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YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

Dr. Daniel Rynhold will be assuming the position of Dean of School at YU's Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies beginning July 1.

Rynhold Appointed Dean of Revel as Berger Steps Down

By AVI HIRSCH

Dr. David Berger will be stepping down from his position as dean of YU's Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies, effective June 30, to be replaced by Professor of Jewish Philosophy and Director of Yeshiva College's (YC) Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein Honors Program Dr. Daniel Rynhold. Berger will continue teaching as a professor of Jewish History at Revel.

According to Dean of the Undergraduate Faculty of Arts and Sciences Dr. Karen Bacon, Dr. Eliezer Schnall, clinical professor of psychology at YC, will be replacing Rynhold as the new director of the Honors Program. "We anticipate appointing an Associate Director as well," explained Dean Bacon in an email to The Commentator. "Our goal is to continue to make the program as robust and engaging as it has been in the past."

The news that Revel would soon have a new dean was first publicized in an email from Berger two months ago informing Revel students that he would be stepping down. In the email, Berger announced his successor, adding, "Those of you who know

Prof. Rynhold will understand why I am pleased by this, and those who do not will soon share that pleasure."

In a statement to The Commentator, Berger elaborated that although he had "resisted major administrative positions" in the past, when he assumed a professional Chair at YU 13 years ago, he found himself in "an institution that [he] cared about deeply for reasons that transcended the fact that it was [his] employer."

"I accepted the vigorous argument by the Provost at the time [Dr. Morton Lowengrub] that it was my obligation to undertake this position," explained Berger. "After a dozen years, and well past the normal age of retirement, I told the current Provost [Dr. Selma Botman] that it was time to return to the simple status of Professor. I hope that I am leaving Revel in a position to build on its stellar status in the academic world through its extraordinary constellation of world class professors and students who are conversant with the texts and teachings of the millennial Jewish tradition."

When Rynhold was called into Berger's

Continued on Page 4

New Bachelor of Science Computer Science Degree Offered at Yeshiva College

By SRULI FRUCHTER

Yeshiva College's (YC) Computer Science department is offering its students a four-year track to receive a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) as an alternative to the three-year track for a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.). The new B.S. track is effective immediately and was officially announced to Wilf computer science students via email on April 7.

Wilf students enrolled in the 4-year tracks of either data science or distributed systems will receive a B.S. while the unspecialized 3-year track will earn a B.A. According to Chair of the YC Computer Science Department Judah Diamant, the New York State Education Department enabled YU to offer the B.S. track this past fall, but the YC faculty officially approved the program in the spring. Diamant explained that some employers,

like Google, "assume that ambitious C.S. [computer science] students are in a B.S. program," and while students with a B.A. can still compete for those same jobs, a B.S. "is assumed in top C.S. industry contexts." Additionally, students pursuing a B.S. degree have a smaller set of required "general education courses" than a B.A., such as a writing intensive course, and can instead focus on taking more major-related courses.

"I hope all parts of Yeshiva will continue to put in the effort and resources, and be given the indispensable *siyata Dishmaya* [help of heaven], to continuously expand and improve our C.S. offerings and services to our students," said Diamant. He added that the administration and various YC departments are working to "make

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Candidate for Syms Treasurer Barred From Running in Student Council Election

By ELISHEVA KOHN

The Wilf Student Court ruled in favor of the Canvassing Committee on May 4 by a majority of 3-2, terminating Michael Stark's (SSSB '22) candidacy for Sy Syms Student Council Treasurer in the upcoming Wilf student council elections on May 7. Majority and dissenting opinions of the court have not yet been released due to the "time-sensitive nature of the case," according to an email from Chief Justice Phillip Dolitsky (YC '20).

Stark sued the Canvassing Committee and the Office of Student Life (OSL) on April 30 after he was informed by Jacob Shiner (SSSB '21), a member of the Canvassing Committee, that his name would be removed from the ballot due to his current enrollment in the S. Daniel Abraham Israel Program. Stark was first informed that he was disqualified from running on April 29,

two days after he had presented more than the requisite 179 signatures to run for the position, and 22 days after he submitted his "Intent To Run" form to the

"The signatures are all from students who want to see me on the ballot for this election period"

Michael Stark
(SSSB '23)

Canvassing Committee on April 7.

Unlike the majority of YU students who attend a gap year program before coming to YU, Stark spent his freshman year in the 2018-19 academic year on the Wilf Campus, where he had served on the YSU Student Council. Currently in his sophomore year, Stark is attending Lev

HaTorah, an institution affiliated with the S. Daniel Abraham Israel Program. Commenting on this untraditional arrangement, Stark explained that he had received two scholarships, one which required him to attend his freshman year of college on campus, and the other which required him to attend a *yeshiva* in Israel. Stark intends to return to campus as a junior for Fall 2020.

Commenting on his reasoning behind the decision to remove Stark's name from the ballot, Shiner said, "He's currently in the S. Daniel Abraham Israel Program, as opposed to registered as an on-campus student. Only on-campus students vote in on-campus elections, and only on-campus students can run." According to Shiner, the decision to terminate Stark's candidacy was made "after a discussion between

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THE COMMENTATOR

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The Commentator is the student newspaper of Yeshiva University.

For 85 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 Umadda, and a commitment to journalistic excellence.

Views expressed in The Commentator are those of its writers and do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial board or the student body, faculty, and administration of Yeshiva University.

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

In Retrospect: Takeaways from a Tumultuous Year

By AVI HIRSCH

Following a relatively calm and uneventful year, in which a *rosh yeshiva* denouncing a coed Shabbaton was perhaps the most controversial and widely discussed news story, one might have expected that this year would be no different.

But as early as August, there were signs that this year would not follow the same path. Beginning with the lawsuit brought by nearly 40 former students against YU, week after week brought with it new major events. The LGBTQ march in September was followed by the rejection and subsequent reinstatement of the YU College Democrats club. In November, student backlash to the restructured dining plan saw it quickly reverted back to the previous year's system, and December brought with it a much-discussed break-in and arson attempt at the Schottenstein dorms, as well as the return of the Chanukah concert.

Then 2020 began, and somehow things became even more hectic. As the spring semester started in late January, elevators began to malfunction across campus, sometimes trapping students and faculty while they waited to be rescued by the fire department. February then saw the abstention of the student council from a vote on the YU Alliance club — deferring the decision to the YU administration, which, with the semester already over, has not yet released its decision on the club's status — as well as the beginning of the historic streak of YU's basketball team. This would continue into March, overlapping with what was to be the last significant story of the year, as well as the most tragic — the infection of a student with the novel coronavirus and YU's subsequent transition to remote learning that we currently find ourselves in.

It's been a busy year, to say the least. Throughout this year, The Commentator has stayed on top of each news story as it unfolded. Our dedicated staff has often worked long hours to highlight important issues and keep the student body informed. One of our primary missions has been to uphold and promote transparency between administrators and

students, calling out the administration for not communicating sufficiently time and again. Although not always successful, we have worked to influence the administration to further prioritize students' concerns.

Many undergraduate students at YU cherish their time here. They appreciate the close relationships they form with their *rabbeim* and *meshgichim*, whose focus on each individual student's spiritual and emotional well-being is unrivaled by any other university. They acknowledge the benefits of YU's small class sizes and enjoy the social atmosphere of a predominantly Jewish undergraduate student body. Often these students arrived at YU with friends from yeshiva, seminary or high school, but many more met their group of friends for the first time when they arrived at college, pleasantly surprised by the warm and inviting atmosphere they found here. These students will fondly remember their time at YU when they graduate after four years.

But another, often more vocal contingent of students have predominantly negative views of YU and its administration. These students have had their experience here tainted by interactions with an administration that doesn't respond when elevator malfunctions threaten student safety, refuses to take a stand on the formation of an LGBTQ alliance on campus, waits for vocal student protest before reversing a dining plan that overwhelmingly dissatisfied students, and at times seems more interested in preserving its own image than in responding honestly and transparently to student complaints. Despite all the services, activities, events, advisement and assistance that YU administrators have worked tirelessly to confer on them, these students will graduate YU with a cynical and generally unfavorable impression of their college.

Why do these students endlessly criticize an institution that has given them so much? Although partially a result of simple administrative failures, the most significant cause is a pervasive sense — right or wrong — that YU executives don't really *care* about student satisfaction or welfare. This feeling grows more pronounced with every email ignored by the Office of Student Life (OSL), every policy

decision made with little to no student feedback and every semester with no public forums or town halls by administrators to hear from the students they purport to serve. As long as administrators fail to reach out to the student body to demonstrate their support and actually convey to the students that they have been working many long hours *for them*, their attitudes won't change.

That's not to say this is a problem across the board. Those administrators who have not only been responsive to student concern but have gone out of their way to engage personally with their students have overwhelmingly positive impressions among the student body.

Dr. Noam Wasserman, in his first year as Dean of Sy Syms School of Business, has been perhaps the most extraordinary example of an administrator with universally positive impressions among students both in his school and across YU. I've heard many students share anecdotes that usually center on his eagerness to directly engage with students, from the open-door policy of his office, to his roundtables and "meet the dean" chats, to his one-on-one schmoozes with students and his tendency to take student feedback seriously when implementing policies. In my own interactions with him, I have found his demeanor to be one of genuine concern for his student body and a willingness to act on their behalf.

Dean Wasserman was the first of the undergraduate deans to host a virtual town hall explaining to students how the P/N policy of his school — which itself was formed largely based on input from Syms student leaders — would work. Interestingly, The Commentator's recent survey of undergraduate students found that not only do more Syms students have a positive view of their school's P/N policy than Yeshiva College (YC) or Stern students, but the percentage of students who expect to make use of the policy for their courses is nearly double in Syms than in YC or Stern. Following Pesach break, Stern and YC deans held their own virtual town halls explaining the effects of the

Continued on Page 3



1 7 Up / 7 Down

You're reading this column, so clearly you agree with me on this one. Farewell, loyal readers. And remember, "Publish and be damned!"



2 The 2019-2020 Commentator Group Photo

It's practically as iconic as Ellen's selfie at the Oscars.



3 Suing in Student Court

All the #coolkids are doing it these days



4 Cereal

This versatile, crunchy food leaves many questions unanswered. Is it a meal? Is it a snack? Can I eat it in bed? Why is my munching drowning out my movie?



5 Student Government Elections Coverage During This Pandemic

Or: why do all the fun articles happen when it's 4 AM in Vienna? #SlackHock!



6 John Krasinski's Some Good News

Heart-warming, but "Good Shtick! with Zack" is clearly superior.



7 Open-Note Finals

The best thing that happened to YU since Senator Chuck Schumer gave the Macs a shoutout at the AIPAC Policy Conference.

7UP NMODZ by Elisheva Kohn

7 Up / 7 Down

Pure *lashon harah*. The Volozhin Yeshiva should have put an end to this column years ago, or better yet, handed it over to the Canvassing Committee!

Engagements EVERYWHERE

Is it just me or are MORE couples tying the knot during the GLOBAL HEALTH CRISIS? #QueenHadassahPenn

Elections: 2019 Versus 2020

Remember the free lollipops and 8 1/2 by 11-inch posters of 2019? Yeah, good times.

No Physical Access to the Gottesman Library During Finals Season

How else are we supposed to spend an entire "reading day" cramming for two hours and socializing for ten, while eating old sushi from Nagel's and "distracting bochurim?"

"The Yeshiva Ballot"

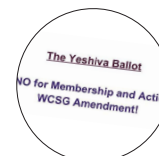
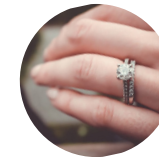
@VolozhinYeshiva iS tHat yOu?!

Mayor Bill de Blasio's tweet

We've been trending on Twitter, and it's not about our rowdy Purim festivities or outrageous editorials. #antisemitism

7 up/7 down Vol. 85 Honorable Mentions

In keeping with Commie tradition, here are this year's headlines that never wound up making the final cut for 7up/7down. Good luck figuring out which are up and which are down: Platonic Relationships, Military Time, Cheesecake, Giving Day Drama, The Grünangergasse *Shtiebel*, Trader Joe's European Yoghurt, Congratulations Macs From Robert Kraft, and WhereverYouAre.



IN RETROSPECT,
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coronavirus on academics for their students — a belated but still much appreciated gesture and certainly an indication that things may be headed in the right direction.

Dean Wasserman's tireless efforts developing a summer initiatives program for those students who would be without an internship over the summer due to the coronavirus pandemic, which attracted far more students than he had originally anticipated, was built with constant student engagement and feedback in the form of a survey completed by 235 students across YU's undergraduate colleges. His competent work has made him an effective dean; his noticeable dedication to students has helped students appreciate that work.

Dean Wasserman is certainly not the only executive working on students' behalf. The efforts of countless other administrators, including Associate Dean of Syms Michael Strauss and the deans of the other undergraduate colleges, have helped students in numerous ways. But Wasserman's student-oriented leadership ought to set the standard for all administrators at YU and promote a new form of student-administrator interaction that elevates students to the level of partnering with the officers of the school for their own benefit and thereby empowering them.

It is unfortunately the case that the most dissatisfied students tend to be the most outspoken, whereas those with more positive stories to tell will often remain silent about their experiences. People tend to speak up most often when they are unhappy with the state of affairs and are therefore motivated to demand change. As a result of this imbalance, negative perspectives of YU have often been amplified, leading to a frustrated administration that feels under attack even while it struggles to continue its job of assisting students.

The Commentator has contributed to this dynamic as well; although we have always tried to represent a broad spectrum of student opinions, both positive and negative, our pages have often ended up reflecting the more critical voices among the student body. Looking back on the ups and downs of the past year, I know that we have not always been successful in conveying all aspects of student experience at YU, the good together with the bad. My hope is that as I hand over the paper to my successor during this unprecedented time, all of us — students and administrators — will work together for the benefit of YU as well as its student body.

BERGER,

continued from Front Page

office in late January, he was not expecting to find himself offered the position of dean of Revel. But ever since that meeting, he has been working closely with Revel's associate dean, Rabbi Dr. Mordechai Cohen, to prepare for the upcoming year. "Ever since the first day in January, he's been very helpful and supportive," said Rynhold about Cohen. "I think between the two of us as a team, we can take Revel from strength to strength."

Rynhold previously served as a lecturer in Judaism at King's College London from 2001 to 2007, before moving to the United States to begin teaching Jewish Philosophy at Revel. He was appointed to serve as director of YC's Honors Program in 2018, after its previous director Dr. Shalom Holtz was appointed to the position of YC Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Rynhold also currently serves as the director of Revel's doctoral program and has simultaneously been serving as the Shoshana Shier Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Toronto for the spring semester.

Rynhold sketched out his three main goals for the school as he assumes the position. First, Revel had already been on a trajectory to expand its online degrees and prioritize remote learning to increase enrollment and attract students from around the globe. Revel's Jewish Philosophy Master of Arts (MA) degree has been available to take remotely for over a year, and with the

area by making the Ph.D. program more accessible as Revel transitions online.

Another priority in the coming year will be further expanding the Chinese-Jewish Conversation (CJC), a program spearheaded by Cohen. According to Rynhold, one avenue being considered for expanding the program would be the development of a track in Revel for Chinese students.

and moving forward, Rynhold will be looking to form similar collaborations with other YU-affiliated institutions.

Overall, Rynhold is expecting the adjustment to a new form of learning necessitated by the coronavirus to be a challenge, and there is no word yet on whether classes at Revel will resume in-person in the fall. But he is nonetheless excited — and humbled — to be taking on the challenges of his new position. "I'm looking forward to building on the platform that Dean Berger has set, and hoping for exciting times ahead for us," he said.

"During my years as a student at Revel, Dean Berger's exacting standards of scholarship and *menschlichkeit* defined Revel during his tenure," said David Selis (YC '19), who is studying Medieval Jewish History at Revel and hoping to graduate this year. "I look forward to seeing Dr. Rynhold guide the institution in its coming decade."

Editor's Note: The Commentator spoke with Dr. Berger virtually regarding his time as dean of Revel. The conversation can be read on Page 15.

"I hope that I am leaving Revel in a position to build on its stellar status in the academic world through its extraordinary constellation of world class professors and students who are conversant with the texts and teachings of the millennial Jewish tradition."

Dr. David Berger

coronavirus pandemic driving schools across the world online, Rynhold hopes to further expand the online offerings at Revel, beginning with a fully online summer session. Citing Dean Berger's success with expanding Revel's Ph.D. program over his tenure as dean, Rynhold expressed a desire to further build on Dean Berger's achievements in this

Finally, Rynhold explained that he plans to explore the possibility of launching new collaborative programs with centers and schools at YU such as the new Fish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, to expand Revel's reach. A dual degree program already exists with Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration,

B.S. COMPUTER SCIENCE,
continued from Front Page

sure that we provide the best C.S. opportunities to every student in the YU community who is interested and ready to work assiduously to take advantage of what we can offer."

YC computer science majors have expressed great enthusiasm for the new opportunity. "This is greatly beneficial for the C.S. students so they can take less classes unrelated to the major, enabling them to direct all their attention solely to the major," remarked Nathaniel Silverman (YC '23). "This change also gives the C.S. students greater opportunities down the road, as a B.S. goes a lot farther than a B.A."

While the 79 YC students majoring in computer science can

choose to pursue a B.A. or the specialized B.S, the 32 Stern College for Women (SCW) computer science majors can only complete a B.A. degree, as Stern will not be offering a B.S. in the near future. Commenting on this discrepancy, Dean of the Undergraduate Faculty of Arts and Sciences Karen Bacon said, "It is my understanding that we do not have the critical number of CS majors to support the BS at SCW at this time."

Professor Alan Broder, chair of Stern College's Computer Science department, told The Commentator that "SCW does not currently have plans to offer a BS option in CS," as the department's efforts will instead be working to expand course availability for SCW students. In 2017, after a "few years" suspension, SCW's Computer Science Department was reimplemented, Broder explained. Since that time, two full-time

computer science instructors and an adjunct professor were added, and the number of SCW computer science majors climbed; Broder expects the number of declared majors to continue growing.

YC students, Bruce added, "I think in general there is a discrepancy between the opportunities offered on the Wilf Campus versus the Beren Campus in regards to the two CS departments," citing YC's

work at impressive companies, and have been admitted to graduate school," Schick said, adding that while "the program only began a couple of years ago," it is expanding its course offerings, hiring new

Diament explained that some employers, like Google, "assume that ambitious C.S. [computer science] students are in a B.S. program," and while students with a B.A. can compete for those same jobs, a B.S. "is assumed in top C.S. industry contexts."

Some Beren students felt disappointed about the difference in academic opportunities between YC's and SCW's department. "I am very proud to be a CS major at Stern, the faculty and people in the major are incredibly caring and supportive," said Adina Bruce (SCW '22), a computer science major. Commenting on the new B.S. degree offered to

two specialized computer science tracks and SCW's fewer choices for electives.

Co-President of the Stern Computer Science Club Mori Schick (SCW '20) did not see SCW's lack of a B.S. degree-track to be limiting. "Stern's Computer Science graduates have consistently landed competitive internships,

professors, and building a new lab. The construction of Beren's new computer science lab — located on the 9th floor of Stanton Hall — was delayed due to COVID-19, according to Broder.

SYMS TREASURER,
continued from Front Page

members of the Canvassing Committee and the OSL."

Although Article II, Section 6(5), of the Wilf Constitution requires the Syms Secretary/Treasurer to be "at least a junior in good standing and a full-time student," it does not outline any conditions to run for the position.

There is also no constitutional requirement for voters — or candidates — to be current students on campus. Acknowledging this, Shiner said, "It's still a Canvassing Committee rule that we made using our constitutional authority." Article III Section 1(1) in the Wilf Constitution commissions the Canvassing Committee to be "responsible for all elections" and ensure "that all candidates meet all qualifications for their respective positions." Shiner acknowledged that the Canvassing Committee's rule preventing off-campus students from running had never been communicated to candidates and is not

formally published in written form.

In his complaint to the Wilf Student Court, Stark claimed that his candidacy was initially approved by the Canvassing Committee after he submitted his "Intent To Run" form. Referring to the COVID-19 health crisis, Stark argued that since "there are no students on campus this semester," there should be "no difference between me and the rest of the candidates in that aspect."

