

The COMMENTATOR

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Here At Last



BENJY SUSSWEIN

Glueck Center Today 185th-The Hottest Plaza in Town

BY RAFFI HOLZER

With the advent of the new school year, a variety of changes, additions, and improvements have been made all over Yeshiva University. Perhaps most visible among them however, is the new Glueck Center, across from Furst Hall on 185th St. Its gleaming contemporary façade draws a stark contrast to the more dated architectural styles that surround it. This modern touch will hopefully indicate the forward-looking stance of the Yeshiva administration. But the gleaming dreams of a freshly faced campus aside, the Glueck Center represents many changes at the moment.

As one walks down 185th, the first thing he will notice is the complete absence of cars. On both the Amsterdam and Audubon sides of the street, rally-style barricades close the street to car traffic from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. Originally, the idea was to create a new public space under the mayor's NYC Plaza Program, a program run by the Department of Transportation. Under that plan, non-profit institutions submit proposals to take underused roads and turn them – with the city's help - into public pedestrian plazas. However, the program did not have the funds to turn an entire

Continues on page 13

Glueck Center Tomorrow Nagel's Noteworthy Bagels

BY TANI COHEN

With the recent opening of Yeshiva's new Glueck Center for Jewish Studies, many around campus, both student and teacher alike, wonder how this nascent edifice will affect and impact upon Yeshiva's future. By and large, the Center's opening has brought only positive reaction from the myriads which paraded onto campus this past week. Indeed, as David Berger, Dean of Bernard Revel Graduate School and chair of Yeshiva College Jewish Studies Department, put it, "the building raises the profile of Torah Studies on campus," which even the most pessimistic of students

and scholars cannot denounce as negative. Further, one Judaic studies faculty member related how, "we should beware of substituting external attractiveness for substance, but we also believe in "Zeh Keli Ve-Anvehu:" what we cherish deserves to be beautiful." Indeed, President Joel commented how the Glueck center is, "Nothing more than a vessel, but the neshama needs a guf. The enterprise of Torah u-Madda which we have here is now dressed well. It's given permission to people to have pride in what we do."

However, many ques-

Continues on page 13

YU at 52, But No Hullaballoo Administrators Unfazed by Rank Drop, Point to Continued Tier 1 Status

BY SIMEON BOTWINICK

This year's publication of US News and World Report's annual "Best College" list ranks YU as 52, a two-spot drop from last year, only the second time in 13 years that YU has fallen below the coveted "Top 50" category. This change in ranking has met with mixed reactions in the YU world.

The last time Yeshiva was ranked at number 52 was in 2007, when the news sparked a flurry of worried conversations throughout YU. Since breaking into the coveted top 50 on the list in 1997 (at number 45), YU had held relatively steady within that range for the next ten years. The 2007 publication revealed that YU had dropped eight spots from the year before, prompting President Joel to send a letter to the university trustees assuring that Yeshiva was "at the same level or stronger" than the previous year. In 2008 YU recouped some of those losses with a rise to 50, but this year has seen a return to 52 (though US News still classifies YU as a Tier 1 university).

Yeshiva was ranked out of a total of 262 national universities, which US News and World Report's website characterizes as offering "a full

range of undergraduate majors, plus masters and Ph.D. programs" as well as emphasizing faculty research.

The ranking system gives weight to several different categories. The single largest factor (25%) is the Peer Assessment survey, in which top academics are asked to rate other universities on a scale from 1-5. Student graduation and retention rates make up 20% of the final score, as does the Faculty Resources category, which includes considerations of faculty compensation, student/faculty ratio, and class size. Student Selectivity, which includes a university's acceptance rate, the high school class standing of students accepted, and SAT and ACT test scores of incoming students, comprises 15%, and average per-student spending covers 10%. The final 10% is divided between graduation performance rate (predicted vs. actual graduation rate) and alumni giving rate.

US News maintains that its ranking formula is comprised of several different criteria designed to give "greatest weight to the opinions of those in a position to judge a school's undergraduate academic

Continues on page 6

Two YC Professors Denied Tenure

Dr. Pimpare to Leave Yeshiva After This Year, Dr. Hrnjez to Appeal the Verdict

BY MICHAEL CINNAMON AND
YAAKOV MILLER

Over the summer, Dr. Bruce Hrnjez, a professor of chemistry at Yeshiva College, and Dr. Stephen Pimpare, a professor of political science at Yeshiva College who also teaches at the Wurzweiler School of Social Work. While Dr.

Hrnjez is appealing the decision, Dr. Pimpare will leave YC after the spring 2010 semester.

Because of Dr. Hrnjez's ongoing appeals process, faculty and administrators generally declined to speak about the details of his

Continues on page 19

Inside:

Revamped English Dept: 5
Message from President Joel: 12
Messages from Student Leaders: 11, 18

Staff

Editorials

Why Centers Matter

The many improvements that greeted returnees to the Wilf campus for the Fall semester of 2009 seem to scoff in the face of those who would claim that Yeshiva faces financial danger. The economy and Madoff can play whatever games they want, but Yeshiva will roll on.

True, we may have taken a few hits. The old dean of YC has gone the way of the rising sun, and US News and World Report has dropped us two spots in their annual rankings. But we have a new, highly qualified dean, and, as President Joel pointed out, a drop of two spots isn't surprising considering the blow our endowment has taken. Taken, but more than endured, we should add, because this year's new-and-improved YU has all the makings of an institution on the rise.

YU, however, cannot rise by itself. Our administrators can review and reform the curriculum, our trustees can spend on buildings and faculty members, and our President can "enable and ennoble" until he's blue in the face, but unless we, the students of YU, start paying attention to all these things, YU cannot rise.

Many of YU's institutions are titled "centers" of some sort. We have the Glueck Center for Jewish Study, the Writing Center, the Center for the Jewish Future, the Center for Ethics, the Counseling Center, the Center for History and Philosophy of Science, the Center for Israel Studies, the Max Stern Athletic Center, the Schneier Center for International Affairs, the Career Development Center, the Center for Jewish History, and the Academic Advisement Center. Though their functions are varied, they all have one thing in common: they all need *us* at their centers.

One of the nicest features of the new Glueck Center is the row of high, majestic windows that adorn the Beit Midrash. During the day, sunlight stretches across the grand, two-story room, highlighting the hundreds of students who learn there every day. But Glueck's windows do more than invite the sun's rays to enter – they are conveniently placed at street level, allowing passing pedestrians to witness the core of our continued commitment to the Jewish tradition. No matter how pretty the building itself may be, it is the students at its center who make it the impressive sight it is.

YU's other Centers need us too. Our university is awash in opportunities waiting for us to get involved. The many institutions here exist for us and us alone, and their success depends entirely on how much we choose to utilize them. If we take advantage of them, they can greatly improve the Yeshiva experience. On the other hand, if we continue to ignore them they'll sit as sad as an empty Beit Midrash viewed through large windows.

At Long Last

Finally.

After years of anticipation and countless questions at Town Hall meetings, the Wilf Campus now proudly boasts wireless internet and a true student lounge. These long overdue additions invigorate the Wilf Campus, bringing new energy and character to a campus much criticized for its listless appearance and lack of modern amenities.

The pedestrian walkway down 185th Street further ushers Yeshiva into a new era, transforming the Wilf Campus from its strip-mall feel to a true campus more befitting the bastion of Torah u-Madda.

These additions, however, also symbolize something far greater than the convenience they provide the Yeshiva community: They highlight the potential for what can be, the power we command when our talents, resources, knowledge, and efforts are pooled towards a common, collective goal. While these changes took great effort and, along the way, encountered frustrating setbacks, we persevered to reap the fruits of teamwork and commitment.

Let us not stop here. Let this not serve as a plateau upon which we rest or a level plane through which we coast. Rather, we must view this as a new beginning, a launching pad towards an era of progress, innovation, and enhancement to the undergraduate experience and the services provided to the Yeshiva community.

Each time we log on to the appropriately named YU Wireless network, every step we take down 185th Street, and any evening we glance towards the Glueck Center as it glows in the light of the fading sun, let us remember that while we have accomplished much, we must not remain complacent. When students, faculty, and administrators work together, we can, with effort, patience, dedication, and understanding, change the Yeshiva campus for the better.

The COMMENTATOR

500 W 185th Street
New York, NY 10033
Email: commie@yucommentator.com
Telephone: (212) 795-4308
Fax: (212) 928-8637

Editor-in-Chief **Michael Cinnamon**

SENIOR STAFF

Managing Editors **Simeon Botwinick**
Isaac Silverstein

SECTION EDITORS

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Photography **Benjamin Susswein**



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CONTACT *The Commentator*

Editor-in-Chief cinnamon@yucommentator.com
News miller@yucommentator.com
Features schwab@yucommentator.com
Arts & Culture blumenthal@yucommentator.com
Opinions horowitz@yucommentator.com
Advertising westreich@yucommentator.com

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Guidelines for submission of
op-eds:

In addition to the typical arti-
cle-length opinions fare of old,
we've decided to include a
new section entitled
"Comments." This section will
feature a forum for short, one-
idea pieces between 100 to 200
words.

