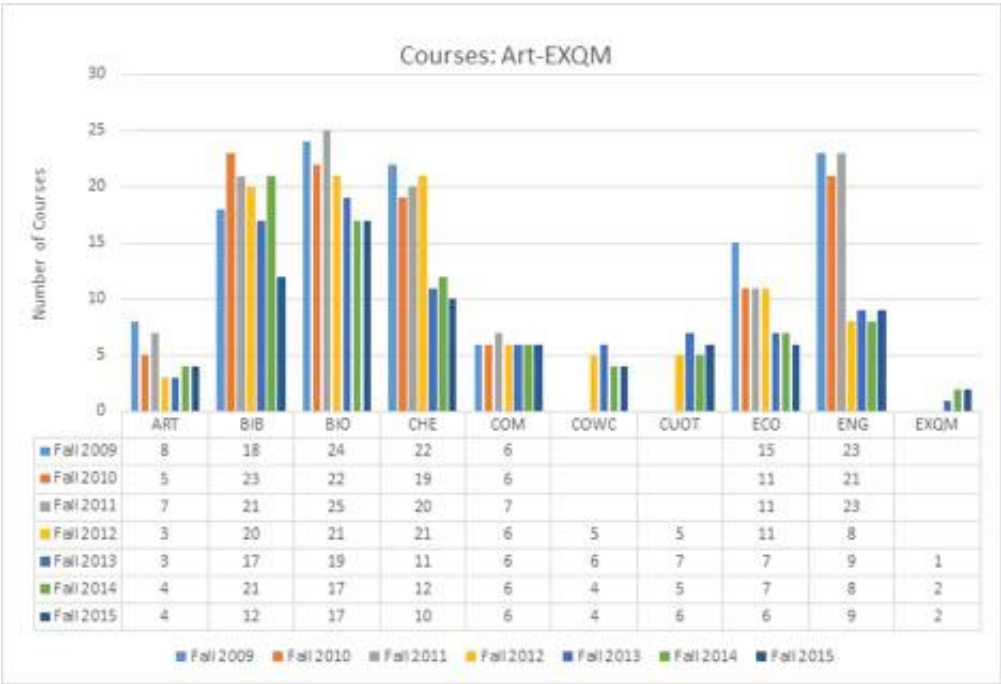
It's no secret that financial and curricula changes abound at our University, specifically in Yeshiva College. We decided to track the changes in course offerings over the last couple of years, to better contextualize these turbulent times. We started with 2009, the beginning of the financial changes at this university, and used only Fall offerings to try to give a more stable picture.

Method: We copied the Myyu schedules into excel, and then separated them by subject and year, demonstrated in the charts below.

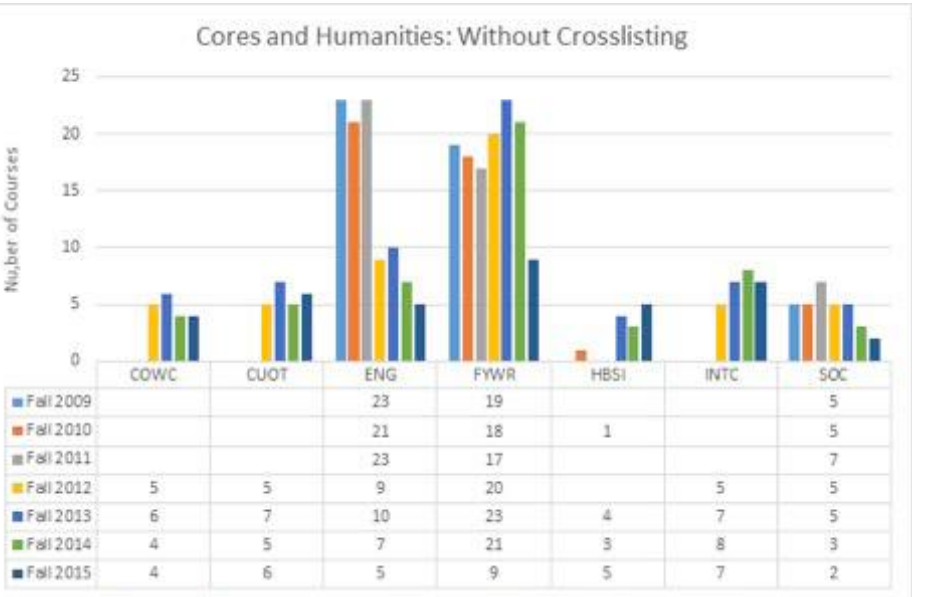
- We did not include research offerings or directed studies.
- Recitations, or course sections which counted as zero credits, (i.e. problem seminars in math) were similarly discounted.
- No Colloquiums in any department were counted.
- In the Music Department, 1 credit courses were discounted.
- Individual Lab sections were all counted as individual courses (except for zero credit labs, like Computer Science Lab).
- Note the changes in 2012 with the implementation of the Core. Instead of EXQM and NAWO, similar one semester courses were offered for non-majors in the Chemistry and Physics Departments, and account for part of those reductions, and for significant changes in the offerings in the English Major.
- Note also, that until 2012 General Chemistry I still had a required lab, with five sections. Those are counted below, and partially explain the change from 2012 to 2013
- All crosslisted courses were counted for both (or in one scenario, three) departments.



To illustrate the overall changes, we created a chart displaying the total course offerings, of each year. Note, that since we originally counted crosslisted courses twice, in the chart below we have a separate line denoting individual courses. The data for crosslisted courses only begins in 2012, so the second line begins there. In addition to an overall decrease in courses, we saw a significant increase in cross-listing in 2015 (2012=7, 2013=7, 2014=9, 2015=20).



The chart below examines the Humanities in specific, in conjunction with Core offerings. Note that in 2012, English offerings decreased significantly, as the general requirements were taken out of the major. In the table below, courses crosslisted from the Core English or Sociology are only counted within their Core Sections. After an original decrease with the implementation of the Core, this semester has seen further serious decreases in these departments.