The health crisis also prompted candidates running for Wilf student government positions to gather signatures virtually, a feat many students found challenging. Stark told The Commentator that he gathered a total of 183 signatures. "These signatures are all from students who want to see me on the ballot for this election period," Stark wrote in his complaint to the Wilf Student Court. "Furthermore," he argued, "during last year's election for YSU President, Ariel Sacknovitz ran for President and was allowed to be on the ballot even though he was on a leave of absence and not on campus." Sacknovitz confirmed to Stark that he was on a leave of absence at the time of the 2019 election.

When asked why it took a week to notify

Stark of the termination of his candidacy, Shiner explained, "We were unaware that Stark was in the S. Daniel Abraham Program because he led us to believe otherwise." According to Shiner, Stark "wrote in his Intent To Run form that he's a current member of IBC [one of four Wilf morning programs], which mislead us from the beginning." Shiner told The Commentator that the Canvassing Committee was only made aware of Stark's status as a gap year student after Linda Stone, director of student events for the OSL, looked up Stark's student identification number. Stone could not be reached for comment.

In an email to Dolitsky, Senior Director of OSL Rabbi Josh Weisberg wrote, "The OSL does NOT decide if a candidate is eligible, we only provide information to the CC [Canvassing Committee] to help them make an informed decision based on the criteria set forth in the Wilf Campus Constitution." In his email, Weisberg admitted that he had offered his "personal opinion" to the Canvassing Committee agreeing with their decision to bar Stark from the election. "If in stating that I agreed with that assessment it

was perceived that the OSL's official position was as such," he wrote, "then I apologize for the miscommunication and will be more careful in the future." Concluding his email, Weisberg stated that "OSL does not have an official position on this matter."

"Voting is about this semester, but running is about next semester," remarked YSU President Zachary Greenberg (SSSB '21), referring to Shiner's claim that Stark is currently ineligible to vote and should, therefore, be ineligible to run. Greenberg is currently running unopposed for reelection. "In my opinion, it should be fine," Greenberg added. "Especially if he got the signatures, so it shows students want him."

"While I am not happy with the Court's decision to uphold the Canvassing Committee's termination of my candidacy, I respect the judicial process and the ruling given by the Court," Stark told The Commentator. "I am very appreciative of the members of the student body who took the time to fill out my signature form in order for me to attempt to make it to the ballot."

Revamped Virtual Post Pesach Program Includes Women

By ZACHARY GREENBERG

This year, Yeshiva University's Post Pesach Program, which began on April 20 and concludes on May 27, is completely online and, for the first time, open to women. These changes come as gap year *yeshivas* and seminaries that are partnered with the S. Daniel Abraham Israel Program will be utilizing online resources for the remainder of the year.

Previously, the Post Pesach Program was only available to men who completed their second year in Israel and wanted to gain exposure to YU by earning up to six credits on campus in the condensed, one-month program. This year, due to COVID-19, the program is open to both *shana aleph* and *shana bet* students, even those already receiving the regularly-allotted 32 credits for their complete gap year program. There are 132 registered men participating in the program, 54 more students than the previous

highest in 2017 and 71 more than last year.

Wilf students participating in the program can take a maximum of six credits from their choice of three Sy Syms School of Business

listing dozens of *shiurim* available for them to join. Additionally, one SSSB course and three Stern College for Women (SCW) courses are being offered to Beren students. Commenting on the small program

"It's definitely not going to be as exciting as actually starting college on campus, but it's still really good that everybody still has the option to get a head start with the Post Pesach Program."

away in Israel for their gap year are now taking classes, *shiurim* and lectures virtually at home. While *yeshivas* and seminaries have been offering these opportunities primarily for current students, many have also offered alumni to join in on these virtual lectures, hoping to provide alumni-oriented *shiurim* over Zoom.

"We are supporting our affiliate *yeshivas* and seminaries in Israel and have been working with them to migrate their courses online to allow students on the S. Daniel Abraham Israel program to finish their year of study to obtain their anticipated credits," stated Chad Austein, YU's chief enrollment management officer, regarding Israel credit for students currently enrolled in the gap year program. "In addition, we are developing supplemental instruction for students to take advantage of the many *shiurim* and programing available at YU in New York."

"It's definitely not going to be as exciting as actually starting college on campus, but it's still really good that everybody still has the option to get a head start with the Post Pesach Program."

Alex Paul (SSSB '23)

(SSSB) courses and four Yeshiva College (YC) courses. Additionally, Wilf students have the opportunity to join a virtual Beit Midrash program with different three *shiur* options taught by YU *rabbeim* for their morning program.

There are 18 women from seminaries including Midreshet Tehillah, Midreshet Lindenbaum, Midreshet Harova and Sha'alvim for Women enrolled in the program this year. Beren students in the program receive a weekly schedule

size, Naomi Fried (SCW '23), who attended the seminary Machon Raaya and is currently enrolled in the Post Pesach Program, said, "This is a huge advantage because with this class size we get to interact with the Professors a lot, give our opinion and ask questions much more than would usually be possible on Zoom."

Alex Paul (SSSB '23), who finished his second year at the *yeshiva* Aish Geshet and is joining the Post Pesach Program, commented,

"The beauty of being in *yeshiva* was the stress free environment surrounded by my Rebbeim and friends," shared Ari Rosenthal (YC '23), who switched from Yeshivat Har Etzion to the Post Pesach Program after his *yeshiva* announced it was going online. "Seeing that the learning in both *yeshiva* and YU would be online, I thought this was an amazing opportunity to get a head start on Yeshiva University credits."

Hundreds of students who were

University To Hike Tuition, Fees by Over \$1,500 for Next Year

By YITZCHAK CARROLL and SRULI FRUCHTER

Yeshiva University will be raising undergraduate student tuition and fees by \$1,575 for the 2020-21 academic year, The Commentator has learned. Next year's \$43,575 tuition cost and \$2,900 in miscellaneous undergraduate fees represent an aggregate increase of more than \$5,800 since the 2016-17 academic year.

This past year, the university hiked tuition by \$1,200 and fees by \$200. In the 2018-19 academic year, the university raised tuition and fees by \$1,500 compared to the 2017-2018 school year.

Compared to this past year, 2020-21 residence hall fees will increase for all Beren housing options and nearly all Wilf housing options. Rooming costs at the 35th Park Street Residence Hall will rise to \$12,000 — a \$500 markup — while students residing at other Beren residence facilities will be charged an additional \$250 compared to this year's rates.

Housing fees will also increase by \$250 for all Wilf Campus housing options, with the exception of two-occupancy dorms in the Muss Residence Hall as well as single-occupancy rooms in the Morgenstern and Ruben Residence Halls. A housing official referred inquiries regarding the housing price hikes to other university departments.

"YU has done its best to keep tuition and fee increases in line with national standards," said Chief Enrollment Management Officer Chad Austein. "Due to increased operating costs such as health insurance, maintenance of our facilities, and creation of new and innovative academic programs, among other rising costs, increases are necessary to ensure continuity of programs and services," he

added, noting that the university awards "competitive financial aid packages" to students.

In an email to the student body on Monday, May 4, President Berman announced that he would be taking a 20% pay cut through December, while some senior university officials would be taking voluntary 5-10% pay cuts through that period as well. Capital projects, travel and unspent budgeted expenses will be frozen in the interim, according to the email, which also touted furloughs for some university employees as a cost-saving measure. Additionally, the university secured federal aid from the Congressional relief package,

and launched an emergency scholarship campaign to mitigate the financial burden students and families are facing, which will likely impact tuition revenue.

A university spokesperson clarified the President's email, noting that some maintenance and hiring will continue. "We are reviewing all current projects and are only hiring for critical positions," the spokesperson explained to The Commentator in an email. "As we prepare to return to campus, planned work on elevators, classrooms and general maintenance are continuing."

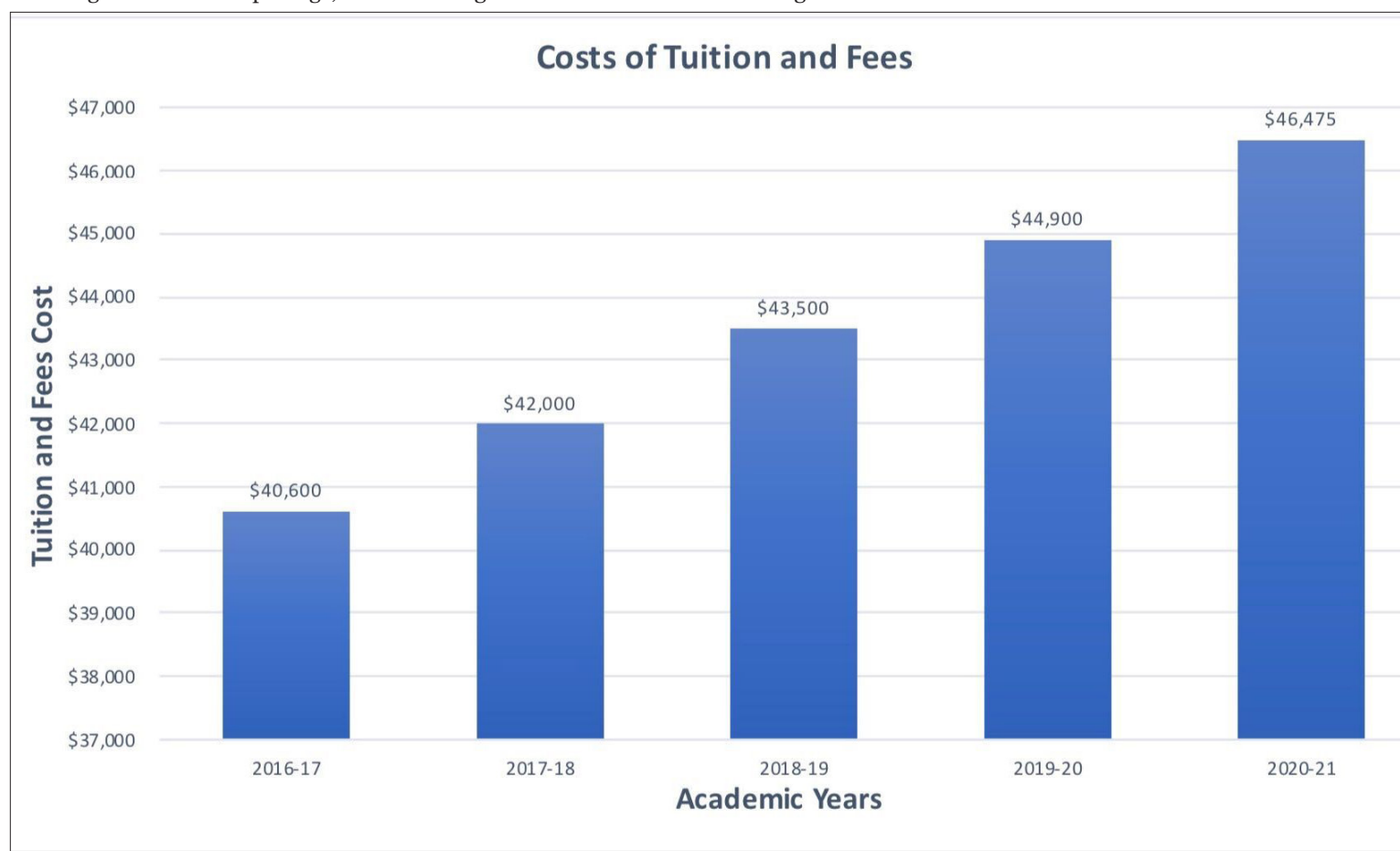
It is unclear whether in-person undergraduate classes will

resume on campus in the fall. YU's Wurzweiler School of Social Work already emailed students announcing that courses will be held online in the fall semester.

Some students felt that the price hikes are a byproduct of the COVID-19 pandemic. "If [the tuition raise] were a post-Corona decision, then I think it makes a lot of sense since [YU administrators] have to try and compensate for the amount of money they lost in order to keep the school running," said Avigail Winokur (SCW '22). "Looking at the new financial measures Rabbi Berman announced, it is quite clear that the university is doing a lot to make sure that

everyone remains as afloat as possible during this time. On the flip side, a lot of people are facing financial hardship, and the \$1,500 may really make a difference to those struggling financially."

However, other students saw the tuition increase as an added burden on top of the pandemic's financial effects. "The price increase doesn't seem very appropriate given the current COVID-19 situation," Scott Stimler (YC '21) said. "Who knows how many students and parents have tremendously suffered from mass employment cuts and income reductions."



Tuition rose by more than \$5,800 since the 2016-17 academic year.

News Briefs: Annual Yom Events Held Over Zoom

By SHLOMIT EBBIN

YU Hosts Yom HaShoah Virtual Commemoration

Over 400 people tuned in live on April 20 at 8:15 p.m. for YU's Yom HaShoah Virtual Commemoration in memory of the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust at the hands of Nazi Germany. The program was organized by the OSL and YU's student-run Student Holocaust Education Movement (SHEM).

Co-President of SHEM Isaac Goor (SSSB '22) introduced the program, which was followed by the anthems of the United States and Israel sung by SHEM member Moshe Stuart (YC '21). Rabbi Dr. Jacob J. Schacter, University Professor of Jewish History and Jewish Thought and Senior Scholar at the Center for the Jewish Future, began by sharing stories of his late father, Rabbi Herschel Schacter, an army chaplain and one of the liberators of Buchenwald concentration camp; his father was the first American Jewish chaplain to enter into the concentration camps as a soldier on April 11, 1945.

Afterward, SHEM member Sophie Gordon (SCW '22) introduced Dr. Moshe Avital, a well-known author and speaker on

the Holocaust. A "Names, Not Numbers" video was shown in which Dr. Avital tells the story of his life before the war in Czechoslovakia, during the war in Palestine after the war. "Dr. Moshe Avital is a true inspiration to all," said Gordon in her introduction. "His passion for Israel, Jewish education, and devotion to family and faith has accompanied him throughout his life."

Following a speech by President Berman about the importance of continuing the values of those who perished, a video was shown of YU students from various parts of the world lighting candles in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. The program concluded with words from Co-President of SHEM Tania Bohbot (SCW '21), read by Gordon.

"I was very moved by this year's Yom Hashoah program," shared President Berman. "With all of the lives that have been lost during this pandemic, including many from the generation who lived through the Holocaust, there was something about this year's ceremony which was particularly meaningful."

"It was a beautifully run program commemorating the 75th Yom Hashoah," reflected Leeba Sullivan (SCW '22), a student who

attended the program. "Although these were not the circumstances we all expected the program to be done in, it was done flawlessly and still brought so much meaning to the night."

President Berman added, "I am deeply thankful to our students for

evening of April 28 and drew approximately 900 student viewers via Zoom and YouTube live stream. The YOMS Student Committee, a group of students appointed by student council leaders to coordinate Yom HaZikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut programming, to-

President of Clubs Elka Weisenberg (SCW '20) delivered opening remarks, followed by IDF soldiers Yehuda Benhamu (YC '16) and Lara Vosburgh (SCW '20). The evening continued with a candle lighting ceremony and words from various *rabbeim*.

"In the end, online programs did a great job in filling in for what we could not do in person. I really enjoyed every part of the Zoom programs and appreciate all the hard work that the organizers put into planning it all."

— Shira Pahmer (SCW '22)

organizing this event which reflects the perseverance, continuity and strength of our people."

A recording of the program was posted on YU's Facebook page.

Yom HaZikaron Commemoration Held Over Zoom

Yom HaZikaron commemorations began on April 26, the Sunday before Yom HaZikaron, at 2 p.m. with over 30 students hearing from Israeli tour guide Eytan Rund about Israel's holy sites. This preceded the main event of Yom HaZikaron, the Tekes Ma'avar, which took place virtually on the

together with the Office of Student Life (OSL), planned and organized the programming in honor of Yom HaZikaron.


At his event, Rund related the history from the battles of the Jewish Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem during the wars of 1948 and 1967. "It was nice to hear from Eytan again after having him as my tour guide in seminary last year," shared Elisheva Grayson (SCW '22). "He was very informative and engaging, and he's also so funny."

The Tekes Ma'avar began with Yom HaZikaron commemorations at 8 p.m., which were followed by Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations an hour later. Stern College for Women Student Council Vice

Rachel Silvera (SCW '20), a student who attended the programming, said, "The sheer number of people in attendance, combined with the fact that people joined no matter the time of day or night it may have been in their physical location, demonstrates both the students' and faculty's sincere commitment and dedication not only to the YU community, but to the greater community of Am Yisrael and Medinat Yisrael."

YOMS committee member Eli Seidman (SSSB '22) introduced the candle lighting ceremony, which

Continued on Page 7




Yeshiva University Presents

Annual Yom Hashoah Commemoration

Monday, April 20th, 2020
Virtual Program Starts at 8:15 PM

Sign Up To Receive ZOOM Meeting Information
Using the QR Code Below



YESHIVA UNIVERSITY PRESENTS:

YOM HAZIKARON AND YOM HA'ATZMAUT TEKES MA'AVAR

Tuesday, April 28th, 2020, 8:15pm

SIYUM, TEKES, AND TEFILAT CHAGIGIT. FOLLOWED BY A LIVE CHAGIGA WITH EITAN KATZ!




Scan Code to sign up

YOMS7

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

Undergraduate Student Government Election Results

By COMMENTATOR STAFF

On Thursday, May 7, the undergraduate student body voted in the Spring 2020 student government elections. The night of the elections, the Wilf Canvassing Committee and the Beren Election Committee, which oversee student government elections, shared the results of the elections with The Commentator.

In total, 745 out of 1196 eligible Wilf Campus students voted, or 62.3%. Turnout this year was up 5.6% from 56.7% in the Spring 2019 elections and up 3.5% from 58.8% in the Spring 2018 elections. Neither voter turnout information nor a breakdown of election results are released for the Beren elections.

The following are the results of the elections, with per-candidate vote totals following the results for the Wilf Campus elections:

Wilf Campus

SOY President: Zachary Lent
SOY Vice President: Zev Jarashow
SOY PR Secretary: Zachary Israeli
SOY MYP Representative: Yoni Laub
SOY BMP Representative: Jonathan Malek
SOY IBC Representative: Baruch Lerman

SOY JSS Representative: Not elected, as no candidates appeared on the ballot, and no write-in candidate received the minimum 20 votes necessary to win.

SSSBSC President: Adam Baron
SSSBSC Vice President: Zach Tuchman
SSSBSC Secretary/Treasurer: Sammy Lekowsky

YCSA President: Ari Lowy
YCSA Vice President: Jonah Chill
YCSA Secretary/Treasurer: David Lifschitz

YSU President: Zachary Greenberg
YSU Vice President of Class Affairs: Josh Weinstein
YSU Vice President of Clubs: Jared Benjamin
YSU Senior Class Representative: Benjy Halpern
YSU Junior Class Representative: Elazar Abrahams

Six proposed amendments to the Wilf Student Government Constitution appeared on the ballot, and four of the amendments garnered the three-fifths majority necessary for ratification. The following amendments were passed:

Amendment #1 (Revised, Restructured and Updated Constitution)

Amendment #2 (Katz School Representation)
Amendment #3 (Makor Representation)
Amendment #4 (Transparency of GA Funds)

Breakdown of Wilf Campus Results

The Canvassing Committee released the breakdown of each race, which is summarized below. In races in which candidates officially appeared on the ballot, all of the candidates and their vote tallies are listed below; for positions where the victor was a write-in candidate, only the winning candidate is listed:

SOY President

Akiva Poppers (write-in) - 179
Zachary Lent (write-in) - 178

Regarding the election for SOY president, the Canvassing Committee released the following statement to The Commentator explaining Akiva Poppers' ineligibility for the position:

"There are certain rules in the Wilf Campus constitution regarding the required class standing of the elected SOY President. When we heard about Akiva Poppers' campaign, the Canvassing Committee spent a good amount of time looking into the particulars of the constitution, and after much discussion, we decided that Akiva Poppers' class standing would very likely make him constitutionally ineligible to win the SOY Presidency. We informed Poppers of this decision and, he, nonetheless, continued his campaign. Should he receive a majority of write-in votes, the Canvassing Committee will name the candidate with the next highest number of votes as SOY President."