These or any other opinions
articles can be submitted to
horowitz@yucommentator.com

Student Pulse

1. How do you feel about Dr. Eichler's appointment as Dean of Yeshiva College?

I am Confident in Dr. Eichler's deanship	17.0%
I am not confident in Dr. Eichler's deanship	2%
I am happy that YC's dean's scholarship is in Jewish Studies	19.0%
I am unhappy that YC dean's scholarship is in Jewish studies	7.5%
I am confused by the whole thing	15.0%
Not enough information	63.3%

2. How do you feel about Dr. Cwilich's appointment as Director of the Honors Program?

I am confident in Dr. Cwilich's directorship	26.2%
I am not confident in Dr. Cwilich's directorship	11.3%
I am confused by the whole thing	7.1%
Not enough information	58.2%

42.2% of Yeshiva College students are confident in Dr. Cwilich's directorship. 43.5% of Honors Program students are confident in Dr. Cwilich's directorship, while 79.5% of non-Honors Program students said that they did not have enough information.

Campus Improvements

3. How have you found YU's new wireless internet?

I am very satisfied	18.8%
I am mostly satisfied	30.2%
I am satisfied	15.4%
I am unsatisfied	14.1%
I am very unsatisfied	14.1%
I have not really used it	7.4%

4. How have you found YU's Glueck Center for Jewish Studies?

I am very satisfied	33.6%
I am mostly satisfied	21.5%
I am satisfied	9.4%
I am unsatisfied	4.7%
I am very unsatisfied	1.3%
I have not really used it	29.5%

65.6% of first year students were either very satisfied or mostly satisfied with the new wireless internet, while that number drops to 53.9% for second year students, 42.6% for third year students, and 42.1% for fourth year students.

U.S. News and World Report Rankings

5. How do you feel about YU dropping to #52 (from #50) in U.S. News and World Report's rankings of America's best colleges?

I am upset at YU	11.3%
I am disappointed in YU	35.5%
I do not care	34.8%
This is the first I have heard about it	30.5%

40.6% of Honors Program students are disappointed in YU for falling to #52 in the U.S. News and World Report's rankings of America's best colleges while 37.2% of non-Honors Program students said they do not care.

Student Comments:

In response to- What do you think is the most important responsibility (or responsibilities) that Dr. Eichler inherits as Dean?

Minimizing the impact of faculty politics on education.

To make undergraduate research opportunities for every student in their major.

Being a representative of YU and observant Jewish community at large.

General Responses-

"As a student who is committed to staying four years at YC and plans on pursuing a PhD. in a very competitive field, the Jewish studies have, in a very real way, prevented me from taking all the necessary courses to be a competitive applicant."

"The Glueck Center doesn't have enough outlets."

179 students responded to the survey: 121 men and 58 women. By year: First (43), Second (46), Third (63), Fourth (22), Fifth or More (6)

News Briefs

The Commentator is happy to bring back **News Briefs**, a section which graced the YU newspaper of old and was reintroduced last year with much success. This section will present short, abridged news reports concerning both the Yeshiva University campuses and the greater Jewish community. The fact that these reports are smaller, less in-depth, and not subject to critical analysis is by no means indicative of their importance. On the contrary, the point of this section is to inform YU students of the many key happenings around campus and abroad. It is even possible that, as issues covered in the section progress and develop, *The Commentator* will cover these stories more fully.

Yeshiva Appoints Chief Investment Officer

In a letter to the entire Yeshiva community, President Richard M. Joel announced the appointment of Dr. Sid Browne as the University's first Chief Investment Officer. Dr. Browne, who received his doctorate in Applied Mathematics, Statistics, and Operational Research from New York University, joins Yeshiva after serving as the Chief Investment Officer for Brevan Howard's US Asset Management.

Dr. Browne has also worked for investment banking giant Goldman Sachs, and has taught at the Columbia School of Business.

In his letter, President Joel expressed the hope that Browne "will help our financial team build an investment office that embodies the quality and values of Yeshiva University and continue to advance the position of finance and economics in our educational enterprise."

A Chimichurri of Our Own

Those students who've spent their travels up Amsterdam Avenue to Yeshiva longing to purchase oddly shaped meat products at one of the various Chimichurri carts situated alongside Highbridge Park have had their prayers answered. Koshers Oasis, a food cart which spends most of its day in Midtown's Diamond District, has decided to spend its evenings on the corner of 186th and Amsterdam. Though the non-mainstream hashgachah (the cart has a handwritten note from Rabbi Yisroel Belsky certifying its

kashrus) gave some reason to pause, one senior member of *The Commentator* staff took the plunge and placed the first-ever order. The French fries were thin and crispy, but not insubstantial.

Chinese Place to Open Opposite Boys' Dormitory

After over a year of hosting a dairy, off-campus alternative to the Caf, the lot occupied by Dougie Doug's is set to undergo an overhauling culinary makeover and offer Chinese food. Many students are excited to give the new place a shot, though some have already expressed disappointment over the loss of their "cozy" hangout and reliable source of coffee. Why Dougie Doug's even bothered opening this year, we can only speculate; one former Dougie Doug's patron spoke angrily against the restaurateurs, saying "they built me up—just to let me down." It remains unclear whether the new tenants will enliven the corner of 184th and Amsterdam with the spirited Jewish music of their predecessors.

Yeshiva Hires 19 New Staff Members

Yeshiva University hired 19 new faculty members at the undergraduate and graduate level this fall, four of whom were appointed to positions at Yeshiva College, including Dr. James A. Kahn, the economics department chair, who will teach courses both at YC and Stern College. This semester he will teach a course in Money and Banking at Stern College. Dr. Kahn graduated Harvard University summa cum laude with a BA in

economics, and received his PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1986. Last year he was a visiting professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business and New York University's Stern School of Business. In 2004 he served as vice president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

Kirsty Cambell was hired to the post of assistant professor of English. Her scholarly focus is on Medieval Literature, and she is teaching a course called "Wisdom Literature of the Middle Ages" as well as a First Year Writing course. See the Feature Teacher article for more details on Kirsty Campbell. Ariel Malka was appointed to the position of assistant professor of psychology and is teaching courses in Experimental Psych and Social Psychology. Julie Napolin was hired as a visiting professor of English. She is teaching three seminars, called "American Renaissance Revisited," "Urban Life: Whitman to Delillo," and "American Music/Literatures."

Commentator Starts Twitter

The Commentator wishes to inform the YU community that it is now on Twitter. As we move further into the 21st century, *The Commentator* staff has decided to find new mediums to keep our readers up to date, especially in between issues, on YU news, events, and general information. Please use this twitter site to stay up to date with the happenings in our school and our community. You can access the account by going to <http://www.twitter.com/YUCommentator>

Dr. Eichler Begins Term as Dean of YC

Plans Underway to Revamp Undergraduate Administrative Structure

BY MICHAEL CINNAMON

Following Dr. David Srolovitz's resignation as Dean of Yeshiva College over the summer, University President Richard M. Joel announced the appointment of Dr. Barry L. Eichler to a two-year term as Dean of YC.

Dr. Srolovitz resigned to accept a joint appointment in A*STAR, a Singapore government organization dedicated to advancing the economic competitiveness of Singapore through a combination of research initiatives and self-marketing to high-tech companies.

After Dr. Srolovitz resigned, Dr. Morton Lowengrub, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, decided that, rather than conduct a search for a new Dean, Yeshiva would select an internal candidate. This decision was based mostly on time considerations, as the search which resulted in Dr. Srolovitz's appointment as Dean took over five months. "We wanted to make sure that the students were well served," Provost Lowengrub said. "We wanted a seamless transition."

While the decision of whom to select rested almost exclusively on the shoulders of Provost Lowengrub and President Joel, Provost Lowengrub consulted numerous faculty members, and Dr. Srolovitz was also part of numerous conversations. "I don't remember whose suggestion it was originally," Dr. Srolovitz said, referring to the suggestion that the deanship go to Dr. Eichler, "but we went through long lists of possibilities, and kept ending up with Dr. Eichler."

Rather than becoming an interim Dean, though, Dr. Eichler was appointed as a full Dean, albeit

only for two years. Dr. Eichler stressed the importance of this distinction, noting that he was only willing to accept the position after being promised that he would not be an interim dean, and would have a strong mandate to accomplish his goals.

However, the two-year appointment also relates to more fundamental changes currently in the making, namely the restructuring of the relationships between the various undergraduate institutions at Yeshiva.

President Joel has established a "re-imagining committee", a group of faculty charged with examining the existing relationships between the faculties of the different colleges. The purpose of the committee is to further unify the faculties, and to address undergraduate issues such as curriculum, grade inflation policies, and other matters.

Dr. Srolovitz and Provost Lowengrub believe that the committee's eventual recommendations will be implemented in about two years, roughly the same time that Dr. Eichler's deanship will conclude.

The committee is still in the early phases of its analysis, and is now moving into smaller focus groups which aim to report on specific elements of the re-imagining in late September or early October.

In terms of Dr. Eichler's priorities as Dean, he plans on continuing many of Dr. Srolovitz's initiatives, as well as picking up various new projects of his own. He intends to keep pushing the ongoing YC curriculum review, but also wishes to bring added attention to issues such as faculty governance and advising.

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English Department Unveils New Major and Curriculum

BY JONATHAN SCHWAB

As the Fall 2009 semester starts, Yeshiva College students can take note that, in the midst of a college-wide curriculum review, the English Department has redesigned its own curriculum, one with a significant emphasis on new courses, a clearer rationale for courses previously taught, and a stronger sense of what the Department represents at Yeshiva College and offers its students. A revamped and more self-evident structure of the Major gives students a “coherent and cohesive shape for [their] studies and a chance to shape them further,” according to the description given out to students at a meeting to discuss the innovations last semester, which is downloadable from the department’s website (<http://www.yu.edu/yeshivacollege/departments/english/>).