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Summary: Over the last seven years we have seen a drop of over 80 total courses in the Fall semester, from 280 (approximating for cross-listing) in 2009 to 198 this Fall, almost a 30% drop. We have seen these reductions spread across a large number of departments. Additionally, cross-listing increased dramatically (from 7 in 2012, to 20 in 2015), masking what have been large reductions in courses offerings in English, Sociology, and others.

Though this year, for obvious reasons, shows a sharp decrease in many areas, the decreases in course offerings is a multiple year trend, possibly

due to Yeshiva's hiring freeze, where professors from various departments have left, or retired, on their own volition, and no replacement was hired in their stead. Though we saw intense public outcry from students about last year's cuts, this issue clearly predates the University's most recent actions. The multi-year trend of decreased course offerings raises the question of whether 2015 represents the turning point of this graph, or just one more year in this continued downward trend.

What You Should Be Watching But Aren't: *Review*

By Etai Shuchatowitz

School has started once again, which for many of us means lots of time spent not doing the things we should be doing. With this comes the always difficult task of figuring out ways to rationalize the time "wasted" so we don't feel as bad. And, with the quality of television being as high as it is, it's becoming significantly easier to waste time well. So, while one could say that I'm here to just comment on television you should be watching but aren't, I'd rather say that I'm providing a public service by helping you feel better about not being "productive".

Everybody and their mother watches Game of Thrones (Mom, please don't watch Game of Thrones), and Suits is a staple of every college dorm, but there's one show on TV that is doing things no other show (I've seen) has ever done, and is criminally under appreciated.

Review on Comedy Central takes a pretty solid premise and ups the ante significantly. The show features Forrest Macneil (the absolutely amazing Andy Daly) as he reviews life experiences. Each episode works the same way: a viewer calls in to ask what it's like to do some life experience, and then Forrest goes out and does it. He then rates the life

experience from one to five stars. For example, the pilot finds Forrest reviewing stealing, getting addicted and going to prom. It's a silly idea ripe for comedy, but the thing that brings Review to the next level is the fact that there's no reset button. Once Forrest has done something in one episode, that act will have sometimes major consequences for Forrest as a character over the entire run of the show. In effect, what starts as a fun piece of sketch comedy turns into a dark, character study of an idiot who feels so strongly about the importance of his work, that he is willing to do horrible things to both himself and those around him.

I almost don't want to say anything more for fear of ruining amazing series long plot points, but in the name of getting you to watch this show (okay fine, I'm not a public servant) , I will tease what was probably one of the best episodes of television I've ever seen.

In season one episode three, Pancakes, Divorce, Pancakes, Forrest is asked what it's like to divorce his wife. Obviously, Forrest being the way he is, goes through with it and divorces his wife of several years (with whom he has a young son). For the rest of the season, Forrest's entire goal which seeps into almost all of his reviews, is trying to win back his wife. For example, in a later episode, while reviewing

"What's it like to be Batman?" Forrest, in full Batman costume, has to go to an official divorce procedural.

He's a deeply disturbed character - almost like Walter White in the way that he's so thoroughly convinced himself that what he's doing is right. Forrest remains completely unfazed as he accidentally burns down his father's house while reviewing "being a little person".

Andy Daly plays him like this loveable suburban dad who's simply trying something he never tried before. He wears a goofy smile as if plastered to his face and always seems excited to review a new life experience. Every episode is an exploration. And, every episode gets deeper and darker into the pathos of his tragically hilarious character. But, the most amazing thing about the show is that it gets me to almost cry laughing while watching something terrifying like many many people getting shot down in a gunfight after Forrest starts a cult (and, for the record, I really don't think I'm a psychopath). And you think that's the end of it. You think how could he still want to do this? But then next week there he is ready to review life a little more.

Review airs Thursdays at 10 PM on Comedy Central (or, whenever you like after that on comedycentral.com).

You're welcome.





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Grappling With Exposure

By Joseph Zummo

This past summer, *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel was assigned as Summer reading to incoming freshmen at Duke University. The assignment became controversial when multiple students refused to read it because of its sexually explicit nature. The memoir depicts a closeted gay father committing suicide after his daughter comes out as lesbian and two sexually explicit images. The extent to which these images are considered “pornographic” is disputed (based on how one would define this term), however it can be agreed on that they both display sketches of naked women. In an article written in the *Washington Post*, freshman Brian Grasso took issue specifically with this aspect of the novel, noting that “If the book explored the same themes without sexual images or erotic language, I would have read it.” His reasoning was based off of a verse in the new testament. Many have been supportive of Grasso’s decision not to read *Fun Home*, even calling him “heroic” for standing up for what he believes in, while many others have accused him of being ignorant (at best.)

Initially, I agreed with Grasso, because I felt that everyone has the right to shield themselves from images, or even ideas, that they believe go against their values. However, while this notion protects religious freedom, authorizing students to become their own filters of information has its downsides. In an article titled “The Coddling of the American Mind,” Professors Jonathan Haidt and Greg Lukianoff discuss the negative implications of students self-monitoring ideas they are exposed to. They note that a significant number of college students are beginning to demand “trigger warnings” on books that contain material that may be offensive to some. These trigger warnings allow students to avoid material that they may find uncomfortable, for a plethora of reasons. For example, F. Scott Fitzgerald’s classic, *The Great Gatsby*, has been called on to be labeled because of the misogyny and physical abuse portrayed in the novel. Some colleges have begun to appease students who demand these warnings. According to Haidt and Lukianoff, in 2013, Oberlin College recommended to faculty that “materials that might trigger negative reactions among students be avoided altogether unless they contribute directly to course goals.”



ald’s classic, *The Great Gatsby*, has been called on to be labeled because of the misogyny and physical abuse portrayed in the novel. Some colleges have begun to appease students who demand these warnings. According to Haidt and Lukianoff, in 2013, Oberlin College recommended to faculty that “materials that might trigger negative reactions among students be avoided altogether unless they contribute directly to course goals.”