SOY Vice President
Zev Jarashow (write-in) - 136
Shmuel Adler (write-in) - 92
SOY PR Secretary
Justin Goldman (write-in) - 32
Zachary Israeli (write-in) - 32

After a tie vote in the election, 20 members of the four current Wilf student councils voted 12-8 to award the seat to Zachary Israeli.

SOY MYP Representative
Yoni Laub - 307
SOY SBMP Representative
Jonathon Malek - 119
SOY IBC Representative
Baruch Lerman - 99
SOY JSS Representative

No candidates appeared on the ballot, and no write-in candidate received the minimum 20 votes necessary to win.

SSSBSC President
Adam Baron - 146
Dovie Solomon - 104
Ely Bloch - 76
SSSBSC Vice President
Zach Tuchman - 255
SSSBSC Secretary/Treasurer
Sammy Lekowsky - 159
Yaakov Schreier - 137

YCSA President
Ari Lowy - 209
Albert Dweck (write-in) - 39
Josh Leichter (write-in) - 21
YCSA Vice President
Jonah Chill - 250
YCSA Secretary/Treasurer
David Lifschitz - 140
Daniel Melool - 116

YSU President
Zachary Greenberg - 578
YSU Vice President of Class Affairs
Josh Weinstein - 554
YSU Vice President of Clubs

Jared Benjamin - 573
YSU Senior Class Representative
Benjy Halpern - 263
YSU Junior Class Representative
Elazar Abrahams - 174

Amendments to Wilf Constitution

Four of the amendments on the ballot received the required three-fifths majority, or 60%, necessary for ratification.

Amendment #1 (Revised, Restructured and Updated Constitution)

PASSED (69.03% voted yes)
Yes - 428
No - 192

Amendment #2 (Katz School Representation)

PASSED (72.19% voted yes)
Yes - 431
No - 166

Amendment #3 (Makor Representation)

PASSED (78.74% voted yes)
Yes - 474
No - 128

Amendment #4 (Transparency of GA Funds)

PASSED (77.70% voted yes)
Yes - 467
No - 134

Amendment #5 (GA Club-Voting Deadline)

NOT PASSED (50.33% voted yes)
Yes - 306
No - 302

Amendment #6 (Anti-Discrimination Policy)

NOT PASSED (35.84% voted yes)
Yes - 238
No - 426

Beren Campus

SCWSC President: Shira Schneider
SCWSC Vice President of Academic Affairs: Shoshana Wallach

SCWSC Vice President of Clubs: Talia Leitner
SCWSC Vice President of Public Relations: Tamar Guterson

SCWSC Vice President of Programming: Danielle Pasternak

SYMSSC President: Alex Brody
SYMSSC Vice President of Clubs: Shaiel Soleimani
SYMSSC Vice President of Public Relations: Abigail Lerman

TAC President: Nina Siegel
TAC Vice President of Shabbat: Eliana Feifel
TAC Vice President of Speakers: Rivka Barnett
TAC Vice President of Public Relations: Michal Herman
TAC Vice President of Chessed: Chaivy Bodek

Senior Class President: Leah Joshowitz
Senior Class Vice President: Nechama Levie

Junior Class President: Hadas Hirt
Junior Class Vice President: Rina Melincoff

Sophomore Class President: Shaina Matveev

NEWS BRIEFS, continued from Page 6

was followed by the *kel maleh* prayer sung by Gedalia Penner (YC '17), musical director for the Y-Studs A Cappella group.

Wrapping up the program, Senior Mashgiach Ruchani Rabbi Yosef Blau recited the *misheberach* for the fallen IDF soldiers, which was followed by a prerecorded message from Rabbi Dr. Leonard Matanky, Dean of Ida Crown Jewish Academy and co-President of the Religious Zionists of America. Finally, Rabbi Meir Goldwicht, Visiting Israeli Rosh Yeshiva and Visiting Professor of Jewish History at YU, delivered a closing message to students.

A recording of the *Tekes Ma'avar* was posted on YouTube.

Yom Ha'atzmaut Zoom Celebration

Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations began in the second part of the *Tekes Ma'avar*, but programming continued the following day on Wednesday, April 29. The YOMS Committee organized a Yom Iyun and student activities including *shiurim* and games throughout the day.

At the conclusion of the *Tekes Ma'avar's* Yom HaZikaron segment, the Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations began with a communal *siyum*, a Tefilah Chagigat and a live concert with Eitan Katz. The next day, Yom Iyun *shiurim* began at 11 a.m. and ended at 5:15 p.m. Student activities ran throughout the afternoon.

At the *Tekes*, President Ari Berman introduced the *siyum* on all of Tanach,

Mishna and Shas Bavli by reciting the *tefilat shalom hamedinah*. "This siyum ties together our core values of Torah, Talmud Torah, *chessed*, and *tzionut*, and Zionism," remarked President Berman. RIETS Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Herschel Schachter then delivered the *siyum*.

The *Tekes* continued with President of Y-Studs Ari Mandelbaum (SSSB '20) singing *Hatikvah* and reciting *Tefilat Chagigat*, followed by a shofar blowing performed by CJ Glicksman (YC '20). A 45-minute live *chagigah* featuring Eitan Katz concluded the program.

The Yom Iyun featured Israel-focused *shiurim* by Beren Campus Rabbi and Rebbetzin Jacob Bernstein and Penina Bernstein, as well as by other rabbis from outside of YU. In addition to the Yom Iyun,

student activities hosted over Zoom included interactive games and a cooking tutorial with Kosher cookbook author and personal chef Naomi Nachman.

"I was pretty disappointed when I realized that we wouldn't be able to have the Yom HaZikaron and Yom Haatzmaut programs in person because I know how meaningful they always are," commented Shira Pahmer (SCW '22). "In the end, the online programs did a great job in filling in for what we could not do in person. I really enjoyed every part of the Zoom programs and appreciate all the hard work that the organizers put into planning it all."

FROM THE COMMIE ARCHIVES

Editor's Note: Traditionally, at the end of each volume, the outgoing editor-in-chief of The Commentator writes a retrospective piece, usually titled "In Retrospect." Published here, in the final issue of Vol. 85, are two such pieces that analyze the overall role of The Commentator at Yeshiva University and the necessity of a free press.

From the Archives (May 20, 1935; Volume 1 Issue 5) — Looking Backward

By MOSES I. FEUERSTEIN
and THE COMMENTATOR
GOVERNING BOARD OF
1935

As this issue goes to press, the first term of the life of The Commentator draws to a close. All in all, it has been a short but colorful one as evidenced by the interest and comment that greeted each issue. For in the short period of its existence it has revealed to the student body the possibility of accomplishments which only the most hopeless optimists had dared to seriously consider till now.

The very appearance of The Commentator at the scheduled bi-weekly intervals was already a record breaking phenomenon in the history of the College and student

activities. That a tradition so deeply rooted in the atmosphere of Yeshiva could be violated by an immature and struggling young newspaper was merely another omen that even greater surprises were yet in

will probably be heaved by the Administration. Theirs has truly been a trying position. To witness after years of rugged individualism in institutional affairs the development in one year of an articulate

The fact that students had many ideas to suggest was always realized by the authorities. But the sudden evolution from rank suggestion to placing the issue in the open where the problem could no longer be

be a definite liability in treating with the exigencies of the present, for the more an issue was drowned in verbiage, the more the fundamental points were brought into direct relief.

Calling faculty meetings to cope with this new and insidious force known as The Commentator proved to no avail, for there could be only one solution — facing the problem squarely.

If The Commentator has succeeded in initiating this new and only logical method, its mission has been fulfilled not only to the students but to the Administration as well. The cases of delirium tremens that visited the authorities before each issue as rumors of the forthcoming "fiery" editorials flew thick and fast "will not have been in vain."

"As the report goes out that this issue will be the last for the semester, the greatest sigh of relief will probably be heaved by the Administration. Theirs has truly been a trying position."

Moses I. Feuerstein and The Commentator Governing Board of 1935

store for the institution. Needless to say, the predictions have long since been realized, as even the most pessimistic will testify.

As the report goes out that this issue will be the last for the semester, the greatest sigh of relief

student body is no very soothing tonic, any college authorities will testify. Especially is this true when a student body has been as meek and complacent for such a period of years as in Yeshiva and Yeshiva College.

evaded, climaxed the fears of the Administration. The old methods of allowing the requests to die from old age or circumlocution suddenly became as out-moded as the horse in the Machine Age. In fact, the solution of the past turned out to

PAGE TWO

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assumes full responsibility for all statements con-
tained in the editorial columns of this newspaper.
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IN THE EDITOR'S MAIL BOX

Dear Sir:
In the last few issues of The Commentator, much dust was raised about the new business school and all in all the Yeshiva Administration was critically censured for failing to measure up to its expectations. Reluctant to consider the practical value of their manifold arguments, not deigning to apprehend the present "un"-Yeshiva attitude of the administration as something indispensable, a mighty condemnation was thrust from all sides.
Now, allow me to turn the tables for a moment. Viewing our scholastic year retrospectively, at this pertinent moment, we recollect that two cardinal "planks" in Mr. P. W. W. Petegorsky's platform, at election time, were: the "Book Exchange" to facilitate the encumbrance of old books and the securing of new books, and eminent men to lecture for the student body. The Presi-

WE SEEM
By ASHER I. HILDESHEIM

That there is a unique kind of brand of among Yeshiva-ites can be denied. We seem to see something which renders classmates "different" polloi one meets on the street is often tempted to be different, "Why is this from all other fellows?" into an investigation which is subject for among the most eminent and psychologists.

A Scientific A
It is the contention of celebrated attribute o

The Commentator archives

THE COMMENTATOR

From the Archives (May 18, 1953; Volume 18 Issue 11) — In Retrospect

By IRWIN WITTY

There is an odd sensation that comes with any discovery of change. Many have tried to capture this intangible, almost inarticulate, feeling that overcomes anyone who finds himself jolted from a *status quo* of any sort. It is an almost lulling effect that the peace and serenity of a position, once secured, brings with it.

The realization that this was to be my last issue as editor of "Commie" came as something of the same nature. It was a job to which I had come to grow accustomed, and one which, with every passing

day, became more a part of me. It was not motivated by sheer altruism, but neither was it motivated by self-grandeur. It was, I fear, more of that serenity that unchallenged position generates.

But the jolt has brought me to reflect. I am faced with the task of "passing on the reign." I hope I am not treading upon the maudlin when I say that it is an odd — I really want to use the word sad — feeling. Granted there is a certain joy to know that now you can "take things easy." But before that can be done, there is yet another matter to be taken up. I realize that it is my duty to charge the incoming editor with what has been called "Commie tradition." And I must confess — it

is not an easy task.

The Commentator was founded in the firm belief that freedom of the press is an inalienable right of the student. "The People of the Book" inspired that freedom, and with it the implicit feeling that everyone has a right to be heard. But, as is so often the case where one interest group can impose its wishes and decisions upon another by dint of uninspired authority or by intimidation and threat, the fear of reprisal throttles us; and the baser inclination of man, to suppress and to cringe in the face of forthrightness, commits us not alone to silence, but to the effacing of our individuality. To subject oneself to authority in the face of rational

and level-headed understanding of our actions, is one thing; to cower and assent without reason is blindness, cowardice and an undermining of man's own right to free expression.

In the person of a newspaper, these ideas are embodied. It is my belief that these were the conscious, if unexpressed, motivations of the framers of the axiom of a free and independent press. It is my belief, as well, that these ideas motivated those students who first labored over the early pages of "Commie."

The past year has had its times when these axioms were challenged by the agnostics of freedom. I fear that their campaign may have succeeded long before I could take up

my blue pencil. But when the situation arose where we could clearly stand up to reiterate these truths, we were ready and dedicated in fulfilling our task.

I leave to Sheldon Rudoff and his staff a Commentator entering upon its nineteenth year of publication — and simultaneously its third year under an advisorship. The step from Alumni Advisor, to faculty supervision and eventually administration censorship can be spanned in time. We must forever remain vigilant that "advice" be confined to counsel.

Shelley, it is to the continuation of this principle that I ask you to remain dedicated.

The Ghosts Have Become Alive: Yeshiva University and the Future of Religiously Affiliated Higher Education in America

By MICHAEL J. BROYDE

Forward

Thank you, dear reader, for letting me share my thoughts on the legal status dilemmas that Yeshiva University faces concerning its charter as a secular institution during these complex and unusual times. I know that we are in the middle of a pandemic and there are much more important short-term concerns — numerous essential worries for Yeshiva and for us all — but I am confident that this pandemic crisis shall pass. “The sun will come out tomorrow” seems clear and when the sun shines again (in just a few short weeks, we all hope and pray) the same important problems brewing for many months about YU’s legal status will return to the forefront, maybe even with greater speed and urgency, having been put on hold for some time. Yeshiva will need to be prepared for that moment, and I publish this piece now — written many months ago — in that spirit. Finally, in the name of full disclosure, I reveal my biases here: I am not some neutral academic writing on some random “law and religion topic” of professional interest. I am a loyal YU alumnus — having graduated from MTA, YC, and RIETS (twice) — and a deep supporter of Yeshiva and its Modern Orthodox vision. One of my children is a fourth-generation alumnus and I hope to have grandchildren who are fifth-generation graduates in many years to come.

The current legal environment seems to me to challenge or even threaten the future, and I share my thoughts in the hopes that we can find the best way forward for YU.

Introduction

During the Spring of 1970, the deeply rational Rabbi Dr. Joseph B. Soloveitchik *zt”l* spoke of ghosts. At the triennial ordination ceremony at Yeshiva University, the Rav — the leading Talmudic authority in America at the time, scion of a multi-generational rabbinic dynasty, and the person who signed the ordination certificates soon to be given — warned the president of Yeshiva, Rabbi Dr. Samuel Belkin (his friend and co-signer on the ordination certificates), not to change the legal charter of Yeshiva University from a religious institution to a secular one. Rabbi Soloveitchik — ever a visual speaker — claimed that he “saw ghosts.” Harvard, Yale and Princeton “all began as divinity schools,” he warned, “and Yeshiva, Heaven forbid, could also go the way of all these great and early citadels of American higher education”

and become a secular institution, having lost its moorings as a religious institution.¹

So far, Rabbi Soloveitchik (d. 1993) has not been correct in his prediction of the future. For 50 years, Yeshiva managed to function as a religious undergraduate college with a dual curriculum of Jewish studies and secular studies, just like the model Rabbi Dr. Belkin had proposed: a secular college affiliated with a religious seminary, with the deep religious and ethical vision flowing from the seminary to the university. While only the seminary was formally exempt from the non-discrimination rules, both the college and the seminary functioned as if they were one — for example, almost all the students were traditional Orthodox Jews, an apparent violation of Title VII as well as many other statutes that govern secular institutions.

Yeshiva University avoided the many complexities in its undergraduate institutions that essentially serve a religious community² by employing a number of strategies (some of which I will outline below). Such cannot be said with regard to the graduate schools of Yeshiva University, which are (or were, in the case of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, formerly Yeshiva’s medical school) essentially secular in their student body and academic orientation and never had either a critical mass of traditional Jewish students or a commitment to any significant study of Jewish law or text or values.³ Other than Revel, all of Yeshiva’s graduate schools are indisputably secular in their orientation. They allow social, religious and student affinity clubs and organizations that no Orthodox Jewish organization would allow, and they have students with no connection to Judaism but who attend merely because of the lofty academic quality of the institution. When Yeshiva University sought to restrict the right to housing for married students at Einstein and not allow students in a same-sex relationship to have housing for the student and their partner, the New York Courts ruled that Yeshiva would be in violation of the New York City ordinances⁴ that legally mandated that housing be given to such students.⁵ With some squealing and moaning, handwringing and kvetching, Yeshiva complied with the mandate of the court and allowed housing in the Einstein dorms for same-sex couples who were not married.⁶

The Present

Others have raised the concern in the years since the Rav did, since it was growing progressively harder to be both secularly chartered and religiously affiliated. As Rabbi

Chaim Dov Keller, a prominent rabbi and an alumnus wrote in 1995 in a public letter to the president of Yeshiva at that time, Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm: “Are your undergraduate colleges, Yeshiva College and Stern College for Women, not under the same nondenominational charter? Sooner or later you will have to face the problem of gay students in these schools. How will you avoid the problem there? Whatever means you are presently using will soon become obsolete, if you are true to your duty as the head of a non-denominational institution to ‘conform to the secular law.’”⁷ I myself wrote to Rabbi Lamm⁸ *Shlita* about this in 2002 at some length as did many others.

Instead, beset by financial problems after the recession, Yeshiva continued to define itself as a secular institution as a matter of law, mostly to allow them to remain eligible for a great variety of financial assistance provided by the state and national government. When tensions arose (as they occasionally did), they were addressed in a discrete way without publicity or legal challenge. We all knew that this situation was both somewhat disingenuous and legally tenuous, since Yeshiva was not secular like NYU or Columbia or even Emory — its legal status did not reflect its seemingly discriminatory practices in admission or the conduct of its undergraduate colleges.

So how did Yeshiva’s undergraduate colleges manage to avoid the kinds of challenges its graduate divisions confronted? To answer this question, four historical realities are worth noting.

First, LGBTQ rights were less clearly established until recently — no one was exactly certain how they would interact with religious institutions or even secular institutions with a religious history. At the beginning of the LGBTQ movement, there was little stomach for that fight and much bigger — and clearly secular — fish to fry.⁹ That era is over; the bigger fish are fried, and now the little fish are being primed for the fryer.

Second, Yeshiva University undergraduate colleges — Yeshiva College, Stern College and the Sy Syms School of Business — employed tight admission standards that selected only students who were deeply interested in an Orthodox life and lifestyle in a gender-separated institution. With a robust dual curriculum of morning Talmud study and required Bible, Hebrew and Jewish history coursework in its colleges, few applied who did not fit in. Furthermore, there was an admissions process that informally weeded out students who were a bad fit for

the religious mission of the undergraduate colleges. Yeshiva managed to discriminate without engaging in overtly discriminatory practices.

Third, until recently, the Orthodox community that attended YU treated the LGBTQ community as far outside its boundaries. The students who were LGBTQ stayed deeply in the closet, either due to their own choice or due to communal pressure (or both). This era too is over. Many in the Modern Orthodox community are comfortable with the political agenda of the LGBTQ community’s call banning discrimination based on sexual orientation and the extension of Title VII to prohibit such (I am, as I note here¹⁰) while exempting religious institutions from Title VII obligations. Furthermore, there is much more tolerance and sympathy regarding the LGBTQ movement within the Orthodox community now.

Fourth, Yeshiva College has expanded its admission base so that it has admitted many more students who are less committed to a complete and full Orthodox life than in other eras.¹¹ The number of students who are not Sabbath observant has gone up, and the number of male students who do not wear the customary head covering has increased as well. The number of hours of Jewish studies required per student has gone down, and there is a greater variety of programs for both men and women that are not classical text study. Furthermore, there are many more programs that compete with Yeshiva for classically yeshiva-trained students, decreasing the number of those who end up going to YU. These trends have brought to YU a higher percentage of students who are not traditionally “Orthodox.”

Of course, lurking in the background of all of this is the secular truth: the diverse pluralistic society that America has become has little tolerance for discrimination based on sexual orientation, and New York City’s Commission on Human Rights has flatly prohibited such discrimination for secular educational institutions.

The Reality

All of these trends culminated in a student’s recent request to form a “gay-straight” alliance club at YU, as well as the filing of a civil rights complaint against Yeshiva with the City of New York Commission on Human

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¹ For more on this, see Rabbi Zevulun Charlop, “The Rav and Dr. Belkin,” in *Mentor of Generations: Reflections on Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik*, ed. Zev Eleff (Jersey City: Ktav, 2008), 85 and Andrew Geller, “Rav Responds to Secularization; Sympathizes with Student Rally,” *The Commentator* 35, no. 13 (April 15, 1970). For a thoughtful discussion of this in the context of the times, see Jeffrey S. Gurock, “The Men and Women of Yeshiva” (Columbia University Press, 1988) at pages 236-245. In the course of writing this article, Yosef Lemel of The Commentator shared with me that *The [Stern College] Observer* published what seems to be close to a transcription of Rabbi Soloveitchik’s remarks on April 15, 1970 in an article entitled “Rav Soloveitchik Speaks Out on YU Crisis” (This article is found in volume 12, issue 12 of *The Observer*, dated Wednesday, April 15, 1970).