Dr. Adam Zachary Newton, the Chair of the Department since Fall 2007 and the new Ronald P. Stanton Chair in Literature and Humanities, made this project a priority immediately after arriving. He congratulated the department and his colleagues on the result, stressing their “creativity, ingenuity, and vision” as well as acknowledging “the more than considerable goodwill” that facilitated the redesign and its impressive results. A committee consisting of Professors Geyh, Jacobson, Lee, Newton, and Stewart constructed a proposal that was subsequently refined and approved by the entire department. The previous incarnations of both the major and the curriculum dated to 2004, when the department, then headed by Dr.

The new English curriculum at YC strives for a more integrative arrangement of courses, some of which focus on literary history and others that highlight different aspects of text and context.

Nochimson, followed recommendations presented by an external review from 2002. Before that, the department was structured around a thoughtful proposal authored by former Chair Joan Haahr and Dr. William Lee – all the way back in 1987. The changes made in 2004, while significant and liberating, still left a number of issues unaddressed, some noted by the reviewers themselves, some by students who wished to see different kinds of courses, and some by the whole department during the first year of Dr. Newton’s chairship, which the Department spent reading and conversing about the field and its current trends. Reflecting the current state of the discipline, the new curriculum will stress connectivity and mobility across genre, period, critical approach, and a wider range of authors and literary traditions – part of the multiple “pursuits of English”

that define the field these days. Positioning literary reading and writing at Yeshiva College as pursuits in exactly that sense, says Dr. Newton, will align our curriculum with the sorts of questions being asked of and by literature and composition departments nationally.

An equally important accompaniment to this rethinking is the collaboration between the two English departments of YC and Stern, the latter also sporting its own new curriculum (similar in some respects to YC’s). Dr. Newton and the incoming Chair at Stern, Dr. Linda Shires, envision this development as the “first fruits” of an ongoing and coordinated relationship between the two departments that will benefit both undergraduate curricula and the students of both campuses. Members of the two departments met as recently as late July in a day-long “retreat” that addressed questions of pedagogy and close reading, the internationalizing of the English classroom, and the MLA 2009 Teagle Report on the Undergraduate Major in Language and Literature; they meet again in November to share individual research. And on both campuses, the departments are looking to forge stronger ties with other departments, such as History, Foreign Languages, the Arts and Social Sciences, Jewish Studies, and even programs at Cardozo, Einstein, and the Center for Ethics, in order to construct a more interconnected space for the Humanities at YU. Of course, YU’s ongoing curricular review will play its own significant role, as the range of General Education courses with literary content and the First-Year Writing and Seminar courses are developed. The Department thus sees its own refocused major as part of a reimagined college curriculum that much more cohesively grounds the interpretation of texts and student-writing as constitutive features of an undergraduate education.

On a broad scale, the new English curriculum at YC strives for a more integrative arrangement of courses, some of which focus on literary history and others that highlight different aspects of text and context. “Traditions” (“T” in the course-catalog) is the term chosen for the former—examples being “Milton and the 17th Century,” “Selected Classical Authors,” and “The ‘60s’; “Forms” (“F” in the catalog and short for “Forms, Practices, and Communities”) designates the latter—examples being “Literature and Empire,” “Protest Poetry,” and “Renaissance Prose.” A new course developed last semester titled “Landscapes of Caribbean Literature” (a course this writer took and enjoyed immensely) illustrates that courses can be angled from the perspective of either literary tradition or genre, and the politics of reception, depending on how the instructor (in this case, Prof. Jessica Seessel) conceives it. In other words, “tradition” need not signify “olden” but can in fact be quite con-

temporary, just as “forms and practices” connotes the ways in which literature has always depended on formal procedures of composition and interpretation. The “Traditions” courses (even those taught previously) are imagined differently from what were previously designated “survey” courses; they prompt students to consider and question the concepts of how texts are placed in history and develop



Dr. Newton stressed the “creativity, ingenuity, and vision” of his colleagues in working to redesign the English major at Yeshiva

their own histories, to view the texts as dynamic rather than as static elements in an otherwise chronologically-driven reading list. The “Forms” courses will “emphasize genre and theoretical perspective,” looking toward “interpretive frameworks other than the historical or chronological” to make sense of various works and to situate writers, literary genres, and methodologies. While it is expected that English Majors will be particularly drawn to advanced electives, the new English curriculum has been designed with all YC students in mind—especially the course E 2010, “Interpreting Texts.” All of these courses will serve as a refreshing alternative to the sort of period-survey or “major authors” courses that for some students have previously been assumed as a definition of what an “English course” is supposed to represent or do, and is a real stimulus for others to choose English as their major (“We need more of you!” Dr. Newton exclaimed).

The redesign, the department hopes, will also be seen on the level of individual courses, as most classes scheduled for fall ’09 (including “Interpreting Texts: Literary Reading and Critical Practice,” the gateway course) have been rethought with the new curriculum in mind. “‘The Wasteland’ and Its Influences” taught by Dr. Steinberg, “Writing in Three Genres,” taught by Dr. Blatner, “Authorship” taught by Dr. Fitzgerald, “American Literatures, American Musics,” taught by visiting professor Julie Napolin, and “Wisdom Literature” taught by incoming medievalist Kirsty Campbell are some of the brand-new courses offered this semester. Similarly, Dr. Lee’s “The World Turned Upside Down,” Dr. Weidhorn’s “From Tradition to Modernity” and Dr. Nochimson’s

“Shakespeare: Jews and Other Differences” represent new versions of courses previously taught. In the spring, students can look forward to the following courses: “Contemporary Women Writers” taught by Dr. Seessel, Dr. Newton’s “Joseph Conrad in the 21st Century,” and “Encounters with the American Unknown” taught by Dr. Jacobson.

The critical terms that students should note in the department’s explanation of its new curriculum are “question” (as both noun and verb) and “conversation,” (as applying to both persons and the texts they read and generate), since the English Department wants students to engage actively with what they study, placing texts and traditions in dialogue with one another, as well as being solicited by them through their interpretive response. The role of “conversation” is one that the department hopes students will recognize by adding their own to the interchange already in place among department faculty regarding the major. While the idea of interpretive practice is not a new one for the English Department at YU, students should now better appreciate the coherence that gives their literary study a trajectory and recognizable structure and positions it in proximity to the interpretive practices they bring with them from the morning program.

Forming a new curriculum bolsters an already-strong department (one of YC’s two largest), allowing it to move forward with new vision and vigor. By reorganizing the major around important topics and approaches that integrate the expertise of its professors, YC has taken a significant step in the college’s movement toward institutional maturity. In addition, the successful recruitment of a junior Medievalist has added an extremely well-qualified and exciting professor to the tenure-track ranks of the department and Yeshiva College: Kirsty Campbell from the University of Toronto (see the “Featured Teacher” article on Dr. Campbell for more). Visiting Professor Julie Napolin, an Americanist from UC Berkeley, will also be joining the English department for this year, replacing Dr. Todd Thompson, who, along with Professor Erin Stalcup (both very popular with their students and colleagues at YC), has accepted a new position elsewhere.

The new English Major signals great change for the literary-minded among us; under the previous model, students were required to assemble a total of ten courses, one of which was the gateway course, another in pre-1700 British Literature, and the remainder from a mix of survey courses in British, American, and “World” literatures. In addition to the flexibility already granted by that structure, students could count up to two writing courses toward their major, meaning that it was likely few students would emerge from Yeshiva College with the same English courses under

their belt or with a comprehensive sense of disciplinary practice in English. The loose structure, while liberating, was frustrating to some, whose majors simply consisted of whichever courses looked appealing at the beginning of each semester. The new major swings the pendulum (“modestly but demonstrably,” says Dr. Newton) in the other direction, organizing the major across five distinct but interrelated areas of study that must be completed, though at the same time offering flexibility and a balance of choices.

The first of six requirements that majors must complete is the reconceived gateway course, which will be offered in multiple sections this fall, an experiment to be assessed once the college-wide curriculum review is finalized. But “Interpreting Texts” is not limited to majors, and YC students generally are encouraged to take it as early as possible, as a foundational component of their undergraduate education. The gateway course, in the language of the new curriculum, asks “the question of texts”—what is literary experience, why read, why write, how to frame such inquiries critically—and orients the major as a graded series of interpretive practices, not just a list of authors or books. As Dr. Newton’s message from the Chair on the department website puts it: since literary texts themselves insistently pose a version of Rashi’s question, “hamikra hazeh omer darsheni” (“this text says ‘interpret me’”), the gateway course will focus on the dynamic of call and response, studying the way texts invite, compel, and engage communities of

Though the relative freedom of the old major was liberating to some, many others found it frustrating and sought a more focused curriculum.

readers.

From there, students will move on to the second and third required areas of the major: “Traditions” and “Forms,” which are meant to work in tandem with each other. One of the two “Traditions” courses must be pre-18th century, though this need not be limited to British literature. In addition to the horizontal movement through the two main categories of study, the new curriculum adds an important element of guiding students vertically, from introductory-level “2000” courses to more advanced “3000” level courses as they progress through the major.