Students are not just attempting to monitor books, but also the way people speak. They claim that many are guilty of a concept called “microaggressions.” According to Haidt and Lukianoff, these are defined as “small actions or word choices that seem on their face to have no malicious intent but that are thought of as a kind of violence nonetheless.” For example, asking an Asian American student, “Where were you born?” is an example of a microaggression because it “implies that he or she is not a real American.” The problem with this, Haidt and Lukianoff continue, is that these beliefs stem from “emotional reasoning”- defined as individuals assuming “that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are: ‘I feel it so it must be true.’” Going through life with this mentality can be crippling-causing oversensitivity and close-mindedness. My doubt in my initial belief came when I realized that perhaps Brian Grasso is also committing this mistake. He feels that the sexually explicit images portrayed in *Fun Home* are “pornographic” and that this makes it “immoral” for him to read it. If we allow Grasso to not read *Fun Home* for sexually explicit pictures, then how do we force other students to read, for example, *Huckleberry Finn*, despite their insistence that the ‘racism’ that they perceive is against their morals? The cliché question of, “Where do we draw that line?” comes into play.

This question may not be popular at Yeshiva University. Many may say, “Our Torah gives us ‘that line!’” I am not disputing that claim, and I believe that Torah guidelines should certainly reflect the materials that we learn at YU (whether or not they do is not the concern of this article). However, how should other colleges determine what materials are acceptable to expose to their students? How do they protect religious freedoms, while not jeopardizing academic pursuit?

In order to attempt to answer this, it’s important to understand exactly what college education strives to succeed. Our current system focuses on a common saying, that educators should not try to teach students what to think, but how to think. This goal is achieved by having students confront ideas that they are unfamiliar with. Only in this way do students begin to think critically and examine their own beliefs in a constructive, yet perhaps uncomfortable way. The “trigger warning” and “microaggression” movement aims to avoid these uncomfortable feelings. However, with this, they hinder the educational experience by not allowing for critical thinking and reexamining their own beliefs. They remain stagnant, unable to reach

their full academic and personal potential. Many would argue that Brian Grasso, and those who identify with him, fall under this category as well. However, I believe that there is a clear distinction that can be made between him and the former.

Instead of colleges using students’ emotional reasoning to determine what is acceptable in the classroom, they should use scientific data. In this way, colleges can avoid appeasing some students’ sensitivities over others. They can teach students how to think, without potentially endangering students’ minds.

“HOW SHOULD OTHER COLLEGES DETERMINE WHAT MATERIALS ARE ACCEPTABLE TO EXPOSE TO THEIR STUDENTS? HOW DO THEY PROTECT RELIGIOUS FREEDOMS, WHILE NOT JEOPARDIZING ACADEMIC PURSUIT?... INSTEAD OF USING STUDENTS’ EMOTIONAL REASONING TO DETERMINE WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE IN THE CLASSROOM, THEY SHOULD USE SCIENTIFIC DATA.”

Scientifically, pornography is a disputed topic. According to the American Psychological Association, there are those who argue it can ruin marriages, while others argue it “provides a safe recreational outlet.” Regardless, the APA notes that “while many viewers of adult content don’t seem to suffer ill effects, porn can become problematic for others.” Therefore, colleges should not force students to view images that may or may not cause them damage. While *Fun Home* and other novels may have ideas that can be beneficial, the benefit versus cost ratio should be weighed by each student. Brian Grasso did not make his decision on scientific grounds, but his argument has factual backing that colleges can support their decisions on. Those who argue for trigger

warnings are concerned that novels that contain racism, or physical abuse, could cause mental harm to students, especially those who have experienced intense personal distress regarding such issues. However, Haidt and Lukianoff assert the psychological principle that “helping people with anxiety disorders avoid the things they fear is misguided.” If an individual has a fear of elevators, it is important to slowly expose them to elevators, in order for them to function properly. By avoiding elevators, the fear is being fed. Physical abuse and elevators should not be equated, but the principle remains that the answer to anxiety is not protection; it is quite the opposite.

This issue is extremely complex, and there is still a vast gray area that is difficult to explain. For example, Brian Grasso’s religious views happen to agree with many scientific reports, but what if a student’s beliefs conflict with his/ her college’s scientific reasoning of what is appropriate for students to be exposed to? Is this limiting the student’s religious freedom? I do not know how to, or if there is an answer to this dilemma.

However, I believe that colleges must educate students by properly exposing them to ideas that will improve their mental state, not hurt it. This should not be measured by what is “comfortable or uncomfortable” for the students, rather by what will enable proper mental growth, as is defined by proven psychological principles.

I Want the Truth

By Doron Levine

Dolores Umbridge was correct. Writing allows us to share our beliefs with others, but it is also intensely introspective. Even as we carefully scrawl ink onto paper, we inscribe the words onto our very flesh.

As Harry learned the painful way, writing can involve blood. Nothing ignites the passions more than a struggle for the truth, and, as anyone who follows current events in our community and beyond knows, written battles are often bloody. Modern ideological battlegrounds regularly host fiery verbal jousts peppered with explosive exchanges and belligerent rhetoric.

Take the issue of homosexuality. The debate over whether the normalization of homosexuality is a positive or negative development for society is positively volcanic. But notice how the argument plays out. Each side appeals to basic principles that its opponents simply reject. Those on the left recommend tolerance, trumpeting their governing principle of “live and let live.” If an action doesn’t hurt anyone, then there is nothing

wrong with it.

But many social conservatives simply dismiss this premise. They argue that some activities are inherently immoral even if they affect nobody but the perpetrator. So here we have a deadlock. This dynamic debate revolves around fundamental moral premises and neither side is likely to budge.

Recently, I found myself involved in a discussion with someone who repeatedly asked me why I felt a certain way about a certain moral question. Whenever I would offer an explanation, he would follow up by asking, “well, why is that principle true?” Eventually, I pointed out to him that all moral principles and, indeed, all principles of reasoning must ultimately appeal to axioms with no further explanation.

These axioms are what modern epistemology calls foundational beliefs. Though theoretically revisable, and, like all other propositions, either true or false, foundational beliefs tend to be deeply rooted and difficult to reconsider. They are the pillars that support all other beliefs; people practically worship them and defend them with fanatic loyalty.