² I hesitate to compare the approach YU has taken to this topic with many Christian universities nationwide, as both New York State and New York City law and funding play an important role here. It is worth noting that St. John’s University and Fordham University are both still religious corporations, as Yeshiva was up until 1970. Indeed, one is hard-pressed to find a Catholic institution that adopted the legally secular path chosen by Yeshiva. This could also be explained by the unique difficulties of running a medical school, a dilemma that is no longer part of the YU calculus.

³ Rather, the graduate schools merely accommodated traditional Jewish practice by providing kosher food and scheduling class around the vacation days of both the Jewish and the secular holidays. For more on this, and Rabbi Soloveitchik’s observations about why this is proper, see the remarks of Rabbi Soloveitchik entitled “On the Creation of Yeshiva University’s Albert Einstein College of Medicine found at Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, “Community, Covenant and Commitment: Selected Letters and Communications” pages 85-92 (Nathaniel Helfgot, editor) (Ktav, 2005).

⁴ Basically, secular institutions in New York City could not discriminate against same-sex unmarried couples in 2000 based on the combination of three laws: (1) NY Roommate Law (Real Property Law, section 235(f)); (2) New York City Human Rights Law sections 296(2-a), 296(4) and 296(5); (3) New York City Administrative Code 8-197(5). The law has changed slightly since the legalization of same sex marriage, but the differences are not important in this context.

⁵ *Levin v. Yeshiva University* 96 N.Y.2d 484 (NY Ct of Appeals 2001). (In New York, the Court of Appeals is the highest court in the State.) For a popular recounting of the win by the students, see “Yeshiva Lesbians Win Ok To Sue Over Dorms” NY Post July 3, 2001 at <https://nypost.com/2001/07/03/yeshiva-lesbians-win-ok-to-sue-over-dorms/>

⁶ See Adam Dickter “Yeshiva University Changes Housing Policy: Medical School To Allow Same-Sex Couples To Share Housing” (August 16, 2002) in *Voices of New York* at https://voicesofny.org/2002/08/nycma-voices-31-news-news_2/.

⁷ See Rabbi Chaim Dov Keller, “A Letter That Should Never Have Been Published” *The Jewish Observer* pages 31-32 (Summer 1995) also found at <https://agudah.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/J01995-V28-N05.pdf>.

⁸ May the One Above comfort Rabbi Lamm and his family for the recent sad loss of his wife Mindella as well as grant Rabbi Lamm himself a full and complete recovery.

⁹ It could be that the reason for this was even more profound. There might have been an implicit understanding that religious institutions could be officially nonsectarian and still impose religious values indirectly, and it was also in the interest of the city and state to host such institutions. The consensus perhaps has changed in regard to LGBTQ issues and religiously affiliated but legally secular institutions.

¹⁰ See Michael J. Broyde, “The Equality Act Is Good For The Jews” *The Jewish Press*, 3 July 2019 at <https://www.jewishpress.com/indepth/opinions/>

point-counterpoint-2/2019/07/03/

¹¹ See for example “How Bare Heads Are More Than Just Bare Heads, and Why It Matters for YU” which notes “Indeed, Yeshiva University accepts students spanning a wide range of religious commitment and does not enforce any religious observance on its students. It is an open institution that welcomes non-religious students who want to connect to and learn from Judaism in their own way, allowing everyone to feel comfortable in his own level of observance.” at <https://yucommentator.org/2018/10/bare-heads-just-bare-heads-matters-yu/> and <https://yucommentator.org/2018/10/response-ask-bareheaded-students-wear-kippot/>. This is a far cry from the historical policies and social practices of many other eras of YU.

¹² See the Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Act (SONDA) which is New York law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation in employment, housing, public accommodations, education, credit, and the exercise of civil rights. Let me add that this complaint and the general focus on Yeshiva in the LGBTQ world is coordinated and not coincidental, as is noted in many places. This means that these matters will not go away.

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Rights. This complaint notes a violation of the New York City Human Right Law, which certainly on its face applies to secularly chartered Yeshiva.¹²

The New York Jewish Week reported simply: “The move intensifies a long-simmering battle for gay recognition at Modern Orthodoxy’s flagship institution . . . The complaint, filed last week, states that YU has ‘refused to allow an official LGBTQ student group’ over the course of many years, and has ‘suppressed LGBTQ-themed events.’ The complaint also stated that a senior vice president at the university ‘tried to pressure student council leaders to reject’ the club’s second bid for approval in two consecutive years . . . **Though it is easy to ‘feel like the underdogs,’ Alberstone said, he is confident that the grassroots student club has the upper hand. ‘YU is a non-sectarian institution, with no legal basis for discriminating against LGBTQ students.’**”¹³ (emphasis added)

What should Yeshiva University do in this situation? Yeshiva simply cannot view same-sex relations as consistent with Jewish law as it understands it,¹⁴ and yet the New York City law directly denies secular institutions the right to engage in the religiously driven LGBTQ discrimination.

Possible Responses by Yeshiva

In response to this dilemma, Yeshiva University has four reasonable options and one unreasonable option, as I will describe below.

First, it can allow such clubs to open and permit students to conduct themselves in a manner not consistent with Jewish law. This approach is not only consistent with their secular charter but also legally the easiest to do. This was the action that Rabbi Soloveitchik feared the most when he spoke 50 years ago.¹⁵ It would mean the abandonment of the historical mission of Yeshiva University — to meld the best of Western culture with traditional Jewish law and run an educational institution that was consistent with both the vision of Harvard and Volozhin.¹⁶

Second, it can seek to continue its current policy of being nominally secular while acting functionally like an Orthodox Jewish institution. It can double down on its practice of adopting *pro forma* secular policies that comply with the law’s calls for neutrality while functionally reinforcing YU’s religious mission. For example, it could prohibit all student clubs that are not academic in nature

and not under the aegis of an academic department in order to prevent the opening of a “gay-straight alliance” club. It could tighten its enrollment policies to reduce the likelihood of students being interested in these clubs, and it could raise the threshold of student signatures needed to form a social club to such a high number so as to reduce the likelihood of such a club being able to be formed consistent with the neutral secular rules as they exist now. Religious student clubs could be re-chartered under RIETS, the religious seminary generally exempt from these laws. The advantages of this approach are three-fold. It is a tried and true method that YU has employed before, and all of its administrators are familiar with it. It continues to allow access to the pools of money provided to secularly chartered institutions. Finally, it seems at first glance to be ideologically more consistent with the basic message of a yeshiva that is a university, which is that one can be both. One can be both an Orthodox Jew and a secular person.

If Yeshiva does not act, it will have its religious agenda determined by a secular court and not by its own religious sensibilities.

The third approach is to recharter the undergraduate colleges or even the whole university as a religious institution and seek shelter from the Human Rights Laws of New York City in that way, which explicitly do not apply to religious institutions.¹⁷ The advantages of this approach are clear: they allow a direct and unmanipulated assertion of the values of Yeshiva University untampered by the New York Human Rights Law. The law school and other secular divisions could remain with their secular charter, but any divisions that are intended to serve Orthodox Jews will clearly be defined as religious. The disadvantages are also clear: as a religious institution, Yeshiva will lose access to a few pots of money only granted to secular institutions — the exact reason Rabbi Dr. Belkin sought a secular charter to begin with.

Let me add that it is clear that this chartering as a religious institution is not an “all or nothing activity”; rather, this needs to be done with a great deal of care so as to accomplish two central goals. First, leave those parts of Yeshiva that are secular as secular. Nothing is gained by chartering the law school (for example) as religious. Division by division, Yeshiva needs to examine itself to honestly determine which portions have central religious values and which merely adhere to the Jewish holiday calendar and

provide kosher food. Only the former should have a religious charter. Second, enough of the university needs to be left secular to allow for robust access to those benefits uniquely provided to secular programs. A close look at what the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York calls the “Touro College and University System” reveals that Touro has a complex corporate structure with many distinctly different corporate statuses and corporate forms in order to address these issues well.¹⁸ Countless “religious institutions” have learned to do this, as anyone can see from the diverse institutional bond-issuing practices of the New York Dormitory Authority.

The fourth approach is to fight: Yeshiva can argue for an extension of the basic holding of *Hobby-Lobby* and argue that religiously influenced secular institutions should be granted exceptions from secular laws that are contradictory to their religious traditions, just as individuals are granted such exemptions.¹⁹ In its weak form, it would argue that

resistance to oppressive laws with a great deal of success. New York State could imprison Yeshiva’s president for contempt of court, but it would create a “prisoner of conscience” in that act. The British lost India to a resistance movement that never fired a shot — religious sacrifice is a compelling narrative.²¹

Related to this approach (but very different) is another option: YU can close its doors in a grand way, sell its New York City assets, and move to a more sympathetic jurisdiction like Israel or New Jersey or Utah. In this approach, it would announce to the community that the ideas and ideals that Yeshiva University was crafted around — that the best of secular culture and Orthodox Judaism actually can co-exist in a yeshiva which is a university — can still be done, but it cannot be done in New York City anymore. Like the legendary Volozhin Yeshiva of lore,²² which was putatively forced by the government in Czarist Russia to offer secular studies and choose to close rather than comply, YU can announce that in light of the oppressive attacks on its religious values, it will cease to function in New York City.

So, What Would I Recommend?

Yeshiva has positioned itself uniquely inadequately for the current legal reality. It is a secularly chartered but religiously affiliated institution, a status both unrecognized by secular law and unprotected by the rights granted to religious institutions. Furthermore, it is in a city with a vibrant Human Rights Commission dedicated to making secular institutions comply with the letter and spirit of the Human Rights law. I think that resistance is an awful idea, even as it has some emotional appeal. While the aphorism of “it is better to die on your feet than living on your knees” sounds courageous, it actually is mistaken in this case, since there are many other standing opportunities. The costs of litigation — social, economic and practical — will be high, and the likelihood of vindication is low. Thus, I am opposed to a policy of resistance and litigation.

Along the same lines, I am opposed to the policy of continuing to thread the needle of being nominally secular while actually being substantively religious. I think too many people are watching closely for YU to have an announced policy at tension with its implemented policy.²³ Of course, it could

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¹³ The Jewish Week, LGBTQ Students File Complaint Against Yeshiva U: Battle for gay rights intensifies as students take discrimination grievance to NYC Human Rights Commission. (Feb 18, 2010) also at <https://jewishweek.timesofisrael.com/battle-for-gay-recognition-intensifying-at-yeshiva-u/>. See also <https://nypost.com/2020/03/07/lgbtq-students-file-discrimination-complaint-against-yeshiva-university/>.

¹⁴ This is not the place to address this issue in detail. See for example “Statement of Principles on the Place of Jews with a Homosexual Orientation in Our Community” at <https://statementofprinciplesny.blogspot.com/> or Michael J. Brody and Shlomo Brody “Homosexuality And Halacha: Five Critical Points” at <http://text.rcarabbis.org/homosexuality-and-halacha-in-tradition-and-beyond/> or many other fine articles written.

¹⁵ See note 1.

¹⁶ What exactly is this mission is beyond the scope of this short note. My favorite short essays that encapsulate the Yeshiva University experience can be found in essays by Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein and Rabbi Norman Lamm at Menachem Butler and Zev Nagel (editors) “My Yeshiva College: Seventy-Five Years of Memories.” Rabbi Lamm’s essay is entitled

“There is only One Yeshiva College (pages 219-225) and Rabbi Lichtenstein’s essay is entitled “Looking Before and After” (pages 231-239). I have an essay in that volume entitled “Truth Seeking as the Mission” (pages 325-328).

¹⁷ As the New York State Attorney General notes simply:

Some exemptions that preexisted SONDA — and apply to discrimination on any of the grounds listed in the law, not only sexual orientation — affect SONDA’s application. A “religious or denominational institution,” or an “organization operated for charitable or educational purposes” that is “operated, supervised or controlled by or in connection with a religious organization,” may:

1. Limit employment, sales or rental of housing accommodations, and admission to persons of the same religion.
2. Give preferences to persons of the same religion or denomination; and
3. Take “such action as is calculated by such organization to promote the religious principles for which it is established or maintained.”

<https://ag.ny.gov/civil-rights/sonda-brochure>

¹⁸ Yeshiva needs to examine in more detail what Touro does and why, as well as deeply understand

how to do this. This is discussed in not enough detail later in this letter.

¹⁹ In its strongest form, it is an argument that the majority decision by Justice Scalia in *Employment Division v. Smith* (1990) is wrong, and in its weaker forms it is an argument that Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUPA) should apply to such institutions. This is not the place to review all such plausible arguments other than to note that the consensus is that the argument that the New York City Human Rights Law does not apply to secularly chartered, but religiously valued institutions is not generally considered the state of the law now. See also note 18 confirming that this is the opinion of the NY Attorney General.

²⁰ Related to this, of course, is seeking special legislative status or exemption from the State of New York. Since I see this approach as practically unlikely, I will not address this here. I do see the possibility that if (big word) we all supported a “fairness for all” type of proposal, maybe these proposals would exempt even religiously affiliated secular institutions, and maybe Congress would also preempt local increases. None of this will help Yeshiva in the short term.

²¹ For an example of a fight, see <https://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/Resources/Court-cases/2018/>

Trinity-Western-University-School-of-Law-2013-201, although this is in Canada.

²² For a more historically accurate portrayal of why the Yeshiva in Volozhin closed, see Jacob J. Schacter “Haskalah, Secular Studies and the Close of the Yeshiva in Volozhin in 1892” in *Torah Umaddah* 1:76-133 (1990) or see Shaul Stampfer, *Lithuanian Yeshivas of the Nineteenth Century. Creating a Tradition of Learning* Translated by Lindsey Taylor-Guthartz. Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007.

²³ In addition, this type of policy has internal social costs of some complexity as. Even at the time of the 1970 events “Rav Lichtenstein voiced the problem of presenting one image to the outside world while trying to preserve another general direction” (as mentioned in *The Observer* article cited in note 1) as an ethical issue. Indeed, in conversation with people about this topic over many years, this has been a common ethical theme. Dr. Zev Eleff notes this as well in his alternate history “What if Rav Aharon Had Stayed? A Counter-History of PostWar Orthodox Judaism in the United States” at <http://www.thelehrhaus.com/scholarship/2017/3/9/what-if-rav-aharon-had-stayed-a-counter-history-of-postwar-orthodox-judaism-in-the-united-states>.



The Rav outlined the many dangers of secularization in his “Ghosts” speech.

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

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have a set of actual policies that reduce this issue (such as “no social clubs at all”), but I suspect that these matters will not go away in the current environment. So too, changing enrollment policies might or might not be a good idea, but doing so to address this issue seems unwise and economically untenable.

So, I see only two real options for Yeshiva: re-charter it as a religious institution in part

or move to more hospitable jurisdiction (or both). The economic costs of having a religious charter are complex and require a very tight and detailed look at the various losses and gains suffered by that chartering. Calculating this is complex, since sometimes the gains and losses are subtle.²⁴ Moving the institution out of New York would be difficult, heart-rending, and dislocating for the legions of students, faculty and staff at Yeshiva. However, it might be the approach most consistent with its mission, actually. Having defined itself as an institution committed to the harmonization of Torah values

and Western ideal, when one is living in a place where that is not possible, one looks for a new place to live.²⁵

In summary: Yeshiva University seems to need (if it wishes to preserve its Orthodox Jewish identity) to re-charter some of itself as a sectarian or religious corporation,²⁶ rather than remain a completely non-sectarian or secular institution, and Yeshiva should even consider moving to a more legally friendly jurisdiction. If it does neither of these, it is going to have a very rough ride preserving the status quo. Or even

worse, if Yeshiva does not act, it will have its religious agenda determined by a secular court and not by its own religious sensibilities.

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²⁴ It is clear to me that the real issue is hardly “Bundy Money,” which has gone down every year since 1990 and is now a total allocation of only \$35M to a slightly less than 100 schools. For more on this, see <https://www.cicu.org/legislation-policy/state-aid-programs/direct-institutional-bundy-aid>. (I was told that Fordham was approved for Bundy money in 1970, although I have not been able to verify that.) The much more complex issue is access to the bond-issuing authority of the New York State Dormitory Authority to issue tax-free bonds as well as other state

and federal funding. For example, see this \$90M bond issued just by Yeshiva University. I have not been able to get a complete picture of the bond issuances of Yeshiva, but since 2010, it seems that Yeshiva has issued only that one bond. Let me add that it is clear that there is a mechanism for parochial colleges to receive funding from the authority, as both St. Joseph’s College and St John’s University have been funded. Unlike Yeshiva, they do not define themselves as non-sectarian. This is a crucially important issue, and further research is required. Indeed, the Touro

College and University System has the practice of having multiple units apply, only some of which are secularly chartered; that is clearly acceptable. Let me add that being religiously chartered has many advantages that need to be factored in as well. For example, a religious charter allows the granting of parsonage to many more people, which both saves on payroll taxes and increases take-home pay while also reducing costs. So too, religious institutions have a less robust regulatory environment allowing for a smaller administrative staff. They are less open

to legal claims, allowing a smaller General Counsel’s office and so on. Each and every upside and downside needs to be calculated closely.

²⁵ Let me add, as one early reader noted, that Manhattan real estate is still very expensive. Yeshiva could sell its holding and relocate to a much more idyllic location and rebuild its depleted endowment.

²⁶ See the paragraph accompanying note 19.



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BUILDING TOMORROW, TODAY

Bioethics in Practice

Northwell Yeshiva Site Open

By TALYA LISKER

Bikur cholim ein lah shi'ur (Nedarim 39b).

The warmly lit Sh'or Yeshuv hallways teemed with life. Echoes of Torah learning circulated from the coatroom to the *beit midrash*, where *talmidim* sat. Close together. All day. Learning, exchanging *svaras*, sharing *seforim* and, occasionally, a basketball. There is also a gymnasium here.

Though the students are gone, the gym in Sh'or Yeshuv is anything but empty.

Sh'or Yeshuv Institute in Lawrence, NY, is the largest yeshiva in the Five Towns. Nestled on the manicured, tree-lined lawns of Cedarlawn Avenue since 2003, the site normally functions as a place of post-high school Torah learning, with a focus on community outreach. Since closing in accordance with government guidelines, the yeshiva has hosted its *shiurim* online.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this center of Torah received a major *Madda* makeover. The coatroom now functions as a triage ward, and the gym houses a fully-equipped potential hospital, with 384 beds and over 100 ventilators. The shul is a sanctuary of first-aid supplies. Conveniently, the yeshiva cafeteria is outfitted with numerous hand-washing stations.

The driving force behind this entire operation? Concern for the community.

I spoke with Eli Rowe, a Hatzalah paramedic and founder of its aviation division, HatzolAir, to get a grasp on how the Sh'or Yeshuv site, now a satellite location of Northwell Health, came to be. The project is best understood from the panicked perspective of society just a few weeks ago, when what Rowe calls an “almost apocalyptic fear” set in, with the realization that hospitals might run out of beds. What would happen if people continued to get sick once hospitals were filled to capacity?

Hatzalah, as an organization, is a link between the community and the hospital system. Hundreds of ambulances service people to provide access to hospital care. Imagining a scenario, then, where Hatzalah could not fulfill its mission — where ambulances wait on endless lines to deposit the infirmed at a hospital — led to the question: “What would happen to the patients?” If there is no hospital available, where can patients be taken? Ultimately, Rowe explained, the goal is to “treat the most amount of people with the fewest providers ... to get the biggest return on our investment, from a human resource standpoint.”