Students will be free (as before) to take Writing courses, though one Writing Course is also mandated as

continues on page 14

Yeshiva Campuses Shed Their Wires

BY ISAAC SILVERSTEIN

After much planning and amidst widespread student fanfare, Yeshiva University Information Technology Services installed wireless internet throughout the Wilf and Beren campuses over the summer. Wireless internet, a subject often discussed at President Joel's Town Hall Meetings, replaces the wired internet which previously served the undergraduate residence halls. The wireless internet also covers the Glueck Center, the Gottesman Library and some outdoor areas

some degree satisfied with the new wireless network. More specifically, 30.7% of students reported that they were "mostly satisfied," 18.7% were "very satisfied," while 15.3% were "satisfied." The poll reveals that the longer students have been on campus, the more likely they are to be unsatisfied with the wireless internet.

Though excited about the new service, some students expressed fear that the new wireless internet will be more prone to security breaches than the wired-based internet was. When asked about stu-

While plans for expanded wireless internet had been in the works for the past three years, Vice President of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer Marc Milstein noted that the \$140 million Board of the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) grant Yeshiva recently received helped "provide the Internet and network capacity needed to support wireless in the residence halls."

along Amsterdam Avenue, with plans to eventually extend across the entire Wilf campus.

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Students have responded positively to the expanded wireless service. Sixty five percent of students surveyed in *The Commentator's* Student Pulse (see page 3) reported that they were to

dents' concerns, Milstein said that ITS has taken many precautionary measures. "We are using a high-level security protocol (802.1x), and we are in the process of upgrading our firewalling functionality," he assured. "In the meantime, we have intensified our capability to closely monitor traffic for possible security events, and take action as required."

Milstein also noted that ITS is currently addressing issues students raised regarding weak wireless signal in the undergraduate dormitories. Most recently, on Tuesday, September 1, ITS enhanced the radio strength of access points in the Morgenstern Residence Hall, and is currently "working to diagnose [further] issues."

Volpe Steps Down, Confident in Future of Advisement Center

BY BENJAMIN ABRAMOWITZ

On Monday, August 31st, after a five-year tenure marked by commitment to Yeshiva student life and dramatic on-campus change, Dr. Thea Volpe, director of Academic Advisement, left her Laurel Hill Terrace suite for the last time. While the loss of Dr. Volpe constitutes a serious blow to the entire Yeshiva community, the strong, capable advisement network she built ensures that Yeshiva Students will continue to benefit from the impact she has had on the Wilf campus for many years to come.

Dr. Volpe will now work for MedEdPath, a consortium offering a unique alternative to the typical course of study for American medical students. As Vice President for Enrollment Management, she will have the opportunity to travel internationally to meet with medical school advisers and pre-med students to discuss this new option. Through the MedEdPath program, students will complete two years of clinical training at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia, followed by two years of clinical training at the prestigious Ochsner Clinic in New Orleans, and then begin work in mainstream American residencies. The program holds especial allure to "students wanting a global medical education," says Harvey Marshak, CEO of MedEdPath.

Her technical experience as Yeshiva's Advisement Director made Dr. Volpe a particularly attractive applicant for the job. She received an excited response 20 minutes after submitting her resume. Dr. Volpe noted, "I think they were interested in me because I know how to talk to pre-med students, especially those having a rough time with acceptance. It's not a sales job. It's an advising

job and a counseling job."

Indeed, Dr. Volpe's sensitivity and interpersonal skills made her and the team of advisers she assembled a valuable element of the Yeshiva community. "I feel very good about getting people to their goal," she said. "That's what I like best about advising: figuring out with a student what his goal is and then helping him get there; and often, guiding the student beyond where he set his sights." While Dr. Volpe will certainly be missed by her colleagues, the loss



While Dr. Volpe will certainly be missed by her colleagues, the loss will perhaps hit hardest among Yeshiva students, many of whom formed strong personal relationships with the Advisement Director.

will perhaps hit hardest among Yeshiva students, many of whom formed strong personal relationships with the Advisement Director. Dr. Volpe emphasized, "What made my time here, first and foremost, was the students. I'm friends with a lot of them." She went to many students' weddings and is Facebook friends with even more. "In fact," she noted, "I just drove one of them back to college. He used my car to load and unload his stuff." Dr. Volpe awaits the return of her car keys.

Dr. Volpe's feelings

towards the students are reciprocal. "I feel bad that future students won't get to benefit from the wisdom of Dr. Volpe," said YC alumnus, Asher Morris ('09). Reflecting on his interactions with Dr. Volpe "as both a student and a student journalist," YC alumnus Zev Eleff ('09) remarked that he "always left her office with the sense that she wanted the best for Yeshiva College and its students." Current student AJ Berkovitz (YC'11) remarked that while the Advisement Center is "still one of the most student-friendly offices in the YU bureaucracy," it will "forever lack the kindness, charm and wit of Dr. Volpe." Berkovitz recounts positively helpful Academic Advisement meetings with Dr. Volpe, adding, "She will sorely be missed."

Reflecting upon the changes she made within the Academic Advisement Center in the past five years, Dr. Volpe said, "I think what I did here was a build a culture of true advising and professionalism. I hired professionals and got first-rate faculty advisers. I built a whole team of people who share my vision of developmental advising...and my passion." In addition to gathering and forming such a committed group of advisers, Dr. Volpe transformed the Advisement Center on an organizational level. When Dr. Volpe first came to Yeshiva, students could not make advising appointments; rather, they stood lined-up outside the Advisement office, (aggravated and) anxiously waiting two to three hours just to see an adviser. "It was chaotic," she said. The frazzled advisers could not treat students, by the time they made it into the office, "with dignity" or "like responsible adults." "I just thought to myself," Dr. Volpe said, "there is something so wrong

continues on page 7

US News Drops YU out of its Top 50

continued from front page

excellence." However, President Joel pointed out that not all of US News' factors make sense when dealing with Yeshiva's unique mission. "They look at what percentage of our students come from the top 10% of their high schools," he said. "But we can't limit ourselves to that. We're talking about only 3,000 Jewish students nationwide looking at us every year."

In 2004, Peter Ferrara, then-Senior Director of YU's Department of Communications and Public Affairs, pointed out to *The Commentator* that the peer-assessment section of the rankings disadvantages Yeshiva. Its small student population makes it unlikely to be widely popular, explained Ferrara. "If you're not Jewish, you won't even know about YU."

YU's student body seemed uncertain how to react to the news of the drop. In a recent poll conducted by *The Commentator* (see Student Pulse, page 3), 36% of students polled said they were "disappointed in YU," while 35% reported that they "do not care" about the change.

YU's administrators, on the other hand, seemed uniformly unfazed. "Our focus stays the same," stated Dr. Hillel Davis, Vice President of University Life, "and that is to build the best Yeshiva University possible. More important than US News recognizing the greatness of the place is that our students and community recognize how special and unique the nature and quality of YU is."

Murray Sragow, Associate Director of Admissions, maintained

that the drop was not significant, simply because of who moved up to take YU's place. "With whom are we in competition for our students?" he asked. "Look at the top schools - Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Columbia - these are who we compete with for our honors students. With respect to these the recent rankings have brought no change." The universities currently immediately ahead of YU on the list are University of Miami, Tulane University, and University of Texas-Austin.

"It would be nice to say we are in the top 50," acknowledged Sragow, "but we are still able to say what has been true for a while now: we are the third best school in New York City, behind Columbia and NYU."

Dr. John Fisher, Director of Enrollment, opined that the change

in rankings would have no effect on enrollment at YU. "When we talk to prospective students enrolled in Modern Orthodox day schools or Israel seminaries it's an easy sell to explain why we are the #1 choice for those who meet our admissions criteria," he explained. "In Jewish Studies no other university offers choices of extraordinary transitional programs like Mechinah, the highest level of learning available anywhere, plus everything in between, campus life which embraces Jewish life and Halachic values, and academic programs which rank among the top fifth of all 260 national research universities in the country. Whether we are 50 or 52 is not meaningful."

President Joel expressed interest in the rankings, but insisted that they were not overly significant.

"US News is on people's radar screens," he said, "but not in ways that are meaningful to our constituency." More important than US News' rankings are "the criteria that we'll all know better than anyone else: What's the quality of our Torah? What's the nature of the environment and network we've created? How successful are we at encouraging dreaming and thinking?"

In fact, added President Joel, "In light of all the challenges of this past year, the fact that we are where we are is a great tribute to what YU is."

President Joel said that in the end, he was focused less on the rankings than on another question: "How are we doing at enabling and ennobling? I don't know another university that has that theme."

The NBN Experience

By SAMMY STEINER

Outside the windows of YU's dormitories, planes disappear into an overcast sky, reminding me of the Aliyah flight that I experienced this past summer. I can still recall the exited and anxious faces of young adults ready to start university or join the army, in a foreign yet familiar country. I can hear the shouts of little children running amok while their parents, stressed with the dual anxieties of moving and a twelve-hour flight, call after them with harried expressions. I can feel the peace and resolution of a seventy-one year old woman who is finally returning to the land she dreamed of living in fifty years ago. However, most of all, I can taste the sweet promise of what the future might hold for each one of these people in Israel.

I was a tourist on that flight and have not, as of yet, made Aliyah. My story begins last January after I emailed the "Contact Us" link on the Nefesh B'Nefesh website on behalf of *The Commentator* with a proposal to write a series of articles chronicling the Aliyah process with their organization. Sharon Millendorf, the Program Coordinator for Students and Young Professionals with NBN, returned my email almost immediately with a time and place to meet and discuss possibilities. After our meeting, I contacted Renana Levine, the manager of Public Relations and Communications with NBN, and we arranged that I would accompany Nefesh B'Nefesh's July 7th charter flight.