So naturally, when two belief systems based on entirely different premises collide, sparks fly. The ensuing heated exchange rarely changes opinions, but it is testament to the deeply rooted beliefs on either side and, hopefully, the recognition on both sides that the debate is about more than sociology.

I say “hopefully” because all too often the discussion devolves into a bizarre sort of chronological criticism. Last year, in response to an article in *The Commentator*, one commenter rhetorically wrote, “what is this, the 1950s?” More recently, a professor countered an argument of mine by noting that the position I held was “a dated idea.”

This sort of rhetoric is commonplace and most peculiar. Plainly put, it says that we should avoid beliefs that were popular at an earlier point in history. Needless to say, this distaste for the dated, this antipathy to the antiquated, produces no convincing arguments. It merely appeals to our smug satisfaction with the present and our vague and unsubstantiated sense that humanity today is morally better than ever before. Why not consider the possibility that the people in the 1950s got it

What You Must Know About Accounting Recruitment

By Etan Neiman

A nice salary, bright future, prestige. These glories and more await every Syms accounting student just down the road at any number of top accounting firms. Many have already began to fill out their business cards with power names such as Deloitte, EY, Grant Thornton, KPMG, PwC, and other excellent firms of varying sizes. The only minor complication that remains is: how do you get from accounting student at YU to accounting associate at a premiere firm? There are just three things standing in your way: building your resume, owning the career fairs, and nailing the interviews. Resume building starts from the moment you walk into YU, while career fair networking and accounting firm interviewing heat up during your second and third years. It is my intent that after reading this piece, whether you are a first year accounting student or nearly graduated, you will be sufficiently informed about the myths and facts of these three fundamental aspects of making it big. You will know exactly what you need to do to one day soon call yourself a top firm associate.

1. Building Your Resume

This is your professional life story crammed onto one sheet of paper. It will detail your educational, work, and extracurricular experience. In order to accumulate the 150 semester hours necessary to be eligible to take the C.P.A., nearly all Syms accounting students either do four years of undergraduate studies or three years of undergraduate and one year of the Sym's MS (Master's) in Accounting. The exception to needing four years is if a student comes in to YU with an unusually high number of credits in addition to any credits from an Israel program. For simplicity's sake, we will assume all Sym's accounting students are on board for four years. The summer going into the fourth and final year is when you will shoot to secure an internship at the top firm you could start your career with. We will call this the target accounting internship. The two summers before then will be filled with some combination of accounting firm internships and accounting or business internships in the private sector.

Myths:

A) Your GPA is the only thing that matters. That's right. The recruitment process is not simply an exercise of who can get the highest GPA. Not to say that your GPA isn't fundamentally important, but having the appropriate internship experience is also a must. Recent YU graduate and Deloitte Associate Avi Geller found that though "one of the first things (the firm) looks at on your resume is your GPA, after that they will look at your experience." While the GPA is the starting point to getting you noticed, Geller urges students to also prioritize internship experience.

B) You must intern at an accounting firm before you apply for the target internship. Before the Career Center comes with pitchforks to take me to the insane asylum, let me explain. While you do not need to intern specifically at an accounting firm, having internship experience somewhere is non-negotiable. As one first year associate at a top firm puts it, "To get your (target) internship, there is no expectation that you have experience specifically in public accounting." Marc Goldman, the Executive Director of the Yeshiva University Career Center, sees benefits to accounting firm experience as well as experience in different business settings. While accounting firm internships portray interest and hands on knowledge of the industry, other accounting and business internships offer varied experience and an understanding of how business works. Goldman preaches that "the key is to build and enhance relevant skills and be able to communicate impressively and clearly about these skills and the experiences in which they were gained." This can be achieved at accounting firms and other businesses alike.

Facts:

A) Recruiters don't care that you are a former camp counselor. Sadly, it is time to hang up your staff badge. Geller even recommends that "for anything camp related,

take it off your resume, no matter how good you make it sound. YU Alumnus Etan Bluman (Class of '10), in his 5th year in the Real Estate Tax Services Group at Ernst & Young (EY), concurs, believing that camp experience on a resume can look like fluff. "Firms are looking for a long term investment," he advises, "the key is to make your resume applicable." The business world is harder to break into than ever and you must do everything possible to make yourself the best candidate.

B) Extracurricular experience is anything but extra. Leading the right program or club is often what earns one resume an interview and the other resume a one-way ticket to the trashcan. While it can be largely subjective which activities a particular company may prefer, one golden rule which holds true as Goldman puts it is that "it is more important to be involved and possibly take the lead in an activity or organization as opposed to picking a right activity." Showing initiative will go a long ways towards making any extracurricular activity stand out.

FIRMS ARE LOOKING FOR A LONG TERM INVESTMENT...THE KEY IS TO MAKE YOUR RESUME APPLICABLE! THE BUSINESS WORLD IS HARDER TO BREAK INTO THAN EVER AND YOU MUST DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MAKE YOURSELF THE BEST CANDIDATE.



courtesy of biznews

2. Owning The Career Fair

Here's a good question: What in the world is a career fair and how much money do I need to bring for rides? A career fair is actually a networking event with representatives from a number of top firms. This is an opportunity for you to meet professionals in the accounting field - and for them to meet you. There are a couple career fairs each school year which are hosted by the Career Center and target different groups of students.

Myths:

A) This is where you learn about the firms. One of the biggest mistakes Goldman sees students making at the fairs

is being ill-prepared. The last question you should find yourself asking is "so can you tell me about PwC?" Well before you step foot in the door, you must know the size, practices, and types of clients each firm offers. Research the firm's website, do a Google search for their recent news, and use Monster.com's LedgerLink to get a brief overview of the firm. This will allow you to ask pointed, intelligent questions like "so can you tell me about what type of work PwC does for Nike?"

B) You need to finish the job there. This is not a job interview. Bluman, who himself has represented EY at multiple YU career fairs, finds that the fairs are best used as an opportunity to simply make a good impression. The most important thing is going to be what you do before and after. Are you going to ask the recruiter for a follow up conversation to get a better feel for his firm? Are you going to touch base at a later date with the manager you met and ask him to put in a good word for you?