With this in mind, gathering support, information and supplies, a team of visionaries set out blueprints for a field hospital, a place where, at the very least, patients could be triaged and treated until hospital space became available. The sketch materialized at Sh'or

Yeshuv Institute, a facility with an ideal open floor plan and fully accessible amenities, located in a populated area lacking a major local hospital. The *rosh yeshiva*, Rabbi Naftali Jaeger, agreed to repurpose the facility in order to care for the sick. The only request made was that the main sanctuary remain untouched, as it has, unless absolutely necessary.

Within a week of its conception, the field hospital was fully set up. It was developed, funded and staffed entirely by the community, under the medical guidance of Dr. Avishai Neuman, an anesthesiologist and co-founder of HatzolAir. Monetary donations for equipment made it possible to secure beds, monitors, ventilators and oxygen, as well as essential supplies such as medications, full protective gear, cleaning supplies and electric wiring. Room dividers were fashioned from repurposed *mechitzahs*, which were contributed by party planners. 500 iPads, enough to be distributed to each patient and healthcare worker, were designated to facilitate remote communication with family members. Equally critical to the operation's success was the hard work and time put in by all members of the team, as well as sustained volunteer efforts. The way that Eli Rowe puts it, the creation of the Sh'or Yeshuv site was the “foresight to build something that we always hoped would be the biggest waste of money.” To date, the hospital wards have not been used.

That is not to say that the site has remained lifeless. The next step in the process stemmed from a phone call with Dr. Gita Lisker, the director of the Respiratory Care Unit at Long Island Jewish Medical Center (LIJ), consulted for advice on stocking and staffing a hospital unit. Dr. Lisker recommended partnering with a health system “to ensure that all safety and quality standards would be met” in the facility. In the days before the Navy ships docked in New York or the Javits Center became a hospital, Northwell Health leaders were invited to visit the Sh'or Yeshuv premises. Eli Rowe proudly describes the impression that the site left on the representatives — “they were flabbergasted,” he says. Michael Goldberg, the Executive Director of LIJ, was among the twelve Northwell delegates initially given a tour of the facility. Mr. Goldberg commented that he is “continually inspired by the way this community supports one another...to build an unbelievably well thought out center to provide care.” The goals of the Sh'or Yeshuv site, Mr. Goldberg maintains, “aligned perfectly with our Northwell mission to help.” A similar sentiment is expressed in Dr. Lisker's reflection on the pivotal phone call, which included Northwell leadership, Hatzalah, Achiezer and Orthodox community leaders — “it was one of the proudest moments of my life,” she says, “as so many of the different and wonderful aspects of my life came



Northwell and Hatzalah team members outside the facility on its inauguration day

TALYA LISKER

together to do great things.”

And that's how you end up with *Siyata D'shmaya* markings atop Northwell Health signs.

Northwell's Lawrence Ambulatory location, as Sh'or Yeshuv is officially known, is currently operating as a COVID-19 testing and evaluation site. It is staffed by a Northwell Emergency Room physician, community volunteers and EMTs, as well as Sh'or Yeshuv staff members. Thanks to around-the-clock security, operations have been able to run smoothly. The facility has seen over 200 patients (as of May 6) since opening on April 22. Once registered, patients are received in the spacious (and regularly disinfected) waiting room, until evaluated and tested for COVID-19 by the doctor. Patients can be referred to Northwell's homecare program (which may include oxygen, if needed), and referrals are also available for telehealth visits with a Northwell pulmonologist. Pulse oximeters are given out to patients for home monitoring when

indicated.

“Even though trends were reversed, we decided to open in limited capacity,” said Eli Rowe, acknowledging the aspects of the facility left unused. A number of ventilator units, as well as other in-demand supplies, were donated to various hospitals when it seemed the field hospital would not need to open. However, we are still amid the crisis. Because all equipment remains in place and the Sh'or Yeshuv site is already part of the health system, Rowe reminds us that the flip of a switch is all that will be necessary to begin treating over 200 patients, should the need arise. “We're in it and we can treat it,” he says.

It is inspiring to work with the kinds of people who dwell not on the good they have already done, but on how much more there is to do. Everyone involved — the dedicated doctor, proficient clerical staff and meticulous cleaning crew — is invested in maximizing the facility's capacity to help. Max Rowe, a Hatzalah EMT who has

been volunteering since day one, emphasized how meaningful it is to “answer a lot of questions the community has [about coronavirus],” providing reassurance and “helping people get the care they need to make it feel like everything will be ok.” This is a testament not only to Sh'or Yeshuv's clinical capabilities, but to its role in providing support and reassurance to those in need.

The fate of the Sh'or Yeshuv facility is intertwined with that of the community; like the people, how it is treated is largely dependent on the jurisdiction of the healthcare system. The nature of what is deemed essential changes every day. Today, I might measure a patient's vital signs as the doctor prepares the COVID test swab. Tomorrow might find me scheduling an appointment for serologic antibody testing. We'll all be hanging in there until, someday, hopefully soon, the triage center will be restored to its former glory as a coat room.

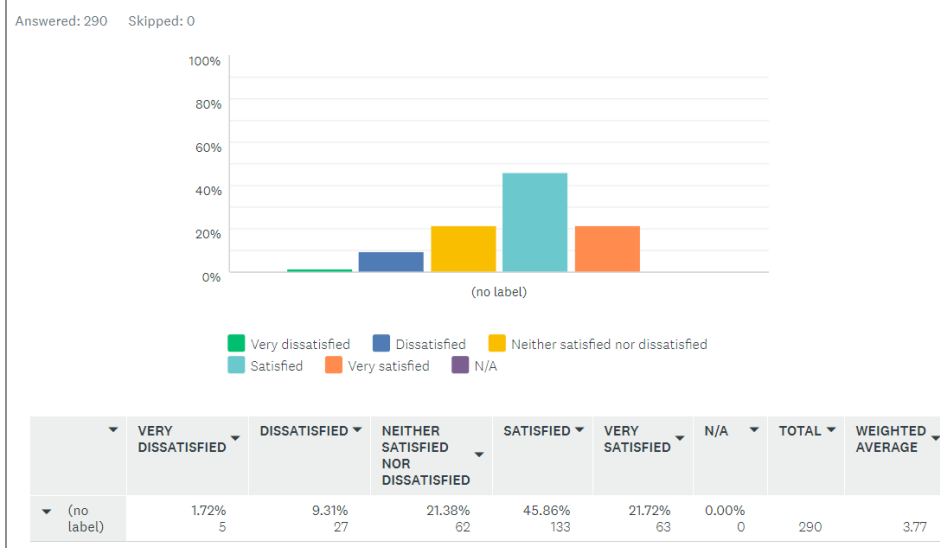


Northwell Health signage, BS"D, at Sh'or Yeshuv

TALYA LISKER

Commentator COVID-19 Survey Results: An Analysis

Overall, how satisfied are you with the university's response to the COVID-19 health crisis?



Overall, 68% of the student body is satisfied with the university's response to the COVID-19 health crisis

By YOSEF LEMEL

Editor's Note: For the purposes of this article, "more difficult" refers to students who indicated that they found aspects of online classes to be "more difficult" or "much more difficult," and vice versa for "less difficult." This rule is true for every measure of student opinion in this survey unless indicated otherwise.

Over the past week, The Commentator conducted a survey on the experiences of students during the COVID-19 crisis, their transition to online learning and other policies of the university in response to the pandemic. The following article presents a detailed analysis of the results.

Introduction

Overall, the survey polled 290 students, or 15% of the undergraduate student body. 102 respondents (35%) are Yeshiva

College (YC) students, 120 (41%) are Stern College for Women (SCW) students, 49 (17%) are male Sy Syms School of Business (Syms-Men) students, 18 (6%) are female Sy Syms School of Business (Syms-Women) students and 1 (.3%) is a Katz School student.

103 respondents (36%) are in their first year on campus, 85 (29%) in their second year, 79 (27%) in their third year and 23 (8%) in their fourth year or beyond.

84% of the students polled live in the Eastern Time Zone.

In the analysis, specific conclusions or extrapolations were not drawn from the results of specific groups with a low sample size, such as respondents from Syms-Women, the Katz School and fourth-year students.

Survey Results

Overall, 66% of respondents find online classes to be more difficult than in-person classes.

92% of students also expressed that it was

more difficult for them to maintain focus during online classes when compared to in-person classes. Of that number, 57% found it *much* more difficult to maintain focus.

Smartphone use during class has also increased with 86% of students saying they use a smartphone more frequently during online classes, and 56% of that number saying that they use smartphones in class *much* more frequently.

Students' responses were more diverse when it came to maintaining their class schedules. 40% find it more difficult, 39% find it neither more nor less difficult and 21% find it less difficult to maintain their class schedules when compared to in-person classes.

When looking at their experiences with online learning, 41% say that they frequently encounter technical difficulties, 20% say they experience technical difficulties neither frequently nor infrequently and 39% infrequently experience technical difficulties. 52% of women frequently experience technical difficulties during online classes when compared to 30% of men.

Only 14% of students say their classes have been "Zoombombing." Zoombombing is an unwanted disruption of a Zoom session, usually by strangers. When broken down by college, 33% of Syms-Men, 17% of YC and 6% of SCW students say their classes have been Zoombombing.

Overall, 68% of the student body is satisfied with the university's response to the COVID-19 health crisis. 21% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 11% are dissatisfied.

The university announced the implementation of a pass/no credit (P/N) option for undergraduates. 46% of the overall student body is satisfied, 24% is neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 28% is dissatisfied. When broken down by college, 39% of YC, 48% of SCW and 57% of Syms-Men are satisfied by the policy.

Overall, only 20% of students plan on using the P/N option while 40% will not and another 40% are still unsure as to whether they will use the option. Interestingly, 39%

of Syms-Men say they will use the P/N option when compared to 16% of YC and 18% of SCW. When broken down by year, 32% of third-year students say they will use the option when compared to 16% for second-year and 17% for first-year students.

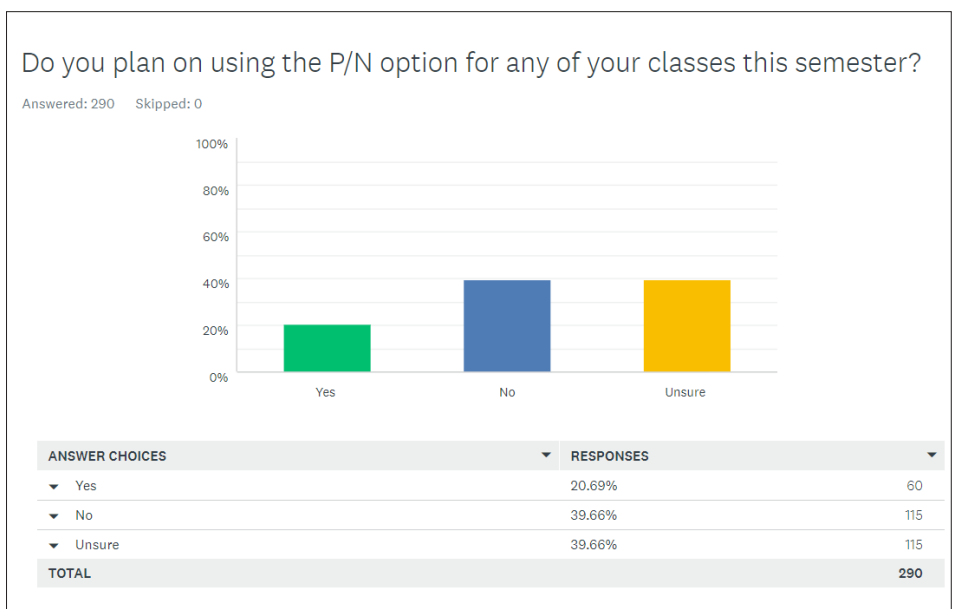
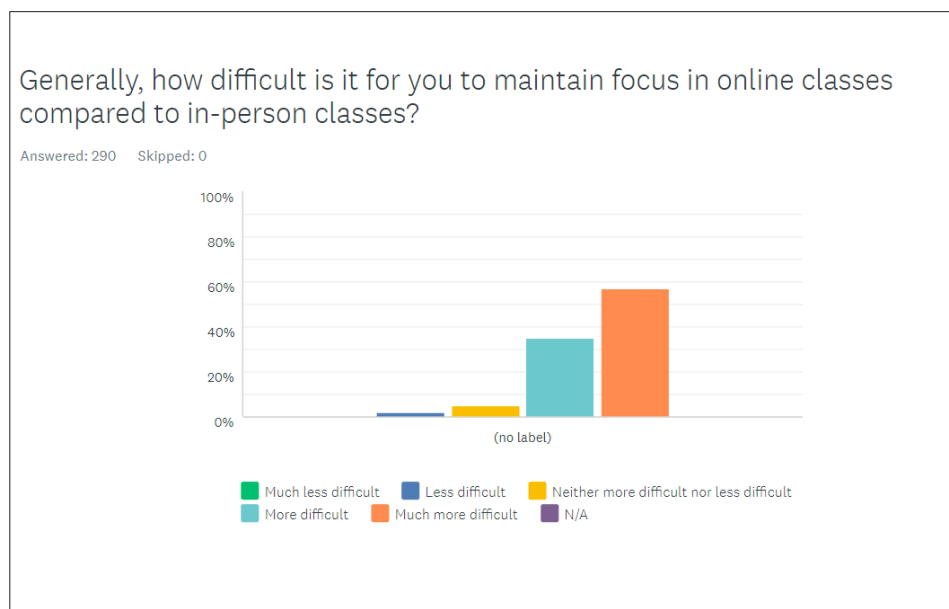
President Berman recently announced that the university will provide full refunds for remaining caf card balances as well as a 30% refund of spring semester housing charges. 66% of students expressed that they are satisfied with the refunds compared to 21% who are dissatisfied. 34% of students think that the refund policy is more generous than they expected, 39% say that it is neither more nor less generous than they expected, and 24% say that it is less generous than they expected.

Methodology

We primarily followed the methodology used in the previous surveys of The Commentator over the past two years.

We reached out to students through the Wilfevents/Berenevents email lists encouraging students to sign up for the survey, gathering a total of 290 interested undergraduate students. We conducted a raffle with a \$50 Amazon gift card as the first place prize to motivate respondents. We also confirmed that respondents were current undergraduate students with YU's Office of Student Life. The survey was conducted through SurveyMonkey. All responses were completely anonymous.

Several confounding factors may have skewed the survey in a certain direction that was not representative of student opinion as a whole. For example, while Syms-Men are 28% of the undergraduate student body, only 17% of respondents to our survey were from Syms-Men. YC students were over-represented in our survey, comprising 35% of the survey respondents while only being 23% of the student body. These factors, among others, may have affected the results of the survey.



Abroad in Four Walls: An Atypical Study Abroad Experience

By DEBORAH COOPERSMITH

This semester, Spring 2020, was supposed to be my highly anticipated semester abroad. It was the semester that I was going to spend exploring Israel, researching in Yad Vashem, studying at

Hebrew University and developing Jewish leadership values through The Nachshon Project. When I started in January, everything was set up and good to go. I was loving being back in Israel, experiencing and taking in so much of what this country had to offer me, both religiously and culturally.

However, in March, things began to slowly fall apart. At first, it

was a called-off basketball game. Then, it was an order from the Israeli government limiting only 50 people in any area, followed by a canceled Purim concert because the artist had been abroad within the past 14 days. The breaking point was on an average Thursday, on my way to the first day of my internship at Yad Vashem, when I was told to not come in because

the internship program was shutting down. I could handle all the other cancellations and missed opportunities, but this was too much for me. On the walk back to my apartment, I called my parents with tears rolling down my face and feeling absolutely miserable: for the lost opportunities, all the unknowns and just being unsure as to what my next steps moving

forward would be. That Thursday was terrible, but it ended with my mom firmly saying that I could either come home or choose to deal with it and accept my new reality.

So that's what I did. The next

Continued on Page 15

*ABROAD IN FOUR WALLS,
continued from Page 14*

day I woke up with a completely new mindset, determined to stay in Israel and be happy about my situation. This was a conscious decision that I had to make, but it was vital for what was to come. Happiness is a choice, one that I deliberately chose every day following that one.

At first, I had a vast support system in Israel, but slowly, cohort fellows and friends started trickling back to the U.S. At first, only a few left Israel, but as restrictions tightened, it became half of them, until it was almost everyone I knew. Friends were changing their minds right and left, because of their own fears as well as their parents' demands. In the end, I had three fellows remaining from a Cohort of 34 and only a handful of friends were still in Israel with me. My apartment of five has dwindled to just two people.

Daily life has been unlike how I would have ever imagined it. I rarely venture outdoors despite the current beautiful weather. Last month, the restrictions in Israel had intensified to such an extent that one was only allowed to walk up to 100 meters from their residence. When I walked to the grocery store, I needed to wear a mask and carry my Student ID to prove to the police officers that might stop me that I was following this law. Currently, one is supposed to remain within 100 meters of their home residence, but the 500-meter rule for exercising has been lifted. This means I can now run outside my parking lot! Many more restrictions should be loosened

by the middle of this week as the number of new cases per day continues to drop. Soon, I will be legally allowed to walk to my sister's apartment which is on the other side of Jerusalem. However, my friends and I decided, for the time being, to remain under lockdown procedures. We are nervous about getting COVID-19 while abroad especially because of the lack of a nearby family support system.

After the heaviest restrictions were placed, I had a spark of realization, which allowed me to grasp the good in my life.

As I once learned from someone, saying no to one opportunity means that you are saying yes to another. I understand this to mean that there is always a choice taking place; a choice between focusing on what is missing or recognizing what is present. This is far from the semester I had envisioned in January, but I am content with what it has turned into. After the heaviest restrictions were placed, I had a spark of realization, which allowed me to grasp the good in my life.

I am fortunate to be healthy. My professors are working incredibly hard, adapting to new technologies in order to make their online courses interesting and engaging. My friends reach out from all over the world to ask how I am doing, always filling my heart with so much gratitude and love. My Nachshon Fellows, no matter where in the

world they currently are, always brighten my day with their thoughtful comments and laughter. My roommate, the mom of the group, is so caring and compassionate, continually ensuring that everyone is taken care of. I have pursued an interest in comedy as seen in my latest Instagram posts. I know that my family will always be there for me and they have proven it to me time and time again, whether by creating a Zoom meeting so we can celebrate a birthday all together, or enabling me to join in on a fitness class by repeating everything the trainer says so I can do it alongside them 6,000 miles away. Because of today's technology, I am able to speak to my grandparents every night over FaceTime. I now have so much extra time to learn Jewish texts and read the books that I have always pushed off in the past. I have my friends who stayed in the dorms with me whom I can rely on for being there with a smile, some fun, and empathy during the difficult situation that we are all dealing with together. It is not easy during this time, especially being abroad, but knowing that I have such good people in my life whom I can spend an incredible Shabbat with is truly a gift.

During these times, I have learned that it is so important to focus on the good because if not, what else is there? I've recognized that being miserable and ungrateful didn't do me any good, and I now have no interest in repeating that. So, in this less-than-desirable situation, I have an opportunity to choose my destination and I am choosing happiness.



Deborah's semester abroad was interrupted by the health crisis.

DEBORAH COOPERSMITH

A Conversation with Revel's Dean Berger

By JACOB ROSENFELD

In an email to Revel faculty and students on March 10, 2020, the Ruth & I. Lewis Gordon Professor of Jewish History and Dean of Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies, David Berger, announced he would be retiring as dean and "return to the simple status of professor."

This past Thursday I was lucky enough to have a chance to sit with Dean Berger and reflect on his time as the dean of Revel and what he sees for the school's future.

Dean Berger began as the dean of Revel 12 years ago after a long and fruitful career at CUNY. In his 12 years on the job, Dean Berger oversaw the expansion of the doctoral program, which had just a handful of active students, to a point where there are currently six doctoral students finishing their doctorate in Jewish Studies from September 2019 through January 2021. Even now, this figure is much higher than the norm, but Dean Berger views it as a testament to the renewed vigor of the program and the effort to nurture its students. Over the past several years Revel has introduced mentoring for doctoral students which has been overseen by Dr. Daniel Rynhold, the incoming dean.