I set out to discover what makes NBN so internationally successful, with over thirty-seven Aliyah charter flights, twenty thousand immigrants from the USA, Canada, and the UK, with a very impressive ninety-eight percent retention rate. I met and worked with the people who keep this organization running, people who travel back and forth between America and Israel more often than the flight attendants do. Most importantly, I got to know the

brave men, women, and children, the "Olim Chadashim," as they embarked on possibly the greatest transition of their lives. In the process, I chased after dogs, was chased after by the head of El-Al security, traveled all over Israel, and made many friends.

Over the next several issues of *The Commentator*, I will take you on my journey and follow several adventurous men and women as they transport their lives to their new homes. You will meet Sirena Rubinoff, a twenty three year old



graduate from Northwestern University with a degree in Broadcast Journalism, the Serota family from Chicago who just moved to Modiin, and Josh Polsky, a business entrepreneur who is currently staying at an absorption center in Jerusalem, along with many others. You will join me as I walk through the John F. Kennedy airport as the Olim eat cake, listen to inspirational speeches by the founders of NBN, and keep an eye on their children. You will fly with me on the twelve-hour flight with the exhausted passengers and the inexhaustible NBN staff. Finally, you will touch down with us in Ben Gurion Airport and feel the excitement as the door opens and lets in the sweet air of our homeland. We will meet the cheering soldiers and children who came to join us in this momentous occasion. We will listen to the inspirational words of people like Natan Sharansky as we hug and reconnect with old friends and new neighbors. When it is all over and everyone heads home, you, along with all the olim on that flight and me, will finally feel it sink in.

Re-Orienting Orientation

By MICHAEL SIEV

Orientation 2009 took place from Sunday August 23 through August 25. For three days new and returning students moved into dorms, reconnected with friends and peers and prepared for the semester ahead. All the students had an enjoyable experience and the program ran smoothly, despite the staggering layers of complexity inherent in such an undertaking.

Bradley Karasik, Associate Dean of Students, credits interdepartmental coordination for the smooth execution of Orientation 2009. The different departments "have been building better cooperation over the past few years and we're beginning to reap the rewards. Orientation was a team effort across the whole campus. Everyone clicked; there were no weak links. It certainly made my job easier," he noted.

One much appreciated departure from years past was the ease of registration. All the major offices that students must deal with in the registration procedure were present in Furst Hall room 501, facilitating and streamlining a process that has been, in past years, rather stressful and unintuitive. This synergy was made possible by many meetings where concerns were aired and solutions proposed before the problems arose on orientation day. The extra effort put in by the YU staff paid off handsomely and gone were those ghosts of years past, running back and forth from Belfer to Furst to Laurel Hill with green "Add/Drop" forms in their hands.

One worry that students had expressed before Orientation was how the current fiscal situation would affect such large university programs, such as Orientation.

Budgeting was definitely a concern due to the economic realities that the University faces, acknowl-

edged Dean Karasik. But he was quick to add that it was not the only concern. "We tried to trim the budget without the program suffering," noted Dean Karasik. "First we focused on the program, then we figured out how to fit it into the budget."

The key to coming in under budget, as Orientation did this year, was to change the little things. The guiding principle was the belief that many small, cost efficient changes can add up without a noticeable difference to the program.

Orientation booklets were not printed this year. Instead, information was kept up-to-date on the Orientation website, and students received a schedule upon arrival. Furthermore, all necessary printing was done in-house. This resulted in a great reduction in printing costs and saved a significant amount of money.

The use of the website also allowed for a more fluid, dynamic process and eliminated many of the hassles of previous years – if a room needed to be changed at the last minute, the change was noted on the website. Gone was the necessity of the ever-present "Room Change" sign from years past. "We took the negative of eliminating the orientation brochure, and turned it into a positive," said Dean Karasik.

Instead of T-shirts, Orientation staff were issued custom name badges. Other departments also stepped up, and sponsored free giveaways and events. The BPA-free water bottles were co-sponsored by the Office of Energy and Sustainability and the Office of Alumni Affairs and Annual Giving. The Welcome Back Bash was sponsored by YSU.

Orientation Staff Volunteers also took a larger role in the proceedings than in years past, assisting in the setting up of meals and other pro-

grams, reducing the amount of money that needed to be spent on hired help. These were "little changes that didn't hinder the experience," stated Dean Karasik.

However, in the end, it all comes down to the new students – how did this year's crop of freshmen and sophomores, collectively known by the upperclassmen as "FTOC's" (First Time On Campus students) respond to the offering presented by YU?

Some students felt very satisfied by the programming. Charles Zami (YC '12) enjoyed his Orientation experience, stating that "Orientation was very nice," a sentiment echoed by others. Other students declared that "New Roc City was fun."

However, some freshmen were not as enthused. Choosing to remain anonymous, some commented that many of the programs "were too long and lacked context." One student went so far as to say that he "did not feel oriented" after the three-day program.

Other students pointed to the relatively low number of night activities offered. While three buses full of new students traveled to New Roc City on one of the nights, some students opined that "there was a lot of downtime; we could have used more night activities."

These criticisms do not change the fact that for those three days, one did not have to look far to find a smiling face, indicating that Orientation 2009 continued on the spirit of the YU orientations of the past few years. What will next year bring? That has yet to be decided, but for now the Office of Student Affairs is still basking in the knowledge that "we put out a program that we're very proud of," said Dean Karasik.

Volpe Steps Down

continued from page 6

with this." Now, the Center boasts an online appointment system through which students can choose which adviser they will meet. Additionally, students now consult with advisers specific to their majors, which helps ensure that students receive the most personalized possible help. Through her overhauling developments to the Advisement Center, Dr. Volpe feels she "got the YC faculty to feel that the Advisement Center was a valuable part of their work-life. They know that students will get good advice and valuable help."

Dr. Volpe stressed the importance of illuminating to students the rich

array of courses of study and professional fields available to them. Many students find themselves strongly compelled to pursue a profession that will please their parents. "But," Dr. Volpe said, "while your parents have a point-of-view, it might not be yours, and you may have gotten to the point developmentally where you understand that what counts in the end is your own." She pointed to her own "checkered" academic history: after a stellar performance in the Upper East Side's famously competitive Dalton High School, Dr. Volpe finished her first semester at New York University with a GPA of 1.6—"from registration to probation." Yet, Dr. Volpe stressed that "it was okay: I had peo-

ple who helped me." She believes that all advisers loved being students and most are looking "to pay it forward." The advisers here in Yeshiva, she noted, "are all experts. This is their profession. It's not a fallback job. It's what they love to do and the students know that."

Dr. Volpe is sad to leave Yeshiva and treasures the friendships she has built here with both faculty and students. The main reason for her decision is the opportunity to travel. "I'm addicted to the travelling," she said, and mentioned that former dean David Srolovitz invited her to make a stopover and visit him in Singapore. She is confident that her team at the Advisement Center will carry on her vision, especially with

the new leadership of Dean Barry Eichler.

"Dean Eichler shares my vision of what I do. He really gets it," Dr. Volpe proudly said. "I'll truly miss not being able to work with Dean Eichler. It would have been a great opportunity." Dr. Volpe maintained a cheery outlook on the future of Academic Advising, confident that she has left it in the hands of competent, committed advisers whose work, under the administration of Dean Eichler, Dean Sugarman and Dean Viswanathan, will never be underappreciated. While no one has yet been hired to replace Dr. Volpe, Yeshiva has already run an ad to fill her position. Confident the college will select a capable candidate, Dr.

Volpe felt that "Dean Eichler understands exactly what kind of person they need."

Regarding the transition to a new directorship, Dr. Volpe stressed that "students should not be worried about the change. If anything, there is likely to be more help here, not less." While the loss of Dr. Volpe saddens many, she bequeaths to the Yeshiva community a strong, professional Advisement Center, which will continue to serve and facilitate students' academic careers.

Changing Honors

The Prestigious Program Gears Up for a New Year

BY BENJAMIN ABRAMOWITZ

Beginning his first year as director of the Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein, Dr. Gabriel Cwilich anticipates exciting developments for this semester. Dr. Cwilich's history of commitment to the Honors Program has allowed him to begin immediate, serious work at the very start of the academic year. Honors students can look forward to increased student representation among Honors administrative discussions, the number and variety of Honors courses offered, and the assembly of an Honors Program Library.

Under the new leadership of Dean Barry Eichler who, like Cwilich, believes fervently in student participation in administrative affairs, Honors students will get a chance to run for one of seven new seats on the Honors Student Board. Like the first Honors Student Board of last year, this year's Board members will communicate and meet with the Yeshiva College Honors Committee to vocalize student concerns to administrators and faculty members. Student representatives to the Honors Committee act as valuable sounding boards to faculty members seeking student opinions on important Honors Program issues. Julian Horowitz (YC '10), who served as one of two student liaisons to the Honors Committee last year, commented, "It was a tremendous opportunity to be part of the decision-making process." Indeed, the Honors Program's inclusion of students in directorial dialogue reflects an admirably progressive mindset, and is sure to bring greater attention to student concerns. Horowitz continued, "It was exciting and scary at the same time to be able to sit and speak alongside some of the college's most active faculty members."