Facts:

A) You are a human being. A PwC Associate and YU Alumnus finds that "students can get caught up in their personal pitches." This is your chance to show you can be sociable but still professional or as the PwC associate puts it, "Have a conversation." Your resume will speak for itself.

3. Nailing the interview

After you build your resume and own the career fair, all that will be standing between you and the top accounting firms is a great interview.

Myths:

A) You must have your answers down perfectly. In fact, Bluman strongly recommends the exact opposite. He has found that giving memorized or "canned answers show (the interviewer) a lack of confidence in yourself to think on the spot." Bluman is not, however, advising you not to have your resume down pat. You better know your resume forwards and backwards. Be able to analyze situations you were in and draw from your resume to support your answers. Just do not rehearse specific answers.

Facts:

A) Be prepared for anything. This can be best described by the following incredible story from Geller of an interview he will not soon forget. "My first round interview with a firm was not a normal interview and it caught me by surprise. He wanted to see how I handled being pressured. I walked into the office and he sat me down and said, 'I don't know why you chose the last slot, but you better have a good reason.' To which I responded, 'Well I'm going to be the first person you will remember tomorrow morning.' Needless to say, he liked that answer. He then proceeded to tell me, 'I don't have any more questions, so you are going to be asking me all the questions.' It's a good thing I had real questions to ask him and turned the interview into a 40 minute casual conversation."

B) You should dress and talk with your brain. Every single encounter you have with a firm representative should be considered part of your interview. While I was waiting for an interview to begin with a top accounting firm, I saw a fellow Syms student walk into the waiting area with a poorly done tie and upon the recruiter asking how he is feeling, he replied, "Really good actually. Usually, I am not well prepared for things, but I am really ready for this interview." Needless to say, he didn't get the job. Anything you say or do could, for better or for worse, differentiate you from the rest of the pack..

If you would like further guidance about resumes, career fairs, interviewing skills or any recruitment matter, please visit the Career Center to have a mock interview and take advantage of their terrific staff and resources.

“What is Wall Street” Event

By Elie Sundel

The Finance Club started off the year on a high note on Thursday night, September 3rd, with its introductory event titled “What is Wall Street.” Dov Herzberg, vice president of the Finance Club, moderated a panel of two Syms alumni and two current students. First to speak was Yonina Fogel, who works full time in the investor relations department at Two Sigma, a New York City-based hedge fund with around \$30 billion in assets under management. Fogel recently took this position, after completing a two-year stint in the wealth management department of J.P. Morgan. Fogel adores her new role and commented that she encourages more women to consider finance as a career. She highlighted the great work-life balance, and overall excitement at the job as compelling reasons for why attendees of the event should consider joining Fogel in hedge funds.

Kivi Eisenberg, born in Vienna, graduated Syms in May and is now a full-time Equity Research Associate at Jefferies and Company. Explaining to the audience what equity research is, Kivi called it “a jack of all trades,” and that it’s given him an ability to “learn a little about everything.” When asked what he enjoys most about his job, Eisenberg stressed the “lean teams” that are common in equity research--Eisenberg works on a team of only three people--the “exposure to management,” and the ability to “become an expert on a bunch of stocks.” To illustrate his first point about lean teams, Eisenberg commented that recently his boss wasn’t able to attend a dinner meeting with Nike CEO, Mark Parker, so a twenty-three year-old member of the team filled in for the boss instead.

After the two alumni spoke, two current Syms seniors Josh Honig and Jeremy Forman, spoke about their internships this past summer at investment banks. At the end of the summer, both Honig, who specialized in the TMT (Technology, Media, & Telecommunications) industry at Goldman Sachs, and Forman, who worked on Mergers and Acquisitions at the Royal Bank of Canada, accepted full-time offers to return to their respective jobs upon graduation.

Although Honig and Forman were working at different banks and specializing in different industries, both had similar workloads. Each job required an extensive knowledge of

financial modeling in Excel, putting together reports, and staying up-to-date on the financial markets. To the chagrin of listeners, Honig and Forman detailed their day-to-day schedules, which often involved working into the early morning and sometimes even pulling all-nighters. That being said, both Honig and Forman described investment banking as a great opportunity to learn and prepare for their next positions once they spend a few years at their respective investment banks.

The packed room on the fifth floor of Furst Hall was filled with budding Wall Street aspirants, hoping to learn and absorb the panel’s experience and knowledge so that they too can take the next step towards accomplishing their goals. Whether they end up working on Wall Street or not, the advice from the panel is relevant to all YU students, regardless of whether they started college classes this fall, or are only months away from graduation. Eisenberg encouraged all YU students to take a step back and try to picture what the next couple of years will look like as they continue progressing through their studies at YU and then search for jobs or graduate school programs. All admitted that one of their toughest challenges faced was trying to get their ‘foot through the door’ by networking and making connections, but that starting this process earlier on in college can be beneficial. Despite the hard work that lies ahead for each and every one of us, the four accomplished students and alumni who participated in the event illustrate what is possible with a lot of hard work, passion, and networking.

EISENBERG ENCOURAGED ALL YU STUDENTS TO TAKE A STEP BACK AND TRY TO PICTURE WHAT THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS WILL LOOK LIKE AS THEY CONTINUE PROGRESSING THROUGH THEIR STUDIES AT YU AND THEN SEARCH FOR JOBS OR GRADUATE SCHOOL PROGRAMS.



An Industry Redefined

By Adam Kramer

You've definitely heard of Paypal and may have used it to for online purchases or donations in the past, but what you probably didn't realize is that Paypal is part of a burgeoning payments industry, consisting of multiple companies, many of which are valued at well over a billion dollars.

Paypal was purchased by Ebay in July 2002 for \$1.5 billion, and was spun-off as a separate company earlier this year, the company currently has a market cap of over \$40 billion. Paypal processes payments for online vendors and for commercial users, but has a complicated fee structure based on a percentage of transaction, as well as flat fees that actually vary depending on the amount of the transaction. Merchants on online marketplaces like eBay and other similar sites don't like this complicated fee structure since they want to be able to understand the fees that they'll have to pay when they sell items, and limit the fees that they'll have to pay.

"OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, THE MACHINES THAT USERS HAVE SWIPED THEIR CARDS THROUGH, AND THE ONLINE SYSTEMS THAT PROCESS CARDS, HAVE CHANGED DRAMATICALLY,... BUT THE UNDERPINNINGS OF PAYMENTS HAVEN'T CHANGED, IN THE SENSE THAT SQUARE, STRIPE, PAYPAL, AND THE LARGE MAJORITY OF THE OTHER NEW PAYMENT COMPANIES STILL USE CREDIT OR DEBIT CARDS AT SOME LEVEL."

Paypal has faced competition in recent years from promising young companies such as Square and Stripe, who offer alternatives to merchants looking to accept electronic forms of payment from their customers. While Square and Stripe provide relatively similar service offerings, and are often grouped together by paymenttech analysts, the difference between the two can be summed up as follows: While Square is used for

card-present transactions, meaning that customers physically pay with a credit or debit card, Stripe focuses on card-not-present transactions, online or over-the-phone transactions, where a physical card isn't used.

Square was founded in 2009 by Jack Dorsey (also the co-founder of Twitter) and Jim McKelvey. Because the company primarily deals with in-person card payments, Square sells physical products such as credit-card readers and stands which allow merchants to turn their iPads into checkout devices that replace traditional, and relatively expensive, credit card reader machines. Aside from Square's physical products, the company has software that can handle sales, scheduling, invoices, and inventory, among other things.

Stripe was founded by Irish brothers Patrick and John Collison in 2010, with the intended purpose of simplifying online transactions for both the customer and merchant. The company raised several rounds of funding and was most recently valued at \$5 billion. A crucial component of Stripe's products is their suite of APIs, or application program interface, that provide routines, protocols, and tools for building software applications that can help with things like scheduling, inventory, and payments. Another Stripe feature is Stripe.js, which stores credit card information on Stripe's servers, so that smaller businesses are alleviated of the worry of sensitive customer information getting hacked.

Over the last few years, the machines that users have swiped their cards through, and the online systems that process cards, have changed dramatically. Square's card readers have made iPads into point of sale devices (i.e. checkout registers), and Stripe has made it much easier and quicker to pay online. Yet the underpinnings of payments haven't changed, in the sense that Square, Stripe, Paypal, and the large majority of the other new payment companies still use credit or debit cards at some level (either the physical card or the card's information if the transaction is being performed online), and are therefore subject to the flawed and antiquated credit card network.

In this traditional credit card network, money needs to flow from the user's bank to the merchant's bank--sounds easy enough right? Unfortunately, to first receive clearance, and then successfully move the money from the user to the merchant, numerous additional steps are involved. The cardholder (user) has to submit a request from the merchant to purchase the item. Once the merchant acquiesces to this request, it has to submit a request to the acquirer. Then, the acquirer asks for permission from the issuer, which is generally either Visa or Mastercard, and so on.

Despite the fact that these steps occur extremely quickly,

they are wrought with issues, primarily for merchants. As the user's money moves from the user's bank to the merchant's bank, small percentages of money are deducted at each stop along the way, including by banks and by the card network, either Visa or Mastercard. As a result, the merchant loses part of his revenue. Additionally, various stages involved under the current payment methodology makes consumers and merchants more vulnerable to credit-card fraud.



For the user though, this isn't a big deal. They don't have to pay the fees that the merchant must pay, and they can take advantage of how these companies' systems allow them to pay in more locations--both physical and online locations--and with more ease, while continuing to use the same credit card. For example, Stripe has made it much easier to purchase merchandise online, and the same goes for Square for in-store purchases.

What will take things a step further than companies like Square and Stripe, and really revolutionize the industry, is an app or payment network that doesn't use the traditional payments network. One such app is Kash, which is taking the speed of credit card purchases, but making it more reliable like the Automated Clearinghouse (ACH) system, which is used for clearing checks in the U.S. Companies like Kash will create a more reliable system for credit card payments, and one that, according to Kash's website, will be 80% cheaper for merchants than credit cards. While we don't yet know how well Kash's system will work, the idea that card-based transactions can be performed without having to pay an abundance of fees to card companies and to either Visa or Mastercard, is very exciting for the industry.

YU Students Spend Their Summer in Tech

By Jonathan Tavin

Many YU students take a gap-year in Israel prior to arriving on campus, which means that they typically spend only three years on campus - hardly enough time to focus on core requirements and courses required for their major. For business students looking to expand their horizons, summers can serve as a crucial time to learn about the different industries and professional tracks that will be available to them at graduation. In this article we'll take a look at the experiences of two students, both of whom spent their summer as interns for tech startups.

Moishi Eisenmann, a senior and Management major at Syms, originally hails from Amsterdam in the Netherlands. Upon graduation, Moishi hopes to apply his entrepreneurial edge in the high tech industry. Moishi spent his summer working for a Digital Customer Experience (DCX) Management company called Clicktale, which helps businesses track their customers' activity on their websites. The company operates globally and was recently ranked as one of the 20 fastest growing companies in EMEA by Deloitte. Clicktale serves notable companies like MetLife and Wal-Mart.

Moishi worked in the marketing department, performing tasks such as video editing and marketing research. He noted that over the course of the summer, "there was never a dull moment." He highlighted two of the most interesting functions he performed. One was competitor

"IT WAS AN ENRICHING EXPERIENCE TO WORK FOR A STARTUP THAT IS HELPING COMPANIES REVOLUTIONIZE THEIR OWN INDUSTRIES WITH ON-DEMAND SOFTWARE AND PRODUCT."

analysis, in which he studied a competitor and compiled a report about it. Another was social media analysis. While summer interns across all industries sometimes perform menial tasks, Moishi was proud to point out that his research-based suggestions on how to improve Clicktale's social media presence has already been implemented by the company.