Dean Berger is enthusiastic about Revel's future with Dr. Rynhold, the "obvious choice to take over," and in a great position to move the school forward. His unique situation as being just senior enough to command the respect of the faculty and students and also being from the younger generation, allowing him to better relate to doctoral candidates, qualities that make him the perfect candidate for the position. Additionally, his scholarship, belief in the Jewish tradition and expertise in areas of student interest, namely the thought of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, make him a great leader for Revel.

Dean Berger was also extremely grateful to the associate dean, Rabbi Dr. Mordechai Cohen, who has worked extremely hard on many Revel projects, most notably the development of the admissions department. Dean Berger greatly appreciates Cohen's enhancements to the program including the introduction of many outside lecturers, as well as the move of Revel's quarters from an almost hidden location in Belfer Hall to its current suite and lounge in Furst Hall.

Revel has also introduced a new track in Ancient Jewish History, a joint Master's program with the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education

& Administration and has enhanced the faculty by recognizing younger professors who have reached the level of guiding doctoral students, most recently by the addition of Dr. Naomi Grunhaus of Stern College. This has been Revel's main method of acquiring new professors.

Dean Berger did note that Revel has lost several professors recently. This includes those who have passed away, such as Rabbi Dr. Yaakov Elman *zt"l* and Dr. Arthur Hyman *zt"l*. In addition, Dr. Daniel Tsadik has moved to Israel with his family. Unfortunately, the school has not been able to replace these professors. Dean Berger hopes that over time the school will be able to further enhance its already top of their field faculty, exemplified at the senior level by Rabbi Dr. Ephraim Kanarfogel, Rabbi Dr. Elazar Hurvitz, Dr. Jeffrey Gurock and Dr. Steven Fine with even more professors. To do this Dean Berger hopes to see an overall improvement in the financial state of the university and continued support from the generous Katz family which has enabled so much of the school's development.

"Revel is the school that should attract fundraisers and strong enrollment," Dean Berger said, "[It] is a unique and extraordinary institution."



Dr. David Berger will be retiring from his position of Dean of Revel.

YESHIVA
UNIVERSITY

As Jews, We Must Support the Anti-Discrimination Policy

By SRULI FRUCHTER

Editor's Note: This article was originally published online on May 6, before elections on May 7.

As students of Yeshiva University, we boast an impressive experience that sets the classic college experience in the context of a Jewish environment. While it may be naive or idealistic, one would expect that our Jewish values would therefore extend beyond the *beis midrash* and our Jewish Studies classes. Recent events, however, have suggested otherwise.

In light of the approaching student government elections on May 7, a flurry of screenshots and messages have flooded various WhatsApp group chats encouraging students to vote against an amendment that would incorporate an anti-discrimination policy into the Wilf Campus constitution. These calls are antithetical to Judaism, as they essentially defend discrimination on campus.

On election day, aside from voting for students to assume various roles in student government, students are asked to approve or reject amendments to their campus's constitutions. Among the six proposed amendments that were approved by the Wilf General Assembly (GA), the last one suggests the addition

of an anti-discrimination policy, similar to the existing one in the Beren Constitution.

One of the circulating messages among students was a flyer titled "The Yeshiva Ballot," demanding that students "Vote NO for Membership and Actions of WCSG [Wilf Campus Student Government] Amendment!" Additionally, a screenshot of the

mitigate discrimination, bullying and hate on campus is deeply saddening and in direct conflict with our basic, Jewish values.

The full text of the amendment reads, "Membership and actions of the WCSG shall not discriminate based on race; ethnicity; nationality; sexual orientation; gender identity; religious, spiritual and humanistic belief or lack thereof;

deeply immoral." He continued, "I don't think I need to elaborate on that ... We, of all people, of every nation on the face of the earth, should understand the poison of racism." Mashgiach Ruchani of RIETS Rabbi Yosef Blau similarly wrote about the need to abolish racism in his articles about the Orthodox community and Jewish racism.

Have we, as a collective Jewish community, fallen to the point where we need Torah sources to teach us that discrimination is wrong? This should not be something any YU student should need to learn, regardless of their religious observance or affiliation.

Rav Kook writes in "Orot Yisrael" that "a love of [Am] Yisrael demands a love for all mankind, and when it impresses hate to any part of mankind, it is a sign that the soul has not fully purified for its filth. And if so, it can't align with the higher love" (4:5). Here, Rav Kook speaks of a more universal love for all people, implying the obvious nature of loving our fellow Jews.

Isolated in the context of considering a Pride Alliance Club, some students have justified the notion that Jews should reject an anti-discrimination policy. However, I cannot help but imagine what our perspective on this policy would be if placed in the times of our historical persecution. Jews should never be bystanders to intolerance in the world. This policy is about more than a potential club; it is about championing our Jewish values and concretizing them in our student constitution to ensure that all students feel safe and secure at YU.

Has our experience as Jews — our collective history, upbringings, education and values — taught us to otherize our fellow Jews? Can we be comfortable being in a student body that cannot call out discrimination?

amendment form was leaked to students, accompanied by a warning that if the amendment were to pass, it would "legitimize a path for an lgbt club."

This anti-discrimination policy goes well beyond the discussion of a Pride Alliance club and whether a student should wholly or partially support or reject such a club. Without the amendment to include this policy, students involved in campus clubs would, according to our constitution, be permitted to deny membership as well as limit the opportunities available to students, simply on prejudicial beliefs.

However, students advocating to completely reject an initiative to

age; disability; health status; political affiliation or ideology; or socio-economic standing." It reasons that since the current Wilf constitution lacks any anti-discrimination policy, this addition will "ensure that every student feels included and part of the student body."

Has our experience as Jews — our collective history, upbringings, education and values — taught us to otherize our fellow Jews? Can we be comfortable being in a student body that cannot call out discrimination?

In an article about racism in the Orthodox community, Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Jeremy Weider argued that "racism itself is deeply,

It would then seem obligatory to support a policy that bars discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity and nationality.

In his "Shmoneh Kevatzim," Rav Kook writes that "the heart of a *tzaddik* is filled with a great love for all creatures: the righteous and the wicked, Jews and non-Jews, and even towards all animals..." (3:170). It would be intellectually dishonest to believe that this "great love" would tolerate the targeting of a fellow student because of sexual orientation, political belief or the like. This is reinforced when considering the famous *pasuk* in Vayikra that urges us to "love your neighbor as yourself" (19:18).



Furst Hall on Wilf Campus

We Too Must Unite Against Sexual Assault

By NEIMA POLLAK

Unfortunately, sexual assault affects our community like it does any other. That is why it is imperative for our university to have a club that brings education and awareness to the forefront and eventually eradicate this issue from our campus. Forming Students Against Sexual Assault (SASA) was the first step towards these goals. The inspiration for SASA was sparked last spring when I attended a workshop for Education majors, led by the Gwendolyn and Joseph Straus Chair in Psychology, Dr. David Pelcovitz, about understanding and preventing child abuse.

To me, it seemed that the material Dr. Pelcovitz shared was basic, yet, it was relevant to more than just the future educators who attended the lecture. Dr. Pelcovitz mostly spoke about the signs of abuse to be aware of, signs that anyone can look out for. Many of us have heard parts of what he said, maybe in a counselor orientation or an employment training course, but after hearing it all together, I thought to myself “Why is this only for education majors? Why is this critical information that pertains to everyone not shared with all the university’s students?”

Further inspiration was taken from “YU and Stern Confessions” Facebook posts I read last spring that were related to both childhood and recent sexual assault. There was one post in particular that was written by a woman who had been assaulted and still saw her attacker around campus. After reading this post, I knew we needed to address

was assaulted, whether it be a close friend, a fellow student or a family member. Sexual assault is more prevalent than we realize. While the statistics show that women are victims of sexual assault more often than their male counterparts, men experience rape and sexual assault at alarming rates, rates that are even higher on college campuses.

Whether a student knows it or not, they likely know someone who was assaulted, whether it be a close friend, a fellow student, or a family member.

the existence of sexual assault on campus. I approached my friend Rivky Wigder (SCW ‘19), who I know is passionate about the issue, and asked her to organize an event together.

With assistance from the Office of Student Life, we were able to run a panel discussion titled “Preventing and Dealing with Sexual Abuse,” a self-defense workshop, a poster contest to raise awareness for sexual assault and most recently, a panel discussing Title IX policy at YU.

I think that many students do not realize the extent to which sexual assault affects our community. Whether a student knows it or not, they likely know someone who

According to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN), male college students ages 18-24 are five times more likely to experience sexual assault than non-students of the same age, while women ages 18-24 who are college students are three times more likely than non-students to experience sexual violence. Being assaulted is a terrifying experience, and it is common for survivors to feel that they are alone. As university students, we are part of an environment that was made uniquely for us, and as such we should work together to ensure that it is accepting and supportive.

It can be hard for a survivor, especially one in our community,

to recognize that they are not the only one suffering. Therefore, a primary goal in creating SASA is to send the message to the students at YU who may be dealing with sexual assault that they are not alone. Clubs are not formed to serve a need that is only relevant to a handful of people, so when a student sees that there is an entire club devoted to combating sexual assault, it sends the message that there are others out there suffering from similar issues. It sends a message to survivors and their supporters alike that they matter and that there are resources and support available to them.

SASA exists as a means to direct

students to professional support and resources. We do not claim to have any professional experience or knowledge, but we are a passionate group of students whose role is to educate the student body on issues pertaining to sexual assault and to direct survivors to resources that can help them.

I am grateful for everyone that supported this club along the way and to the incredibly capable board that will take over the leadership. I look forward to seeing all that SASA continues to contribute, and I thank all of you for joining the fight against sexual assault, both in the world at large and within our YU community.



Students Against Sexual Assault Logo

DEVORAT

Morphine Alarms Out of Tune: A Review of Hospice

By JOSH LEICHTER

There are times when we get so swept up in the books we read or the movies we watch that the stories we are told over song get overlooked. Some of us look to music as the background noise to help us study or that extra person in the passenger seat accompanying us on a long, lonely drive or subway ride. This is not to say that we ignore what we listen to. After all, if I were to ask you to name your favorite song, the chances are that you would be able to tell me the lyrics. Especially nowadays with platforms like Genius, the era of mishearing lyrics are long past us, and despite the annotations from the artists themselves, we are still free to come up with our own meanings to what we hear. Every now and then, an album comes along that requires no need for annotations or extra commentaries because the artists paint such a vivid picture that, at the moment we begin listening, we understand what they are talking about. These are albums where the tracks bleed into one another, where we find ourselves emotionally invested in the people being sung about. In a way, they serve as a modern-day version of vintage radio serials, except instead of running to the next album, we linger a little longer and return to Track One, ready to relive the experience for a second, third or fourth time.

One album that does this perfectly is The Antlers' 2009 album, *Hospice*. Following two previous releases that flew under the radars of many, the release of *Hospice* saw critical acclaim and widespread coverage with NPR placing it as number one on their year-end music review and music publication Pitchfork placing it at number thirty-seven out of fifty, going so far as lauding the album's ability to “emotional destroy listeners.” In an era that was overwrought

with indie albums of high-school angst and the late 2000s turmoil over recessions and depressions, what The Antlers succeeded in doing was tapping into another aspect of traumatic life experiences that many felt were not discussed in mainstream music at

other genres of music.

The story of *Hospice* follows a nameless male hospice worker who finds himself caring for and subsequently falling in love with a terminally ill patient who is often referred to as Sylvia by fans of the album, inspired by

In an era that was overwrought with indie albums of high-school angst and the late 2000s turmoil over recessions and depressions, what The Antlers succeeded in doing was tapping into another aspect of traumatic life experiences that many felt were not discussed in mainstream music at the time.

the time. In addition to this, the band's usage of soft vocals and unique instrumentals, interspersed with the chilling lyrics, created an album that fought against the grain of the cut-and-paste chorus that was common in

the name of the album's third track which is a reference to Sylvia Plath, the famous American poet of the 20th Century. Within this relationship that the narrator carves out, we hear about the emotional toll it takes

on both parties. In the sole track devoted to Sylvia's perspective, titled “Thirteen,” singer Sharon Van Etten lends her voice to the haunting plea of a patient alone and dying, begging her caregiver to help save her from an impossible situation. It sounds romantic, but as the tracks that precede and follow this one talk of heavy and sensitive subjects like abortion, post-traumatic stress disorder and abuse, we come to understand that their relationship was never equal to begin with, rather it was built on these unhealthy foundations that served as crutches for two broken lovers.

There has been much speculation as to whether or not the story told is autobiographical, with the band's frontman and writer, Peter Silberman, choosing to play coy about what is and isn't fact, simply stating for the past ten years that it is true “to an extent.” Regardless of how much truth Silberman decided to put into the story, listeners may find themselves empathizing with the characters and subject matter that the music and lyrics put forth in the nine tracks. (The first, titled Prologue, is entirely instrumental.)

Overall, *Hospice* provides a rich musical experience for those that listen to it, with the band successfully choosing to subtly riff on previous melodies used both within this album and those previously utilized in their first two releases. While it may not be everyone's cup of tea, taking the time to listen to it and experiencing a story in a new way provides a richer understanding of how versatile storytelling can be, whether it engages the senses via sound or sight.

Hospice is currently streaming on Spotify, Pandora, Amazon Music and Apple Music.



Following two previous releases that flew under the radars of many, the release of *Hospice* saw critical acclaim

PIXABAY

Ultra-Orthodoxy in a Time of Corona

By ELYANNA SAPERSTEIN

I live in Passaic, a community known for its thriving black-hat life. There has been a lot of discussion, especially by people external to the community, about how the coronavirus has impacted the ultra-Orthodox or “yeshivish” communities. As a resident of Passaic, I have had a courtside seat to the communal response to this pandemic and want to reflect on this topic from my own experience inside the community.

One major underlying principle of ultra-Orthodox life is the importance of unity. Thus, in our close-knit enclave, community is an integral and continual part of our lives, both religious and secular; whether its services on Shabbat, *shiurim*, book clubs or simply lending a hand to someone in need, members of my community are constantly in contact with one another. The social distancing that has slowly forced people into their own households has been a dramatic shift for a community in which it is not unusual to find each other popping in and out of each other's houses and praying together. By decimating our social norms, the coronavirus has targeted the heart of the community.

Besides for a strong emphasis on interdependence within the community, ultra-Orthodoxy also has a strong differentiation between the public and private spheres. The public sphere is encouraged for men, while the private sphere is thought of as the woman's domain. This is because the ultra-Orthodox lifestyle celebrates women as the mainstay of the home and men primarily responsible for things external to domestic life. For example, usually on Friday night, men go to shul while most women stay home. Since the coronavirus has infected the world, *Kabbalat Shabbat* is davened at home; in a sense, shul davening has come to the women. Watching my father *lein* with no *mehitza* between him and my mother, I am privy to an

experience that is entirely new to me. Despite the memes going around showing men's worry about increased responsibilities at home, men are actually being given a chance to spend more time with their families. This has created a heightened appreciation for the space in which their wives have invested so much time and effort.

The social distancing that has slowly forced people into their own households has been a dramatic shift for a community where it is not unusual to find each other popping in and out of each other's houses and praying together. By decimating our social norms, the coronavirus has targeted the heart of the community.

The coronavirus has other silver linings for women as well. As religious resources shift to the internet, many doors have been open to those of us with internet access. I now have access to previously all-male religious spaces. While in the past I may not have joined an all-male class to learn *daf yomi*, once it's being given on Zoom, I can just click in without entering that previously uninviting physical space. The wonderful thing about the internet is that everyone has the same access to information — with the click of a button you can reside in anonymity in a space that would have not necessarily allowed you in.

Contrary to popular belief, ultra-Orthodox attitudes towards the internet and external sources of information vary greatly. This has generated very diverse reactions to the pandemic. While some communities who embrace a more open approach to information (particularly the internet) shut down communal spaces very quickly, other communities have had much slower reactions. (For example, in Lakewood, some

institutions stayed open until the very last minute.) In my experience in a community where there appears to be a heavy or varied reliance on internal sources to gain insight on the world, medical information is often obtained through word of mouth, as opposed to official sources. For example, people who have a strong skepticism of the inter-

net and media often rely on shared emails and WhatsApp messages more than official news sites. This mistrust of the “establishment” can lead to a misinformed populace. However, my community is blessed with hard-working local doctors, experts and people with more exposure to the world who make it their mission to disseminate correct and accurate information. As we've learned with last year's measles outbreak, the best way to fight faulty information is with truth. By supporting local medical authorities in disseminating information, there will be a higher success in informing people who inform themselves differently.

The mistrust of the internet also hits another point that is near and dear to the community's heart: education. As most schools across the country have moved educational resources online, without access to the internet, the local Ultra-Orthodox school has tried to continue classes via telephone. Eschewing the internet has left both children and adults without educational resources that might be more easily available online. Not being

able to see fellow classmates or teachers, students miss out on an integral learning experience. Research has shown that over 50 percent of communication is nonverbal. In addition, teachers cannot demonstrate a lesson in any other way than talking about it. For many other students doing online learning, if they feel the teacher has not adequately explained a concept, they can look online for answers. From Khan Academy to Youtube, the internet is full of experts on every topic. Students using only audio devices are not able to rely on this as a backup plan if they don't understand something the teacher has taught. Of course, this does not negate the excellent and hard work the teachers of Passaic have been doing. From original source packets to individual phone calls, Passaic teachers have been going above and beyond to make sure their students are still learning the best they can.

The lack of easy access to the internet has consequences in the field of healthcare. I work in a doctor's office where we encourage any patients with respiratory symptoms to book an appointment with the doctors over Zoom in order to minimize the health risk to staff and anyone who might be in the office. I have received calls from people who do not have internet access for ideological reasons and do not wish to obtain it. These people cannot access particular medical resources and are forced to either venture into public spaces, such as doctors' waiting rooms and urgent health clinics, for advice or receive advice without the visual aspect of their medical visit. However, it is important to state that these have been exceptions as opposed to the norm.

Another aspect of my religious lifestyle that has been impacted is Shabbat. Shabbat is a break from the relentless onslaught of COVID-19 news, watching the number of overall cases and deaths tick higher and higher. However, an ominous air still hangs over those 25 hours. Each Shabbat, I speculate about how the world has changed during my isolation from it. Has the governor announced new restrictions? Has someone I know fallen ill? The anxiety of ignorance does not measure up to the frenetic anxiety of the news cycle, but it has still changed my Shabbat experience.

On the flip side, being able to step away from our digital devices to pray and eat together as a family is a literal godsend, now more than ever. Having faith in God, especially during a time of international suffering, is complex. While I know that everything God does is good, it is not always evident to me how. Right now, a significant part of my faith that does seem clear to me is the sense of compassion and sanctity of human life that ultra-Orthodoxy reveres. It makes staying home and washing my hands not just a good idea but a moral imperative. It reminds me that every time I forgo seeing my friends, there is a higher purpose that I am serving by doing so. It reminds me to call and check up on people who might be feeling isolated during this difficult period. It reminds me of my obligation to others instead of my own panic.

A pandemic is a paradigmatic shift for most people, however, it affects different communities in vastly different ways. Ultra-Orthodoxy has given me a space and support system to rely on as we go through these trying times, as well as a moral obligation towards the rest of humanity. I hope people learn to be understanding of different types of communities and plan critical responses for the future that incorporate an understanding of the different cultural nuances.



Besides for a strong emphasis on interdependence within the community, ultra-Orthodoxy also has a strong differentiation between the public and private spheres.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

On My Friend and Student, Saadya, A”H

By Dr. Steve Glicksman

Soon after we announced the founding of the Makor College Experience, I received a call from the mother of a potential applicant. She informed me that her son had for years dreamed of attending Yeshiva University; he had many friends that went to YU, and his late father was a long time professor. Over the years, she knew that his Down syndrome made that dream unattainable, and simply smiled and changed the subject when he brought it up. At the same time, she knew that her son always seemed to find a way of getting what he wanted. When she saw the announcement that Makor was starting a program in partnership with and on the campus of YU, she relished the chance of seeing her son’s dreams at last come true. There was only one problem: He was already in his thirties. Was he too old? Did he miss his chance? I explained to her that, in truth, having a middle-aged man in a college setting could be problematic; if a student didn’t “fit the part,” it could impact the overall acceptance of the program on campus and minimize our students’ inclusion opportunities. But, that being said, we’re here to fulfil people’s dreams, and from an inclusion perspective his chronological age was truthfully less important than how old he looked. So, we asked him to come in for an interview.