Through the conduit of the Honors Student Board, last year, many YC Honors students expressed their frustrations over the paucity of Honors courses offered and the uneven distribution of Honors courses across departments. Dr. Cwilich sought speedy improvement. He has encouraged department heads to persuade their faculty to teach Honors courses, resulting in the abundance of Honors courses this semester. Dr. Cwilich hopes for greater student input after the election of new student representatives this year to present the most favorable array of Honors courses next semester.

Thanks to a \$10,000 donation from the Earhart Foundation received by Dr. James Otteson, YC professor of philosophy, during his directorship of the Honors Program, the Program will purchase books to build a new Honors Library. While the Honors Program

administration has yet to decide on a location for the Library, it carries student hopes to be a valuable on-campus resource and enjoyable area in which to spend time.

Additionally, this marks a monumental year for the Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein Honors Program from a strictly statistical perspective. This year's freshman class is the biggest in history, with a record-



Dr. Gabriel Cwilich, the new director of the Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein Honors program, anticipates exciting developments for this semester.

shattering 64 students enrolled in Freshman Honors Seminars. Moreover, for the third consecutive semester, the college has more students taking Honors courses than ever before. Also new this semester, honors courses will have budgets for their own extra-curricular activities, including movie nights, which the Honors Lounge in the Furst Hall basement will be fully equipped to host. Finally, this year, the college boasts the highest number of students ever preparing Honors Thesis proposals.

This year will also witness the arrival of new, renowned educators. Dr. Murray Dry, a Middlebury College professor of political science who has experience teaching at Harvard University, as well as the law schools of Stanford University and University of Pennsylvania, has joined the Yeshiva community for a year. His Friday course, "American Constitutional Law," immediately attracted many students. In the spring Yeshiva will welcome the visiting professorship of a major figure in the world of Latin American literature as well as a course taught by Dr. Adrienne Asch from YU's Center for Ethics. The Honors Program also has plans for exciting new activities, many jointly coordinated with Stern College for Women's S. Daniel Abraham Honors Program, the Center for Ethics, Center for the Philosophy of Science, and Cardozo School of Law's Center for Jewish Law and Contemporary Civilization.

Psst? Emm...Uhh!=Can you Pass the Salt?

(Shabbos) Table Talk

BY TANI COHN

With pictures of delicious challah rolls alongside bottles of sparkling Kedem grape juice placed atop latticed white table cloths and seen via the light of glowing candles, Shabbat is often portrayed as a beautiful experience for both body and soul. A time for relaxation and spiritual growth, the experience of Shabbat led one medieval composer to term it as "like the world to come." Yet, here at Yeshiva University, Shabbat does not always take on that warm and enlightening spiritual experience; indeed, for many on the Wilf campus it remains a begrudging choice for the weekend. *The Commentator* spoke with students and faculty around campus in an attempt to capture the moods, both positive and negative, surrounding the Shabbat experience in the Heights and beyond.

KOL MIKADAISH SHVEI

While the number of weekend Wilf inhabitants remains small, their range of reasons for staying in seems smaller. The majority of students interviewed cited work and sleep as their primary reasons for staying in Jonathan, a YC senior, related, "It's a great way to get a lot of work done on Friday afternoons and Saturday nights," adding, "it's my first choice for whenever I want to do a lot of work before and after – and sleep all through – Shabbat." With such enthusiasm for the Shabbat experience, it's no wonder why more than eighty percent of the Wilf campus leaves for Shabbat.

Indeed, many students who frequent the Wilf campus on the weekends praise the program for similar reasons, emphasizing the opportunity for sleep and ample free time. Ari, a YC Junior (whose work schedule resembles that of the typical sleep-deprived MYP/Pre-Med student) commented, "I stay in for a few reasons; mainly it's relaxing and gives me lots of free time to sleep." He also added, "If this were a terrible place I wouldn't stay – the guests, the food, and the free time to relax all make it a nice program. Also, it allows me to get work done both immediately before and after Shabbat." The ability to do work before and after, as well as the time to achieve some well deserved R&R in between, seems to be the biggest draw for Shabbat on campus.

To be sure, many of those who do end up staying, whether out of choice, obligation, or need, do seem to enjoy, or at least not be excessively pained, by their weekends in the Heights. Dovie, a YC Sophomore and foreign student, told *The Commentator*, "as a foreign student, I feel at home and

enjoy my own space at YU on Shabbat." He also added the seemingly-obligatory qualifier, "it lets me make the most of my time on Friday afternoon and Saturday night."

Others, when asked about their feelings regarding Shabbat in the Heights, answered with a synthesis of sarcasm and seriousness. David, a YC senior, commented, "Shabbat in YU is fine, although at times the way the program is run makes me feel like I'm attending a never-ending middle school NCSY Shabbaton."

YU's Office of Student Affairs states that it strives to make Shabbat an enjoyable day of rest for all who choose to observe it, or at least for those who sign up in the Caf by Friday morning. Brad Karasik, Associate Dean of Students related how, "there's one overriding goal, namely, that YU should serve as a place for all who desire to stay in for Shabbat...so we try our hardest to make it a positive experience." Without a doubt, the Office of Student Affairs puts tremendous effort into arranging Shabbat on campus. However, what is less certain is exactly how

One senior commented that "Shabbat in YU is fine, although at times the way the program is run makes me feel like I'm attending a never-ending middle school NCSY Shabbaton."

successful these efforts have been in accomplishing their intended goal.

With the current price tag set at a mere ten dollars for three meals, an Oneg, Kiddush, and Meleve Malka, Shabbat is, if nothing else, an incredible bargain. Yet, rumors are abounding about a possible hike in the price of a Shabbat ticket. Mr. Karasik, commented that "general costs have risen and food costs have increased. We have yet to set the price but it will probably be nominally higher next year." Because of the rising cost, some students, as many already do, may opt to host their own meals, whether via cooking on their own or buying take-out, especially those who live in IHP or rent their own apartments.

D'BABAVEL
D'BEYISRAEL

The vast majority of the current undergraduate student population at Yeshiva has enjoyed a gap year

or two between high school and college. During this time many were exposed to an Israeli Yeshiva environment, whether wholly American or integrated with Israeli peers. In either case, Shabbat at these institutions often took on a special meaning, an atmosphere replete with spirituality and Torah learning, alongside Yerushalmi kugel, pickles, and occasional waiter duty. *The Commentator* spoke to several students concerning their thoughts on the contrast between YU's Shabbat experience and that of their Israeli Yeshivas.

Avi, a YC Junior who attended an Israeli yeshiva for two years stated that, "I feel that the experience which I had in my Israeli yeshiva was far superior, mostly because I felt more of a connection to the place and people; essentially, I actually desired to spend more time there." Indeed many students replicate this thought, such as Dovie, who poignantly related how "At my Israel-Yeshiva there existed a communal theme. Here, we come together for eating and the rest of the day is vacuous, which can highlight the loneliness one at times experiences. However, the plus side here is that it's more autonomous, I can do what I want when I want, there's no official schedule or need to be part of a greater community or Beit Midrash.

Similarly, Aryeh, a YC Junior, commented that "In some ways YU on Shabbat is similar to yeshiva in Israel. In Israel I stayed in to learn more, as well as to hear the Rabbis speak. Here I'll stay for R' Rosensweig or R' Shachter, not necessarily for the others." He added, "In Israel I loved the Tisch, it was a real highlight of Shabbat. Here however, I really don't care for it; I usually just take food and leave." While no one believes Shabbat at YU can entirely duplicate the Israel experience, many students support implementing certain elements of that experience at YU where and when possible. Exactly how these wishes, whether they be Tischim or In-Shabbatot, can be successfully realized on our campus remains to be seen.

U'LESHADAICH
HABANOS!

While the Wilf campus offers much, Shabbat at the Beren Campus does hold its own perks, including frosted cupcakes and mediocre hotel rooms. Of course, like all issues involving the mixing of genders, Shabbat at Stern is extremely and entirely unnecessarily complicated and many students hold their own opinions on the matter. Yonatan, a YC senior related how "Shabbatons at Stern are very nice; they are events which

continues on opposite page

Psst? Emm...Uhh!=Can you Pass the Salt?

(Shabbos) Table Talk

continued from previous page

lend themselves to healthy socializing.” He further lavished praise on the sleeping arrangements saying that, “The accommodations are great.” More than a few students, however, said that they felt uncomfortable going down to YU’s midtown campus because they were unwilling to mix socially with our female counterparts.

For some, shabbat at Stern seems to carry a stigma of sorts. Indeed, Ari, (our Pre-Med student from above) said, “I don’t go to Stern for Shabbat, not because its co-ed, but because I just feel uncomfortable to be at a YU-sponsored co-ed event.” Avi, expressing similar sentiments, related that, “On a certain level Shabbatons at Stern are quite nice, as they create an opportunity for a safe and healthy co-ed environment. On the other hand, it’s sometimes almost overwhelming and I feel like I’m a specimen in a zoo.”

Nava, a SCW senior, weighed in on the issue, commenting that, “Shabbat at Stern is both mildly awkward and entertaining, but that’s what happens when you place a lot of socially awkward Jews in the same room for 25 hours.” Further, she added that “If everyone would relax just a tiny bit and begin to come down more often with their friends without making a big deal about it, Shabbat at Stern wouldn’t have a stigma.” While such an attitude is unlikely to affect the current zeitgeist, perhaps with significant social change and just a modicum of courage Shabbat downtown can become a common experience for the majority of Wilf campus students.