A second YU student who worked in the tech industry this summer is Adam Kramer, originally from Boston, MA. Adam is studying Political Science in YC and is pursuing a Business minor at Syms. He worked for a startup that is creating a system for home-service companies to manage

and schedule their employees. Adam commented that today, with many industries becoming like Uber—where a user can summon a ride at his convenience, with the freedom to choose the type and level of car in the process—it was an enriching experience to work for a startup that is helping companies revolutionize their own industries with on-demand software and product.

Adam worked as a Customer Success intern. He assisted the start-up in on-boarding new clients onto the company's service platform, which turned out to be more challenging than anticipated given that technicians in the home-services industry aren't adept with technology—some don't even own smartphones! Adam designed a Help Center with over 40 articles explaining to the companies how to use the system. Among his other tasks, he created video tutorials for the startup's software, which provided explanations of its various functions. Adam also wrote blog posts that highlighted different elements of the application and ways that users of the application could maximize the product.

Adam reflected on the unique culture of the startup, noting that it took him some time to acclimate to working at a fast pace and actively seeking out new projects, but that he had an extremely rewarding experience working in this culture. He commented that having an internship at a startup provided valuable experience in terms of understanding what it takes to succeed as a small company that works with, and competes against, larger players.

Ethical Dilemmas

The Puerto Rican debt-crisis and Bankruptcy Law

By Raymond Cohen

On June 28, 2015, Alejandro García Padilla, Governor of Puerto Rico, declared the island's approximate \$72 billion worth of debt to be 'not payable'. The governor's assessment came to fruition when Puerto Rico missed a payment of \$58 million payment on Public Finance Corporation (PFC) bonds due August 1st. For those who were already watching Puerto Rico closely, the pronouncement, and subsequent default, came as a shock, but not necessarily as a surprise. An October 2013 article published by The New York Times labeled Puerto Rico's financing strategies as "unsustainable in the long run". Furthermore, starting in 2000, Puerto Rico experienced 15 consecutive government deficits, and in February 2014, was downgraded by all three of the major credit rating agencies (Standard & Poor's, Moody's and Fitch) to non-investment grade, or 'junk status', signaling an increase in probability that the commonwealth would default on its debt obligations.

Puerto Rico has sought debt relief and negotiation with its creditors, the problem however is that since the island is not a normative municipality, it doesn't have the right to file chapter 9 bankruptcy, a right that municipalities like Detroit utilized to gain the necessary protection and leverage when negotiating with creditors to alleviate their financial woes. Affording Puerto Rico bankruptcy protection has been the subject of intense debate throughout the financial and political worlds. In July, Senator Chuck Schumer sought to help the commonwealth by proposing the Puerto Rico Chapter 9 Uniformity Act; since then, presidential hopefuls such as Hillary Clinton, Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio have all weighed in on the matter. The Puerto Rican bankruptcy controversy raises the question of whether or not declaring bankruptcy and defaulting on payments is ethical in the first place. In this article we'll take a look at what the Jewish tradition has to say about defaulting on loan payments, declaring bankruptcy and overall debtor-creditor relations.

The first aspect of bankruptcy protection to consider is the fact that, by filing for bankruptcy, the debtor is essentially withholding the money of another party and is partially or completely (depending on the type of bankruptcy) ignoring his or her financial responsibility towards the creditor. The Talmud records that there is a positive commandment to repay debt obligations (Ketubot 86a), Maimonides (12th Century A.D.) suggests that failure to do so would constitute a violation of "Lo Taashok", or 'do not commit fraud' (Sefer HaMissvot, Lo Ta'aseh 247). However, there is a concept in Jewish Law known as creditor's despair ("Yeush"). This concept means that if the creditor believes, within reason, that the debtor does not--neither at this point in time, nor at any time in the future--have the ability to pay, than it is considered as if they have given up on receiving the money and the borrower would be absolved of his obligation.

The extent to which this concept is applied is argued amongst Jewish legal scholars. Rabbi Yosef Caro (16th century A.D.) states in his magnum opus, The Shulchan Aruch, that creditor's despair does not override a debt obligation as a simple result of the debtors messy financial situation (Choshen Mishpat 262:5). Rabbi Moshe Isserles ("The Rema"), a contemporary of Rabbi Caro, agrees with this general sentiment. Rabbi Aryeh Leib HaKohen Heller (18th Century A.D.) ("The Ketzot HaChoshen") points out that in the view of The Rema and other notable Jewish legal authorities of his time, if the circumstances are such that would lead any reasonable creditor to have Yeush--for example, a case "where the debtor's fields are ruined by floods"--the debt would be considered discharged. There is a third opinion, of Rabbi Meir Auerbach (19th Century A.D.) ("The Imrei Binah") which states that the concept of creditor's despair overrides a debtor's obligation under all circumstances aside from financial negligence of the part of the borrower. Assessing whether or not negligence played a role in the debtor's financial situation can

prove to be somewhat difficult, and would most likely need to be carefully determined on a case by case basis.