I had actually met and known Saadya about twenty-five years earlier from the camp he attended as a child, but we had lost touch for a decade or two. When he entered the room for his interview, and despite the long gap in our relationship, he immediately recognized me and said, “Dr. Steve!” I, in turn, immediately recognized not only that Saadya would be a good fit for Makor, but a perfect fit. In fact, he was precisely the type of student for whom the program was founded.

The Makor College Experience was never just about giving people with Intellectual Disability the chance to experience college life; it was about the chance to experience Yeshiva University. YU is so much more than

a college; it is, for many people, the next normative stage in their growth as Jews. Saadya didn’t just want to go to college; he wanted to walk the halls and sit in the classrooms his father walked and taught in. He wanted to study Torah in the *beit midrash* his friends learned in. He wanted to be welcomed and included and accepted not simply in “the world,” but in what he knew was “his world”; the world of his father and his forefathers. He wanted what was expected of his peers to be expected of him: To continue growing, to study Torah, to be part of our community.

Equally wonderful, however, and important to remember, is that he was also a real person. He relished being the center of attention, loved a good danish or slice (or two) of pizza, could be a prankster at times and sometimes got himself into trouble when he overstepped a boundary or wanted something that perhaps he wasn’t meant to have access to. A few people on campus over the years called me with what we can now simply refer to as a “Saadya related matter,” and I sometimes came down hard on him for behaving in ways that I felt would hurt his

the best cleaner I have ever met, and while this trait sometimes got him into trouble if he straightened up the possessions of a peer who preferred his items to remain unstraightened, he was incredibly helpful in keeping the Makor classroom orderly. Once, after numerous staff scoured the campus searching for something another student had lost, Saadya proudly announced that he had discovered the missing item in the classroom itself in a place that only he would have thought to clean. A year or two into the program, an opening came up in one of Makor’s residences in Brooklyn that was perfect for Saadya. Not wanting to miss the opportunity, Saadya moved out of the Makor House at YU and started commuting every day. He was so proud of this next transition into independence, but, I have to admit, the Makor House became noticeably less organized without him living there.

While Saadya was sick, there were times when we were not sure he was going to make it through. But he did, and he got stronger. Had his death occurred two weeks earlier than it did, it would have been sad; now, it is sad and shocking. Frankly, I’m still numb. In the morning of April 28th, I was talking to Makor staff in Brooklyn about Saadya’s impending discharge from the hospital set for the following day. Just hours later, I got the call that he had gone into cardiac arrest and wasn’t able to be resuscitated. When I sent out the devastating news to the Makor College parents, I immediately received an emergency message from the mother of one of Saadya’s classmates: “Are you sure? Where did you hear this from? I was just talking to his mother an hour ago!”

Apparently, that is often how this dreadful virus works: There are good days. There are bad days. Too often, there are worst days.

One of the things we teach the Makor students is that you cannot argue with an emotion; emotions just are, and nobody can tell you not to feel how you are feeling. We also teach them that in responding to your emotions, it is important to remember that no emotion lasts forever. So, while it is sometimes important to refrain from acting on one’s emotions (acting out of anger, for example), it is equally important to refrain from fighting one’s emotions (it is still okay to feel angry). Just let your emotions happen. Just experience how you feel. You won’t feel this way forever.

Now is the time to be sad over our collective loss of Saadya. Soon, it will be time to honor his legacy, and we at the Makor program will do that. And, eventually, our thoughts of Saadya will move beyond our mourning and return once again to moments of joy and positivity that he so beautifully and eagerly brought into our lives.

I noted before that a lot of things went right in the birth of the Makor program, and I have often described its birth to people as a miracle. I have come to learn in the last few days that this particular miracle did not just happen; it had a very strong advocate. I am convinced, now, that what I saw as unexplained miracles were, in fact, Saadya’s prayers to attend YU being answered. I am so grateful that they were, that he re-entered my life, that he helped build our program into what it is, and that he gave me the opportunity, in some small part, to help him realize his dream.

Dr. Stephen Glicksman is the Director of Clinical Innovation at Makor Disability Services and founder of the Makor College Experience.

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The Makor College Experience gave Saadya the opportunity to live his dream, and he, in turn, was a huge part in the program’s initial success. A lot of things went right in the birth of the Makor program, and I have often described its birth to people as a miracle. Part of that miracle was having Saadya as a member of our inaugural class. Having a student like Saadya, with his warm smile and air of exuberance and positivity, made it easy for us to be accepted on campus. Sitting in the first seat in the Glueck *beit midrash* meant that his smile was often the first thing people saw if they entered the *beis* on the left side on the second floor. Watching Saadya daven was a lesson in *kavana*, and if you were having a tough day there was nobody better in the world at telling you everything was going to be okay.

Since his passing, a lot of people have been rightfully talking about the angelic side of Saadya, of how close to *shamayim* and “otherworldly” his *neshama* was, even in life. That is all true, and that “special” side of Saadya was a wonderful side of him that we should learn from and be inspired

inclusion and independence opportunities in the long term. When I did, Saadya would always begin with, “It’s okay. Don’t worry.” When I would insist, “No, Saadya, it isn’t okay. You really can’t do that if you want to be welcomed to places,” he would eventually get serious and say, “Okay.” Then, without fail, I would receive a text at some point within the next 24 hours that stated some variation of (and I am copying this directly from my phone as I type), “Thanks you so much for all years of me you are special staff my life forever come to you all life ever in the world.” How can a text like that not bring some light into your day?

Even when he struggled, Saadya always wanted to do the right thing and be helpful. In looking through my texts, in addition to the thank yous and never-missed birthday wishes, there are numerous calls to come down from the office for *mincha* (“*mincha* now please come down to davening to together ever”) and announcements of things he thought it was important for me to know, like photos of announcements of new *beit midrash* rules as they were posted. He was



Having a student like Saadya, with his warm smile and air of exuberance and positivity, made it easy for us to be accepted on campus.

TIMES OF ISRAEL

Take an English Class and Experience the Best

By CHANA WEINBERG

Before we can understand the excellence of the SCW English Department, let's look at some numbers. There are three tracks: creative writing, media studies and literature. According to the most recent list from the Registrar, there are 43 students currently majoring in English and four students minoring. Of those 43, there are six students concentrating in literature, and of those six, I am one of two students graduating this semester.

A majority of the full-time English professors teach literature classes and I have had the pleasure of taking almost all of them. You would think that spending so much time with the same department would help me find the flaws, but it has in fact brought me to the conclusion that it is the best department at SCW. It is the best because it functions as a cohesive unit that prioritizes its students by being available to them, and because the professors are kind, generous and brilliant scholars in their respective concentrations. As far as declarations go, this one likely appears a bit biased. So, in order to convince you of my claim, I have some proof that can be considered more objective.

You may have noticed emails in your inbox about departments' meetings discussing class options for the upcoming semester. Did you know that the English department has

been doing this for years? Every semester there is a "Majors Meeting" where students (non-majors are invited) get a sneak peek at the course offerings and descriptions for the upcoming semester while also getting a chance to request subjects and topics for upcoming semesters. The professors take notes and prioritize your requests. They are excited to hear your ideas while being honest if you request something too unrealistic.

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Unfortunately, SCW's smaller size limits the budget and class options that can be offered. A refrain at that meeting is "I'd love to teach that, but we are not sure we could get enough people to sign up." That's where you come in. Fill your requirements with English classes so your requests can be made available. And for Wilf students who want exposure to this excellent department, check out the summer course options.

What sets the English department further above the others is the advisor program. When you declare yourself as an English major you are assigned an advisor who is there to guide you through course requirements and selections — and any other questions you

have. My advisor is Dr. Linda Shires, Chair of the English department, and aside from being an excellent professor, Dr. Shires has made time to meet with me about my course requirements and to discuss graduate school possibilities. For those of you who are not studying English, you can gain access to this generous faculty by taking a class with them.

Did you know that by using the Beren Campus Writing Center, you have been

said about William Dean Howells only to be answered with a supportive smile and blank eyes, I realized that not everyone can be convinced to even take an additional literature class. Loving of English Literature is part of my nature — both of my grandfathers proudly studied it in college, one at Yeshiva College and one at City College.

That being said, I am certain that much of my passion for English has come through the nurturing of this English department — it comes from Dr. Wachtell's eye-opening insights into the mind of a playwright, from Dr. Nachumi's fascination with the feminist writing way back before British novels thought of feminism, from Dr. O'Malley's particular ability to weave history into meaningful literary insights, from Dr. Miller's giddiness for meter and anything Whitman. My love of literature has also been nurtured by my classmates' passion for the subject, by our conversations that continue outside of the classroom and the relationships I have built from those conversations.

I hope that I've raised awareness for the greatness of the department which, according to Dr. Shires explained, hopes to give the students "entry into another world, another time, others' lives, non-human creatures and nature," through literature. Though I am a student who prefers papers to tests, I can still be considered trustworthy — so find a class that sounds intriguing and dive right in.

Stuart Woods, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Pulp

By MATTHEW SILKIN

I'm an English major. Ostensibly what this means is that I sit around dressed in tweed jackets in libraries filled with old manuscripts, holding a snifter of my bourbon of choice and talking about my favorite Percy Bysshe Shelley poem (Buffalo Trace and "Adonais", by the way). Unfortunately, quarantine has left me without tweed, large libraries, and/or bourbon, and I must make do with other pieces of literature. So, once I finished my more high-brow literature, I turned to my family's growing collection of Stuart Woods novels.

For those of you not in the know, Stuart Woods is, well, to say "a prolific author" would be a tad bit of an understatement. He's written 85 novels since 1981, a vast majority of which prominently feature

the character Stone Barrington, an NYPD detective turned somewhat private eye. I haven't read every single thing he's written — that's a bit too ambitious, even for me — but I've read a good handful of his books, my siblings have read others

and hits the major cliches of its genre. While the strict definition of pulp extends to the cheap sci-fi rags of the early 20th century (the kind of places you'd see early work from H. G. Wells, Philip K. Dick, and Isaac Asimov originally

So why do I keep reading them?

I suppose, on the one hand, I'm a bit curious to see how bad they can get. Much like the ironic enjoyment one gets from watching *The Room*, or the *schadenfreude* of seeing a prominent public figure

these so much?

I suppose, in a way, the same reason I enjoy cheap American beer, or eat junk food, or watch stupid YouTube videos — I need to turn my brain off sometimes. Yes, every time I turn the page in a Stone Barrington novel, my English major brain is yelling at me to put it down and read some literature of higher caliber and quality, but my English major brain needs to shut up every once in a while. And besides, Wells and company are all high brow literature now, so why should I let the quality of the paper on which their writing is printed determine my enjoyment of it?

And to give Woods some credit, he does know how to write a chapter-ending cliffhanger worth his salt. Sure, the payoff at the beginning of the next chapter isn't all that much great in retrospect — one example comes to mind, in which Barrington opens his room door to see his current paramour with a gun, only for the next chapter to open with her stating "This is for your protection" and handing it to him — but it's at least enough to keep one turning the page.

So yes, sometimes I'll take off the tweed, exchange the Buffalo Trace for Budweiser, and put away Ozymandias for Stone Barrington. Because darn it, we're in quarantine, and sometimes my brain needs a break.

And to Stuart Woods, if you're reading this — first of all, how did you find *The Commentator*? Second, hi! And third, go write more Stone Barrington!

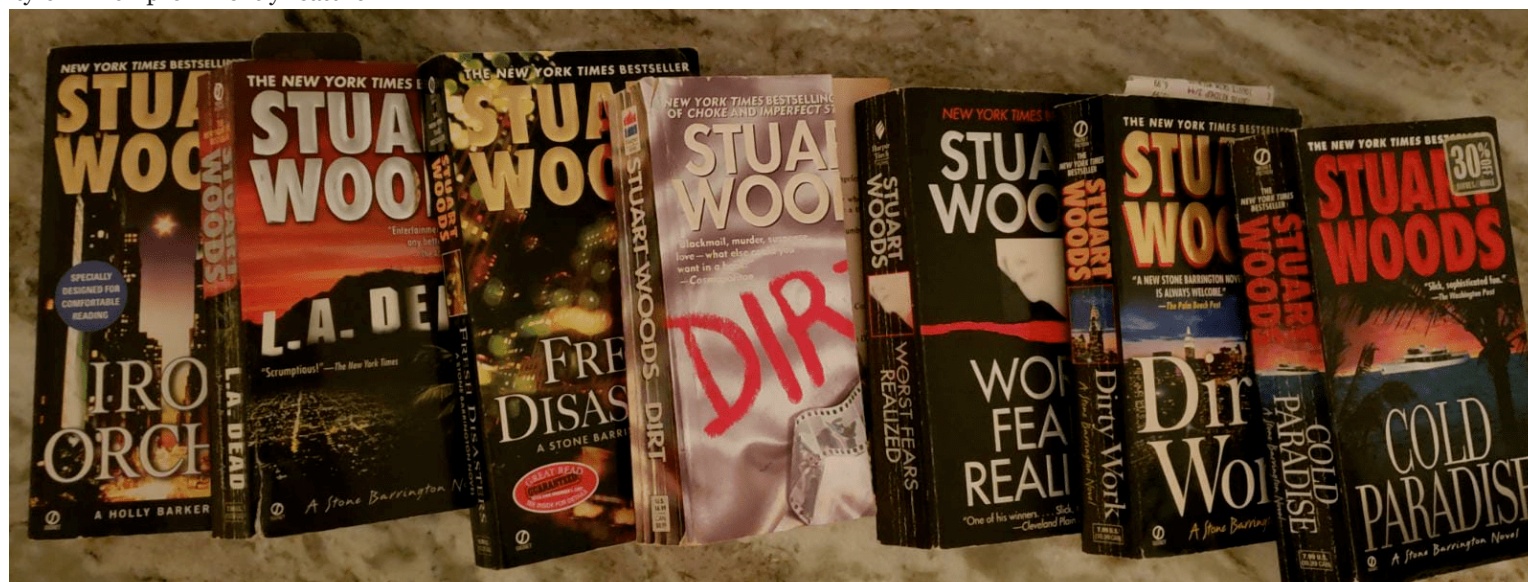
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and I'd say that I've developed a sense of what his work is like. And I have to say, my tweed-wearing, library-dwelling, bourbon-sipping, Shelley-reading English major brain... isn't liking it all that much.

For starters, it's pulpy — it's mass-produced, easily digestible, sensationalist, a bit trashy

published), I think I'm safe in extending the definition to Woods' works. They're permeated with cheap thrills, somewhat abrupt and less than satisfying endings, gratuitous descriptions of characters' wealth, and sex — a lot of sex. In fact, I'd wager to say an obscene amount of sex.

get their just desserts, or watching a dumpster burn. But as I put down my Stone Barrington novel this afternoon and reached for the next one, I realized that I could easily drop the "ironic" from my description of enjoyment for his work. Which led me back to my question: Why the heck do I enjoy



So once I finished my more highbrow literature, I turned to my family's growing collection of Stuart Woods novels.

MATTHEW SILKIN

Criteria Mysteria: A (Highly) Critical Analysis of YU's Course Requirement System

By AVRAHAM SOSNOWIK

Over my time in YU, there has been almost constant controversy over the YC core curriculum. Many argue that the very idea of the core curriculum is pointless, and that all a student really needs is their major. I don't want to talk about this point. In fact, let us assume that the core curriculum is a vital part of the education of each undergraduate. My point is to talk about how the core designations are assigned. Now I know what you're thinking; here's yet another article pointlessly complaining about YU. What if I promise not to talk about misogyny and the libraries, or even attempt to diagnose a fundamental problem in YU's ethos? Now that you're wondering what's even left to talk about, let me begin.

I took Philosophy of Law in Fall 2018. It was the ideal course: interesting material, an engaging professor, and nice classmates. For those of you new to YC, the core system used to be different (if you aren't familiar with the old system, read this). Anyway, when I took Philosophy of Law, back in my day, it was cross-listed under philosophy and political science, but not the HBSI subject.

Fast forward to Spring of 2020: Philosophy of Law is being offered again in the fall, this time tagged with the HBSI attribute. I was excited when I saw that, thinking that maybe I retroactively fulfilled my HBSI requirement. I was planning on taking that core this summer so I would be on pace to graduate in January, but maybe now I wouldn't have to. Sadly, this was not so. Not because YU doesn't allow retroactive fulfillment; they do. Instead, I was told that the two Philosophy of Law courses are "significantly different." To be fair, the course I took and this current course are taught by different professors, and the syllabi are not identical. However, when Intro to Bible was still a requirement, the courses taught by Professors Carmy and Bernstein were not identical, yet they still fulfilled the same requirement. Academic Advising explained to me that the current Philosophy of Law course was designed "specifically to conform to the requirements of the core curriculum." I'll admit that I was immediately skeptical of this claim. They didn't elaborate on the rubric they're following or how a course listed under the same name and course ID as its iteration from two years prior could be significantly different.

Despite my skepticism, I generally believe that it is incumbent upon us to trust the administration unless there is reason to believe otherwise. If they say there are some concrete criteria that they use to determine whether a course fulfills a certain requirement, then we should believe them. Here's the issue, though: when you look at the courses that have a common attribute, it is extremely unclear what this rubric might be.

After my request was denied, I went back to look up more classes to see what cores were available. I decided that I would compare the different courses tagged with the same attribute and see if I could reverse engineer whatever standards the administration claims to be following. When you look, and I encourage you to do so (if only for the humor), expect to be confused.

doubt. Maybe my situation is just a one time mistake — after all, none of us are perfect. But when I vented my frustration to my friends, I learned that I am far from the only one frustrated with the seemingly arbitrary system of attribute designation. Next semester, both at Stern and YC, there is a team-taught course called "Shakespeare, Bible, & Political Thought." This

I'm almost always in the middle of writing a paper. Some of my courses were tagged as Writing Intensive, but I wrote one paper the entire semester. Others demanded weekly writing assignments or four to five large papers over the semester, but weren't deemed WI. In fact, on the WI website (yeah, it has its own website) it states that a course only has to have one writing as-

respect it must be fair and true to itself, or in other words, have integrity. YU's system doesn't even follow its own descriptions of their core classes. Thus, the requirement system, as it stands, completely lacks integrity.

However, I'm not just ideologically frustrated by the superficial requirements system and an administration which stubbornly defends it. The difference between retroactively counting Philosophy of Law as an HBSI and having to take another course amounts to my enrollment in an HBSI over the summer. The requirement attributions may not seem like such impactful decisions to the faculty — but it can carry significant financial repercussions for students.

Anyone who has heard their FYWR professor breathe once, knows the English department supports the core curriculum so that students will be "well-rounded." As an English major, I'm no exception. I believe in all of YU's requirements; but for this system to work in a way that's truly beneficial to students, there needs to be a set of strict, concrete and publicly available criteria for any and all course designations. I understand that, at some point, those of us that aren't educators just need to trust that the educators know what they're doing. But if the students who actually believe in the requirements don't know what the administration wants them to take away from these courses, shouldn't that be corrected? Won't we have a better chance of getting the full value of these requirements if we go in knowing what the goals are? I'm not an educator, but speaking from my experience being educated (admittedly, anecdotal evidence at best) the answer is yes. I will learn more if I know what I am trying to learn.

Anyway, the article is over, I kept my promises. Macro and micro, here I come.

The criteria for determining course requirements listed on YU's website are blatantly ignored when deciding which courses get which attributes, and we are left to wonder if there are any criteria that the administration actually follows.

Take, for example, the wide variety of courses that fulfill the Cultures Over Time (CUOT) requirement. When I think about a CUOT course, I normally envision something like the one I took, Wholly Moses, where we looked at artistic depictions of Moses throughout history. Or perhaps something like Media Revolutions: From Scroll to Screen, which, to my knowledge, goes through the technology of media throughout history. On YU's Core website, they describe the CUOT as exploring "the distinctiveness of the past in relationship to the present through an investigation of values, traditions, modes of thinking and modes of behavior of one or more cultures, beginning before 1900." In other words, a course that has Syms guys rolling their eyes and gets blacklisted by the Volozhin Yeshiva because the professor said the word "modern" without the "ish" suffix. You get the picture.