WOMAN AND WINE

Shabbat at other college campuses is a completely different experience than the weekend at YU. The greatest contrast, named by nearly everyone interviewed, is the presence of women and student leadership (in that order) on the secular campus. Indeed, many a YU undergrad spends his or her weekends at a secular campus, be it Penn, Columbia, Maryland, NYU or a plethora of others where a sizeable Orthodox student populace exists.

Jonathan, a YC senior, explained that, “Shabbat at a secular college is very different - there’s interaction with all sorts of Jews from all different backgrounds and religious orientations.” Adding that, comparatively, “the people here (at YU) are of a more homogeneous nature.” Another Jonathan commented on his experiences at secular universities on Shabbat saying that, “I’m continually fascinated to see Shabbat observed

around so many non-Jews and unaffiliated Jews. It’s really nice to see a community of responsible young religious Jews taking care of events on their own.”

Similarly, Avi, related that, “I’ve been very impressed with the leadership roles undertaken by my friends at secular universities. Also, the cohesive community which they have formed and nourished amazes me every time I’m there;

He concluded by saying that “for now, Michael Goon is the closest we come to the positives of a secular college.”

Lastly, Aryeh poignantly pointed out a prominent discrepancy between the secular and religious campus, recalling, “I’m exceedingly impressed with the community they build there, entirely through students own leadership and initiative. Additionally, I crave the per-

sonages decline to speak about sensitive subjects. However, on Shabbat, given the absence of such apparatuses, most guests are willing to open up and comment on issues which they would not during the week.

Yet, many students hold a slightly negative view on the Shabbat guest position. Avi stated that he thinks the position holds tremendous potential, but that unfortunately it is not being used in the most efficacious of manners, adding that “It’s great to have guests, but they should bring in Torah personalities whom the students can relate to. It’s an excellent project and it can be used to greatly contribute to the Shabbat experience on campus.”

Another Shabbat surprise, albeit not a guest, is the formidable presence of Michael Goon and his hilarious antics. To be sure, many funny and entertaining people (whether they know it or not) populate the Wilf campus; however Goon is by far and away the most celebrated of them

all. Indeed, many advocate for him to take on further responsibilities regarding Shabbat programming. Avi said, “I think Michael Goon should be placed in charge of the programming. He’s a natural leader whose entertainment everyone enjoys.” Another box office-like comment came from Dovie, who recalled how, “I find that the meals are over-structured, they lack a certain degree of spontaneity, and Goon is the only person who attempts to change this.”

NISHT SHOBOS GIRET

So what’s a Yeshiva University to do to improve its weekend experience? Many students have voiced their suggestions: keep Shabbat at a low price, replace the current programming leadership with students, allow for gas in the IHP apartments so students can cook and host their own Shabbat meals,



YUVAL NADEL

it’s something which we lack at YU, for better or worse.” Ari compared the experience at secular colleges to Shabbat at YU when he said, “One of the biggest differences between YU and secular college is that in secular College Shabbat is their own thing; they create it themselves. In YU it’s given to us on a silver platter, and those who serve it treat us as if we were campers- a Rabbi giving diveri Torah at each meal, invitations to sing zemirot, why can’t guys be in charge of these things?”

vading ambience of achdus which is palpable during Shabbat at a secular college; it’s a scarcely-felt sensation here at YU.”

GUESTS, GOON AND GOOD TIMES

Every Shabbat in YU features a famous figure who graces the Rubin Shul with a Friday night Ticsh and generally delivers a shiur sometime Shabbat day, something new happens, This figure is usually one of the 30-plus Roshei Yeshiva, but sometimes a Rabbi from the Israel Program and occasionally a Jewish studies professor visits. As is to be expected, student reactions vary with each individual guest.

Some, like Ari from above, present a positive view on the guests, saying that, “The guests are generally good; I more often than not find them to be both interesting and enlightening.” Likewise, Dovie expressed his support for the guests relating that, “you get to see the personality of the Roshei Yeshiva and other guests shine through in an environment that is not shared with the outside world.” Indeed, given the proliferation of recording devices, many prominent public



What exactly do we need these ‘counselors’ for? Perhaps students don’t have time -I myself don’t - but it seems like this would create an entirely different experience.”

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WELCOME (BACK) TO YU!!



Message From YCSA

A new year begins, and we hope this year will be something more than a holdover until our next vacation. It is in that vein that the Yeshiva College Student Association (the other student council) takes this opportunity to welcome everyone to a new year in Yeshiva College. Whether you are a returning student or here for the first time, we hope this year is both productive and enjoyable.

To that end, the members of YCSA have committed ourselves to a new and broader agenda. In addition to the programming we normally run and the clubs we generally support (most academic clubs and programs are run through us), we would like to create a new atmosphere of student participation and leadership on campus.

We believe that the greatest events and movements are the products of students' vision and drive. Therefore, we encourage all students who have a vision to step forward. Whether there is a class you'd like to see offered, a policy you would like changed, or a project you would like to pursue, let us know, and we will facilitate the success of your endeavor in whatever way we can.

Our vision is to encourage the growth of an activist student body that knows its power to effect positive change and acts on that knowledge. We hope to have your help in accomplishing this.

Sincerely,
YCSA

Ari Bernstein
President
ABernst1@yu.edu

Yossi Berger
Vice President
JBerger@yu.edu

Raffi Holzer
Secretary-Treasurer
RHolzer@yu.edu



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Featured Teacher: Dr. Kirsty Campbell

Meet the New Face for Medieval Studies at YC

By JONATHAN SCHWAB

Yeshiva College (YC) students interested in Medieval literature and culture can look forward to a fresh representative: Dr. Kirsty Campbell, a Canadian import who bolsters YC's English department. Dr. Campbell is teaching a course titled "Wisdom Literature of the Middle Ages" this semester, as well as teaching one of YC's First Year Writing Seminars. Campbell feels just as new in the city as some of YC's students might: she lived her whole life in Canada and received all of her education there, with an M.A. and a Ph.D. in Medieval Studies from the University of Toronto.

Dr. Campbell's research focuses on the writings of Reginald Pecock, a 15th Century English prelate who encouraged his readers to question and explore religious topics on their own. But Campbell's expertise is not limited to Pecock: she uses his works as "a gateway into so much more: the rhetoric and poetics of the Middle Ages; how authors talk about their own receptions; teaching ethics in the Middle Ages; and historian Brian Stock's notion of 'textual communities'."

YC's students – unsurprisingly, for those who have heard faculty discuss their experiences here – have already left a strong impression on Dr. Campbell. The class-

dom" nature of her past experiences. She added that it was a "gift" and a "pleasure" to arrive at YC in tandem with the new curriculum, which makes it easy for her to develop courses that appeal to her and her students.

In the spring, Dr. Campbell will pilot another course designed for the new curriculum: "Chaucer and His Historical Others," and she will get her chance to teach English's 2010 "gateway course," Interpreting Texts. As a future plan, she hopes to one day pioneer a course in the history of reading



New to the City
Dr. Campbell is excited to experience both YC and NYC

practices from Augustine on and how the condition of historical texts informs us of how they were read. Her research, for now, "is on the back burner" as she focuses during the semester on developing

Dr. Campbell has already been impressed with YC students, noting that the classroom environment "is exceptionally civil; their kindness is something that has surprised me."

room environment, she notes, "is exceptionally civil; their kindness is something that has surprised me." Additionally, she said that "the level of intellectual focus in the classroom is unparalleled so far – I'm just really impressed with that." In just the week she has been teaching, students have already shown the ability to "stand up for themselves, academically," as well.

"Wisdom Literature of the Middle Ages" fits into the new English curriculum (see: "English Dept. Unveils New Curriculum, Major" for more information), which Dr. Campbell says she loves. "I have a chance to give this literature a thematic focus, to highlight this strand that runs through it." Campbell, who taught a version of the Medieval survey at both John Abbott College and Bishop's University, said that the "focused approach" far exceeds the "ran-

her courses and working with students. When asked to describe her teaching approach for the unique YC classroom, she laughed and said, "evolving." She pointed to the general atmosphere of a critical approach to pedagogy in the English Department, and said that she works hard to see what works and what does not for her students.

In addition to her excitement about joining YC's faculty, Dr. Campbell expressed enthusiasm for being in New York, both from academic and cultural perspectives. The "huge Medieval community" in New York offers great opportunities, she said. And as fan of theater, she now has much to see and experience. In addition, the Washington Heights Tour project (for all first year students) has opened her eyes to much more to see in the community where she now lives and works.

A Message from President Richard Joel

This past summer, I received a thoughtful e-mail from an undergraduate student here at Yeshiva University named Aryeh Amsel, urging me to speak out against the many cases of corruption that plagued the Jewish community this past year. I felt proud that this student was motivated to write me in the wake of such extreme examples of crookedness from the ranks of Am Yisrael, but it pained me that he had to do so.

Here are a few excerpts from Aryeh's letter: [This past year's] disgraces, which desecrated G-d's name, all appeared as headline news in prominent media sources [and have] brought me to a new emotional level... Can you imagine what a non-Jew thinks of the Jewish people today?

This letter is not meant to reprimand anyone to act ethically. Everybody already knows that that is our obligation. Rather, I am concerned with our public image. Where are our leaders standing up for the image of the Jewish people? Right now, the headlines, which arguably speak for the world, think of the Jewish people as inconsiderate thieves. We need to issue a statement stating the exact opposite!