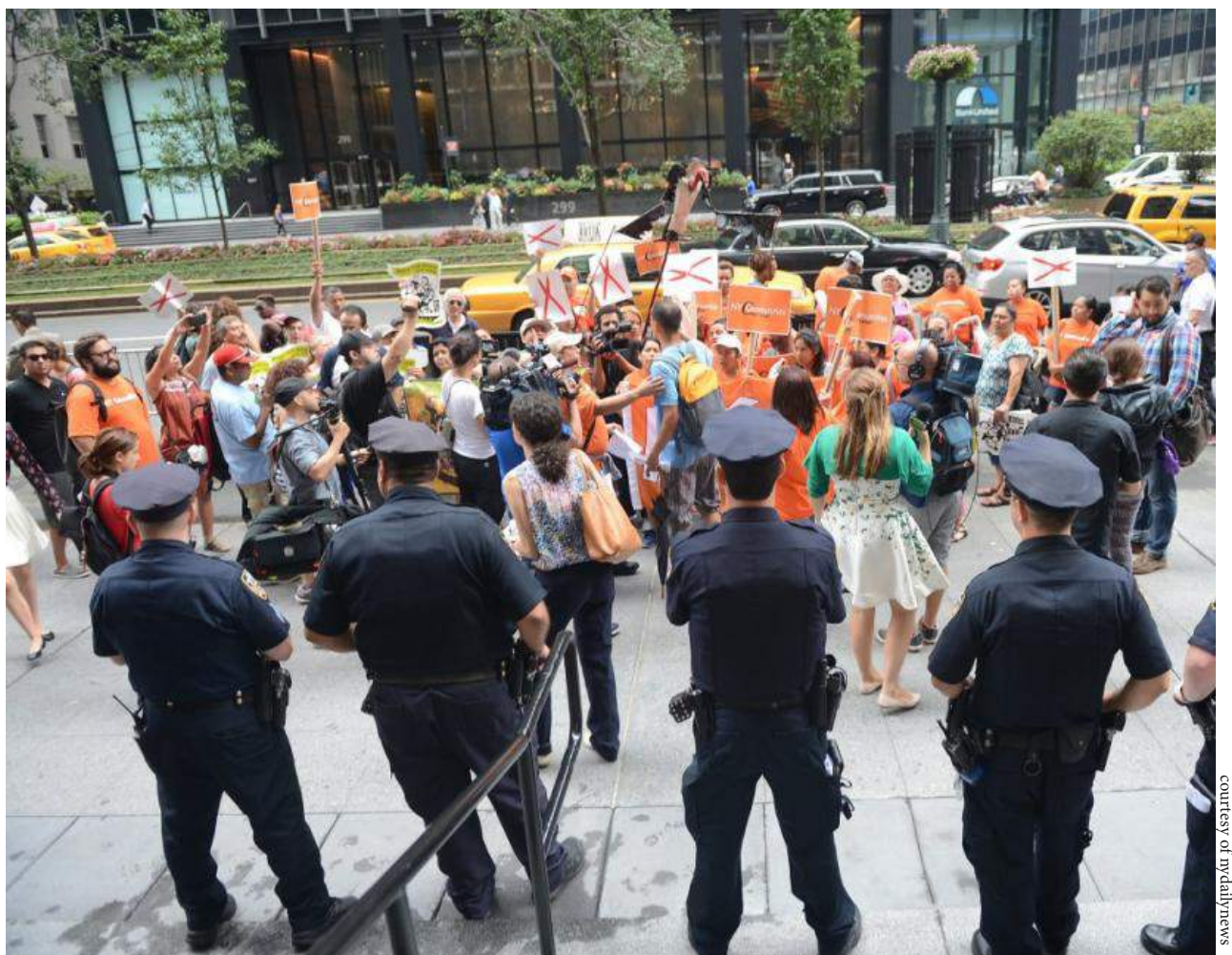
Now that we've assessed the varying opinions as to a borrower's right to default on their loan payments, we'll take a look at the extent to which American 'bankruptcy protection' plays a role in Jewish Law. According to contemporary American bankruptcy law, there are three primary types of bankruptcy. A debtor could either liquidate all of their assets and use the money to pay creditors (Chapter 7), it could extend debt payments and create some form of a payment plan (Chapter 13) or the debtor could reorganize their debt (Chapter 9,11). With regards to civil law, the Jewish tradition makes room for incorporating the common practice ("Minhag Hasocharim") into its own law. For example, the Talmud states that "One who hires laborers and tells them to come early or stay late: in a place where the custom is not to come early or stay late, the employer is not allowed to force them [to do so]. . . All [such terms] are governed by local custom." (Bava Metzia 83a). Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (21st Century A.D.) deduces from this passage and others like it in the Talmud, that when it comes to monetary laws, the prevalent custom can sometimes supercede Jewish Law (Iggeros Moshe, Choshen Mishpat, part 1, no. 72.). (This statement is not unqualified, and the extent to which this is true is not the subject of this article).

In terms of Minhag Hasocharim's application in bankruptcy law, Rabbi Moshe HaKohen (16th Century A.D.) ("The Maharshach") was once asked to adjudicate a case where a debtor was having a hard time meeting his obligations, and a majority of the creditors agreed to give him additional time to pay. One of the creditors was not happy about the agreement, and brought the debtor to Jewish court in an effort to force the debtor to meet his obligations. Citing passages in the Talmud with a similar sentiment to the previously mentioned passage, The Maharshach ruled that since it was customary for creditors to forgive their obligors in this type of situation the creditor did not have a valid claim (Responsa, volume 2, no. 113). This ruling was quoted favorably by other notable Jewish Legal Scholars such as Rabbi Samuel of Medina (16th Century) (Choshen Mishpat: 108).

Needless to say, this article purposely does not express a conclusion, but rather, presents a fraction of a larger more detailed discussion and analysis of the Jewish perspective on the intricacies involved in debtor-creditor relations.

NOTE: Most of the primary sources used for this article as well as translations were derived from 'Bankruptcy - A Viable Halachic Option' written in 1992 by Steven H. Resnicoff, Professor, DePaul University College of Law.

"WITH REGARDS TO CIVIL LAW, THE JEWISH TRADITION MAKES ROOM FOR INCORPORATING THE COMMON PRACTICE INTO ITS OWN LAW."



courtesy of nydailynews

בס"ד



Thank you!

To the hundreds of Yeshiva University students who form the core of our amazing staff this, and every summer. Yasher Koach on your dedication, commitment and leadership!

Thank you to the prominent leaders of the YU Community who visited us and addressed our staff & campers this summer - Your presence added so much to our program.

We are proud to be your partner and are honored to work together with Yeshiva University in serving our community.



President Richard Joel



Rav Menachem Penner



Rav Yaakov Glasser



Rav Mordechai Willig



Rav Baruch Simon



Rav Moshe Zvi Weinberg



Rav Yehuda Willig
Camp Rabbi



Rav Josh Blass
Camp HASC BMP Mashgiach

Wishing you all a *K'siva V'chasima Tova!*

Rav Judah Mischel Executive Director & **Shmuel Kahn** Camp Director

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