Much to my surprise, there were courses fulfilling this requirement that have seemingly nothing to do with culture or time. For example, the Philosophy department is offering a course on Kurt Gödel's theorems on the incompleteness of mathematics. For those of you who have no idea what that is, trust me when I tell you it doesn't seem to have anything to do with CUOT (beyond technically fulfilling the core requirement). Certainly, Kurt Gödel (born 1906) lived in a culture, and undoubtedly it took him quite a bit of time to come up with his theorems, but the similarities appear to stop there. Interestingly, Intermediate Spanish I also fulfills the CUOT requirement. Why? I don't know. By the way, Elementary Spanish I *doesn't* fulfill the CUOT requirement. Why? Good question. Still don't know.

Perhaps now you're wondering, "Ok, the range of courses which satisfy common requirements is a bit strange. What's your point?" Here's my point: how can a course on Gödel's theorems, Intermediate Spanish I, and Media Revolutions all overlap enough to fulfill the CUOT requirement, but Philosophy of Law and Philosophy of Law don't overlap enough to both be considered an HBSI?

At first, I tried to give the administration the benefit of the

course, tagged with the Straus Center attribute, is listed as an Honors course at Stern — but not at YC. The course will be taught by Dr. Neil Rogachevsky and Rabbi Dr. Meir Soloveichik at YC, and Dr. Matthew Holbriech and Rabbi Dr. Meir Soloveichik at Stern. Now, unless this reflects an aspersion cast on Dr. Rogachevsky's pedigree (simply ridiculous), or Stern's lower standards for Honors courses (hopefully ridiculous), we have yet another puzzling case of seemingly identical courses with an unexplained distinction.

In addition, the courses being offered in the fall that do have the HBSI attribute don't fit YU's own definition of the HBSI requirement, namely that "Students learn to interpret and analyze qualitative and quantitative data through the approaches of *at least two social science disciplines* to a substantive area of interest." I suppose the "two social science disciplines" in Principles of Economics are macro and micro.

Even when there isn't a specific issue, the designations of these requirements don't seem to follow any consistent rhyme or reason. As an English and Philosophy major,

signment to be considered "intensive." My guess is these aren't the only instances and that I'm not the only person who has experienced the seeming randomness of the requirement qualifications. The criteria for a course to fulfill a given requirement is at best obscure and at worst completely arbitrary.

Perhaps now you understand why I sound like I just heard someone say "YU and Stern" instead of "YC, Stern, and Syms." YU's rejection of my request to retroactively count Philosophy of Law as my HBSI requirement seems completely baseless. The criteria for determining course requirements listed on YU's website are blatantly ignored when deciding which courses get which attributes, and we are left to wonder if there are any criteria that the administration actually follows. What are the administration's goals concerning these requirements? How are the classes that fulfill those requirements accomplishing those goals? I don't have any idea how to precisely answer these questions, which is itself an indictment of YU's general requirement framework. I learned in my Philosophy of Law course that for a system of rules to gain



The Wilf campus

What We Lose Through Online Education

By **BETZALEL SHAPIRO**

How is everybody holding up? Are you enjoying your online classes? Passing them, I hope?

If you're anything like me, it's difficult to answer positively to any of those questions, because unfortunately, things aren't so hot right now. We're burned out. This Zoom thing may have seemed like a feasible replacement to physical classrooms several weeks ago, but by now sitting through these online sessions is exhausting, defeating and ultimately draining.

But why exactly, is this the case? One could argue that online classes, as is now the norm, offer many advantages and quality-of-life conveniences compared to more traditional classroom settings.

For one, we don't have to deal with strict bathroom policies, we can get up and effectively "leave" class whenever we feel like, and quite frankly, there's not much professors can do about that. Additionally, we can enjoy whatever food or drinks we have at our disposal, and getting a refill is as easy as wandering over to the kitchen mid-lecture. Some students have found the comfort of their beds replacing those hard, cramped desks we're all accustomed to sitting in. This is hardly a personal confession, but the fact remains, with the webcam turned off, the students of YU are free to pick their noses as they please and learn basic economics simultaneously.

Effectively, some of the stricter elements of schooling have more or less gone out the window. Class is a more casual affair these days, and in a way, this quarantine has granted us new freedoms.

But those freedoms come at a cost, one that many would agree is far too steep, and quite simply, not worth it. It's the reason that, despite these small freedoms afforded to us, we feel more trapped than ever, and being stuck at home, bound to our online routines, becomes an increasingly soul-sucking experience.

See, we're losing a very valuable aspect of our college lifestyles. Under normal circumstances, the more difficult times spent in class and studying are complemented by social opportunities. I like to think of it as a work/reward scenario. Yes, we'll spend a

day stuck in class, taking notes and allotting ourselves appropriate time to study, but then we also have our social lives. For some people, this can be more robust than for others, but quite literally, at the end of the

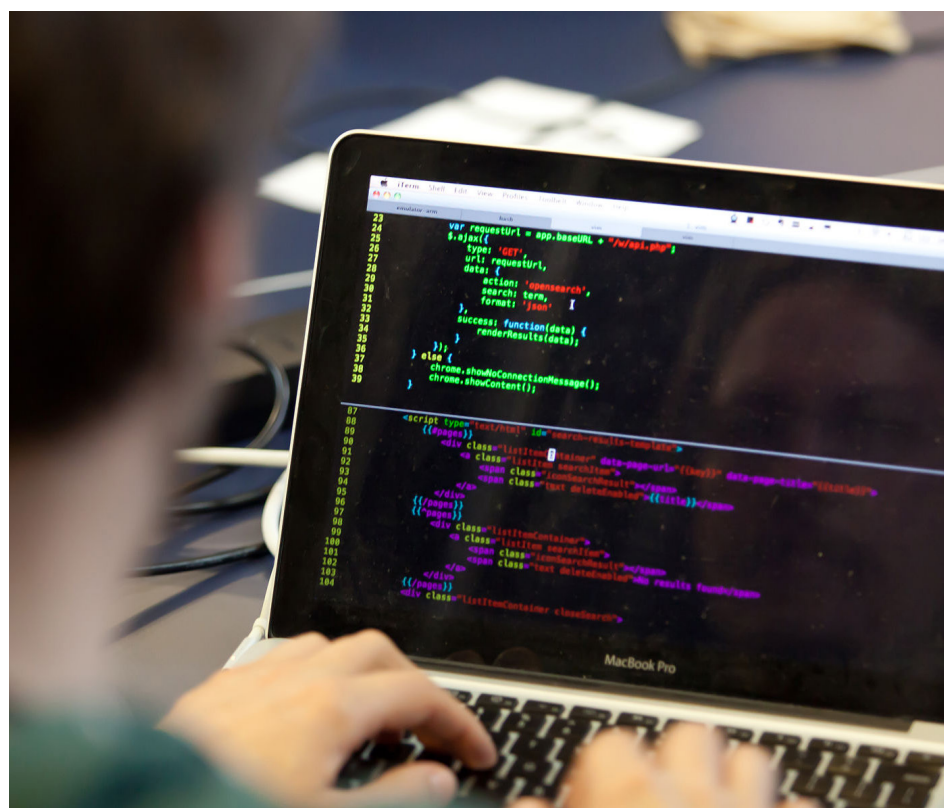
might find it difficult to hang out during the week due to overwhelming workloads, there's always extra time, whether it's spending Shabbat on campus together with one's peers or attending club events from time to time.

The beauty of the traditional college setup exists in the fact that we get a proper reprieve from the stress of constant schoolwork in the form of meeting friends for lunch, going on dates and attending club events as we please.

day, there is another side to our college lives that comes in the form of fun and friends.

Some of us are lucky to share classes with our friends, or are even able to make new ones along the way. At the moment, we may not realize it, but that physical sense of companionship goes a long way towards making that time more bearable. And to those who

The point is, there's something to be said about the value of a proper social life serving as the backdrop to our college experience. Now personally, there have been periods during my time at Yeshiva University where I wasn't "getting out" as much as I may have wanted to, and I recall feeling incredibly dulled by the monotony of my education,



The bleeding social aspect of our lives, much as many of us are trying to keep it alive online, simply cannot replace the real deal.

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the dominant force in my life then. However, given the current circumstances, those feelings are greatly amplified and I yearn for the chance to actually "live" again, in a way that is both socially productive and fulfilling.

I applaud efforts made by some of the student body and the YU community to create virtual events through platforms like Zoom and Facebook, and the fact that people are trying their best to maintain a sense of community and culture through these makeshift methods is admirable. I myself have been doing my best to stay connected to others, and I find that even friends with whom I may not have regularly hung out with much during a normal semester have been reaching out.

There's a reason for this. We're starving for genuine social connections. Frankly, I don't even need to be saying this, as it's constantly on all of our minds while this quarantine drags on and on. But coupled with the fact that we're still technically in school, attending classes and doing work, well, I think the absence of this cornerstone to our lives is noticed all the more so.

We're doing the work that college demands of us, but despite our best efforts to remain social online, the rewards of a true social life escape us.

On a technical level, Zoom classes might "cut it", despite a growing sentiment that they are more difficult to learn through. Personally, I feel as if my brain gets instantly distracted the moment I log on. But at the end of the day, I suppose it "works." But the bleeding social aspect of our lives, much as many of us are trying to keep it alive online, simply cannot replace the real deal.

The beauty of the traditional college setup exists in the fact that we get a proper reprieve from the stress of constant schoolwork in the form of meeting friends for lunch, going on dates and attending club events as we please. Seeing my friend in a small rectangle on my screen for about an hour a day and tagging them on Facebook just can't compete. The days we are currently living through enforce those same isolating feelings I had during previous semesters when I wasn't taking advantage of social opportunities, and now, we simply can't, as much as we want to.

In the end, we feel exhausted, defeated, and ultimately drained.

Making Strides Towards a Stronger Beit Midrash on Beren

By **SARAH BEN-NUN**

When I chose to attend Yeshiva University, the main reason behind it was to qualitatively and quantitatively continue my Torah learning. On the eve of my college graduation, I can testify that I got to do that through a beautiful *beit midrash*, a plethora of courses that enhanced and complemented my learning, and countless opportunities for *shiurim*. I am changed, and I have a tremendous *hakarat hatov* for what I've gained.

Every day, I came into contact with women who were eager to learn — and the range of learning materials was wide — in pursuit of a stronger and more meaningful religious experience. My fellow students were taking it seriously, my professors and Rabbis added the appropriate gravitas to it and the campus couples warmly provided — and continue to provide — so much Torah.

Yet, it does not seem to me that the university as a whole gives women's Torah learning the full attention that it deserves. Our institution offers a curriculum of Torah study, and the attitude toward it needs to

change: We need a stronger presence of constant religious mentors inhabiting Beren's *beit midrash*.

The Wilf campus, home to the men of YU, nestles the famed Glueck Beis Medrash, the pillar of Yeshiva. As such, the uptown, or Wilf, campus, is a physical *yeshiva*. The downtown Beren, or women's campus, is not.

I would like to suggest that a serious place of Torah study — such as Glueck — consists of three essential elements: students dedicated to religious growth through Torah study, religious authority figures that inhabit the physical space of the *yeshiva*, and a whole lot of books.

Having religious mentors in this specific, physical space is a pillar of the *yeshiva* world, a factor that is critical to its relevance and its success. By not providing its Stern College for Women (SCW) *beit midrash* with *enough* people like that, Yeshiva University is effectively demoting its importance as a *yeshiva*, as it denies us the full exposure to, and respect for, religious authorities; this can be detrimental to our religious growth. It is a slap in the face to Yeshiva University's women.

"There's no other time in which Jewish women have the opportunities and the access that they have today," President Berman told The Commentator in December 2018. "And we want to strengthen, encourage, support and grow that as much as possible." Do more. Access is not just filling a room with books and planting it on the Beren campus; that's not equal access. We need more of our religious mentors inhabiting this area.

should by having more mentors there, but it's not there yet.

It is slow and steady strides that will get our Torah to a place of proper attention and authority, and, though I won't be here to see it, I look forward to Mrs. Shoshana Schechter's appointment as the Associate Dean for Torah Studies at SCW. I hope to see more religious authorities inside this space, to see those who are already in the build-

The beit midrash on Beren sometimes seems to me like a symbolic space, in that it symbolizes a perfected place of Torah study — it's quite incredible, and has women studying in there almost all of the time.

The *beit midrash* on Beren sometimes seems to me like a symbolic space, in that it symbolizes a perfected place of Torah study; it's quite incredible and has women studying in there almost all of the time. It is so close to becoming that, to becoming a place that treats its Torah learning as seriously as it

ing spend more time in the *beit midrash* establish a presence there. I hope that she will continue to advance the institution on the path it's already started going on, and take it to a place where our Torah study gets the proper attention and the proper *kavod* that it deserves.

An Editorial Discussion: Analyzing the in-Home Work Model

By **ELI FRISHMAN** and
EITAN LAVIAN

Editor's Note: As COVID-19 has shuttered corporate America, professionals are forced to work from home. In this edition of an Editorial Discussion, the Business editors examine the in-home model and how various professions are adapting.

Eli Frishman: How's school from home been for you?

Eitan Lavian: Surprisingly, schoolwork has been the least of my worries. The bigger challenge was adjusting to my current environment. Even today, I am continuously tested and trying to find new ways of being more productive. However, although this is the case, the fact that others are facing the same challenge helps me cope with the situation.

EF: Yes. I can definitely relate. Adjusting to a new work environment is tough and not having a library to pound out some work makes finishing projects and school work much harder. I've been setting one-hour timers where I'm not allowed to be distracted. This way, I can ensure that I devote my focus, at least for a short amount of time, solely to being productive. But like you said, the struggles are universal and everyone is forced to deal with this new work reality.

EL: Exactly. After talking to a few people in Finance, I realized that students have it way better. At the end of the day, we are not at risk of losing our jobs. We wake

up, put on a shirt and join a Zoom with all of our friends.

EF: Luckily, the camera only focuses on our torsos...

EL: True. Additionally, people who are working also have to maintain the same professional standards at home, while, in many cases, they are expected to accomplish a larger workload.

EF: I've been speaking to a number of accountants and they've been saying that the work is the same but busy season has been especially brutal with everything else going on. And naturally, since people are never actually leaving work to go home, they end up working more than they were used to.

EL: Interesting. In a way, you are working 24/7, because your home has become your office. On that note, how have audits been conducted?

EF: Normally, for accountants who work in audit, if they need additional information to verify financials, they go to their clients. Now, they're emailing and calling, and when collaborating, they use video chats. Interestingly, tax accountants who primarily work in their set offices and don't usually go to clients, aren't experiencing that much of a change. What about finance?

EL: Things have been a little different for investment banks. For example, there has been a decrease in M&A activity. Of course, this also depends on specific sectors; however, recently many deals have either fallen through or are currently on hold. Companies are not looking to perform any transactions.

The markets are incredibly volatile and this creates uncertainty towards a company's true valuation. However, because banks do a great deal of pitching, that has continued.

In a way, you are working 24/7, because your home has become your office.

EF: It seems like every profession is adapting similarly. Recently, the Supreme Court was forced to hear oral arguments over the phone, and outside of litigation, lawyers are also sticking to a similar work model; drafting and reviewing

documents is the same regardless of location. Even doctors are conducting routine checkups through video chats. I recently experienced this form of medicine first hand and it actually worked pretty well.

EL: Although many industries have been using technology to adjust to the current situation, I still believe the restricted face-to-face contact for deals has made it harder to secure new transactions.

EF: Yes, in every profession the

human element is critical.

EL: But do you think the world will take the good from what technology has offered and implement it into our future day-to-day working lives?

EF: I think people will realize that technology makes it possible to do a large chunk of their work remotely, and if not for the pandemic, this model actually seems somewhat sustainable. People are saving time commuting, and as a result there's also less air pollution. That being said, I can't wait for life to become normal again and to get out of the house!



Professionals are adapting to the in-home work model.

PIXABAY

Corporations Taking a Stand: Should They Care?

By **AVI LEKOWSKY**

Companies large and small are constantly vying for the eyes of their consumers. In an age where fast food Twitter accounts are more famous for their personalities than their food, companies are relentlessly trying to personalize their relationship with their customers. A prominent strategy for a company to achieve this is to display its social responsibility efforts. A report from Markstein in 2019 found that 70% of consumers want to know what efforts corporations are making to address social and environmental issues. The study also found that 46% of all consumers surveyed and 51% of millennials pay attention to a brand's social responsibility efforts prior to deciding to buy a product. This demonstrates something important: people care about the ethical aspects of a company and its products.

Yet, ethics are, at times, also a political argument. In 2017, President Donald Trump expressed his desire to have two national monuments decreased by millions of acres. Both monuments, Bear Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante, would be minimized in size by about 85%

and 50%, respectively. By revoking the Antiquities Act, the President sought to remove the presidential powers to designate areas of land as culturally and environmentally significant. Many environmentalists and conservationists opposed these proclamations, but the most

protest police brutality during the national anthem ignited widespread controversy. Many claim that the symbolic gesture led to Kaepernick being cut from the 49ers and to his subsequent ostracization from the NFL. Nike escalated the debate by including him in an ad

that has tried this tactic has come out unscathed. Gillette's campaign titled "The Best a Man Can Be" drew immediate firestorms of comments and boycott declarations. The campaign had little to do with men's products; instead, the commercial addressed the #Metoo

a company promises to donate a portion of their sales to a charity, highlights their worker compensation programs, or expands their efforts to help fight hunger, consumers are more likely to buy and to continue supporting their product. This demonstrates that there are some causes that consumers universally agree are good and worthwhile. But, if a cause is divisive, a company has to clearly analyze the implications of incorporating it into their marketing campaign. Patagonia's ad was successful because they were able to connect an environmental issue to their outdoorsy brand. Nike, too, was able to make the connection between athlete and athletic provider. Gillette, on the other hand, failed to make a noticeable connection between its menscare products and the messages it was displaying; the company's efforts were seen as nothing more than a cheap ploy to add "social points" to a company's profile. These case studies demonstrate that when choosing an issue to promote in the social-awareness sphere, a company must be sure that the message is tastefully produced and directly related to the brand.

If a cause is divisive, a company has to clearly analyze the implications of incorporating it into their marketing campaign.

prominent voice protesting the president's action was Patagonia, the clothing outfitter known for its rugged and outdoor styles and whose vests are ubiquitous across the professional world. Yvon Chouinard, the founder of Patagonia, even decided to temporarily redesign the company's website homepage, placing a simple, albeit pointed, text stating, "The President Stole Your Land." While it's unclear if this political attack directly affected sales, the company noted 2018 sales were up and approaching \$1 billion.

Another instance of a company taking a stance on a contentious social issue occurred when Nike featured Colin Kaepernick, the former San Francisco 49ers quarterback whose "kneeling" to

in late 2018 which was captioned with "Believe in something, even if it means sacrificing everything." Much like Kaepernick's kneeling, many people were divided on the content of the ad. Videos appeared online of people burning their Nike sneakers, while others went out of their way to buy Nike products. In an interview with *Fast Company*, Phil Knight, founder of Nike, said, "It doesn't matter how many people hate your brand as long as enough people love it. And as long as you have that attitude, you can't be afraid of offending people." That decision ultimately ended up working well for Nike. In 2018, the company received a \$6 billion brand valuation and a 31% increase in sales.

However, not every company

movement and toxic masculinity, admonishing men for their behavior towards women and rhetorically asking "is this best a man can be?" To many, it seemed like a company jumping on to whatever they thought was today's most relevant issue in society and using it to build brand awareness. Today, the ad has received 1.5 million dislikes on its YouTube page compared to 812,000 likes. But Gillette is far from the only recent example of a company misfiring with a social issue. Pepsi encountered a similar reaction while using Kendall Jenner in a commercial addressing "Black Lives Matter" protests.

While some ad campaigns are political in nature, it appears consumers are, for the most part, altruistic in their buying habits. When