President Joel, I am writing this letter to you because I believe that you are capable of speaking to the world on YU's behalf. YU is a leading representative of today's modern Jewish community and considering the current predicament of today's Jewish image, it is incumbent upon such a high-caliber institution to do whatever it can to be a "light unto the nations." (Isaiah 42:6)

I responded a few days later, but his letter and my response still resonate with me. Aryeh commenced a conversation that we as a community should share; a conversation that should humble people charged with public responsibilities. I often think about these issues and talk to people I respect (mostly my wife) regarding what we can do in response to these past events that will not seem empty, pompous, defensive or self-serving. I still struggle for an answer.

This I do know. The problem is not our Judaism - it's the people who distort it. But it goes deeper than that. We must achieve a higher level of awareness of who we are, what our values are, and how each day serves as an opportunity to model them. Not by making statements, but by being statements. Being statements by upholding the Yashrus that many have discarded and by implementing the values that appear at the heart of the education we offer at YU.

At the core, we must stress fulfilling G-d's covenant which requires us to act as a light unto the nations. We need to live our story, lead a life of mitzvot, and through that, matter in the world. I feel responsible for us to continue building a culture of kedusha or nobility here at Yeshiva by, first, comporting ourselves in a manner consistent with Torah values, a challenge in the world in which we live today. And second, by spreading that consciousness throughout YU, knowing that we must harbor and produce educators committed to the principle of derech erez kadma l'Torah. Yes, we need – in all aspects of university life – programs and classes and conversations about how we can deserve, as individuals and as a community, the bounty of our heritage. We cannot do this by cursing the dark. Instead we shall accomplish it by gathering in the light. But it's more than programs; it's a collective consciousness of purpose. I hope this year will see success and progress on these fronts.

I am still struggling with my own role of speaking or acting more broadly. As an educator, I deeply feel that I should impact my world here at YU. I think these things can change our world, inspiring students of great worth to lead worthy lives. I strive to live a life of decency in the eyes of the larger world and I hope that I act like a proud and purposeful Jew while representing Yeshiva University.

I guess I'm left with a question: when do we decide to make statements and when do we decide to be statements? That is both the challenge and the opportunity of living a life of Torah.

Richard Joel



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The Glueck Center Today: 185th St. Plaza

continued from front page

street into a plaza. Jeff Rosengarten, the Associate Vice President of Administrative Services at YU, then turned to another agency within the Department of Transportation. Using legal terms, he requested that the street, which had been deemed a "limited use" street in 1986, be turned into a "restricted use" street. Under DOT code, a "limited use" street only allows cars to pass through during certain hours, while a "restricted use" street limits car traffic to emergency situations only. The street, currently a "limited use" street, will be made a "restricted use" street in the near future.

To "smarten" the space around the Glueck Center and render it more worthy of hosting events and social gatherings, YU removed some of the concrete barriers lining both sides of the street. Cement planters filled with trees and flowers, a more aesthetically pleasing protection for pedestrians from cars, replaced the barriers along the length of the Glueck Center.

The effort to beautify did not stop there. The Glueck Center's glass and stone frontage, which, as mentioned, sharply diverges from those of its Wilf Campus fellows, updates YU's look. Additionally, to bridge the gap between past and present, the joint

entrance between the library and the Glueck Center shows off the new glass look. In Jeffrey Rosengarten's mind, this visual connection between the buildings serves as a sort of embodiment of the connection between Torah and academia that YU aims to achieve.

Entering the library through this new entrance, students who remember last year's library generally gush with excitement. The renovations include a transformation of Gottesman Library's bare, concrete-and-brick lobby to a magnificent and modern student lounge. The area beyond the lobby, recently remembered as an under-construction danger zone, now called "The Heights Lounge" serves a beautiful place to study or socialize. Its multi-tiered layout compliments its purpose rather than confuses it. Decorative space rugs break up the open spaces into sections, making social interaction in the large spaces surprisingly easy. Bright, multi-colored sofas and chairs and plain rectangular tables act as centerpieces. Industrial-looking spot lights hang away from the ceiling, adding a modern chic feel to the environment. According to Rosengarten, some of the ideas for the design came from the University of Pennsylvania's student lounge, though he feels the finished product at Yeshiva University is even nicer

than its inspiration.

A bagel store, cleverly named Nagel's Bagel's after the benefactor of the new atrium, occupies a spot in the rear of the library lobby. As part of YU's Caf Network, it accepts Caf cards and will remain open, along with the rest of the lounge, until 2 a.m. The late hours reflect the administration's understanding of students' long schedules and the need for some late-night snacks.

The stairs granting access to the second floor of the library have been converted to emergency-use only fire stairs. To replace them, a stairway stemming from the corridor between the library and the new Beit Midrash in the Glueck Center will allow students and faculty to access the main floor of the library from the lobby.

However, despite the beauty and appeal of the new atrium and the library facelifts, the new Beit Midrash and the rest of the Glueck Center draws the most attention and represents the biggest change in the physical landscape of the Yeshiva College campus.

The contemporary, airy, aesthetic, two-story Beit Midrash is furnished primarily in wood and plastic ergonomic chairs. The Aron (ark), too, is made of wood in three tones. A blue parochet (curtain) with a twelve-tribes theme will soon

bedeck the classy ark. As currently configured, the room's two floors seat approximately 550, but can fit far more if necessary. The integration of the two floors, a crucial aspect of the design, serves the dual purpose of engendering unity in learning as well as acoustically making prayer more communal. To that end, the second floor surrounds a large open space in the first floor's ceiling, akin to a balcony. The vaulted ceiling, designed by sound engineers, will carry the voice of the baal tefila or baal kriah from the first floor to the second. Additionally, numerous flat screen monitors occupy the walls of the second floor so that speeches given to the entire Beit Midrash can be easily seen on the second floor.

Perhaps most importantly, the Beit Midrash will afford extra space to Yeshiva University's students. Previously cramped into a number of small batei medrash around the campus, students now have assigned seats by shiur, replacing the haphazard and illogical seating of the past. With all members of a shiur learning together, stronger sense of community within learning will develop.

The building also houses eleven new classrooms and a number of larger lecture rooms. Shiurim previously busting at the seams now have room to breathe in large lecture halls

with stadium-style seating. And Rebbeim, previously forced to share cramped spaces in Furst Hall, now have new offices. These offices, generally situated near the shiur rooms, make it easy for students to find their Roshei Yeshiva easily.

The classrooms are also available to YC and Sy Syms classes in the afternoon, which relieves pressure on the graduate schools struggling to find space in Belfer Hall. The rooms, equipped (or soon to be) with digital multimedia hardware such as projectors, drop down screens, and computers, provide modern environments for learning of any kind. However, as many students quickly noticed, Glueck suffers from a relative dearth of electrical outlets, both in its classrooms and the Beit Midrash. Rosengarten explained that the installation of fewer outlets drew from the idea that battery life, constantly improving, would render a largess of outlets obsolete.

The addition of the Glueck Center and the Nagel Family Atrium, combined with the library renovations, has already impacted the social and academic atmosphere of Yeshiva University significantly. The much-needed expansion in space and improvement in aesthetic quality of the campus could not be more welcome.

The Future of the Glueck Center and Nagel's Noteworthy Bagels

continued from front page

tions, specifically regarding the future of the Glueck Center remain unaddressed; What will happen with 185th street? Are there plans for further construction in the near future? How will students deal with the shift in campus center? How will the newly constructed lounge area in the library affect inter- and intra-campus social life? And perhaps most poignant of all, what does the Glueck Center represent for the Yeshiva of the future?

Luxurious or Licentious? – The Lounge

Jeffrey Rosengarten, YU's Associate Vice President of Administrative Services, said that the new student lounge in the formerly barren underbelly of the library will be a major boost to Yeshiva's students' quality of life. Indeed, many students have adamantly requested -- and in some cases even beseeched -- the university's administration for a spacious and relaxed lounge environment, and with the newly created Lili and William Goldberg family lounge, these wishes have finally become a reality.

David, a SSSB Junior, was delighted to learn of the new lounge area, as he said: "When I first looked at Yeshiva I knew something was missing. With the addition of this new area many students' social lives will be positively promoted. Also, Nagel's Bagels, and the fact that I can pay with my Café card is a wonderful compliment to the library, lounge, and Beit Midrash- which, in my mind, happily co-exist with each other."

The gals downtown are equally thrilled about the newly inaugurated lounge. Ester, a SCW Senior said that she "has always longed for a comfortable place on the uptown campus," where she could, "mingle and chill out with her friends uptown." Similarly, Naomi, a SCW Junior, "always thought it would be a great idea to have a super-friendly and spunky lounge where everyone could hang out and interact." Further, she added, the lounge will serve to "enhance our university and community." Additionally, many Stern students noted that they will be more likely to sojourn up to the Heights with the knowledge that many colorful modern couches – in addition to wireless and Nagel's irresistible bagels- await their arrival.

A New Outlet (or lack thereof) for Learning

Many Yeshiva students have mentioned that the Glueck Center will change the campus dynamic, with its new central 'Main Minyan' in addition to its proximity to the library, and of course Nagel's delicious bagels. While some mentioned the lack of restrooms, outlets, and low water fountain pressure, most have only praise for the newest building to grace 185th and Amsterdam since the time when our fathers were in the Rav's shiur. Many, such as Evan, the resident super-senior of the 7th floor of Morg, believe that the Glueck Center "reinvigorates the beis midrash experience." He continued, noting that "the modern-building will pique the interest of many students – bringing the myriads closer to the world of Jewish leaning." Indeed, others such as Ari, a YC Junior, commented,

"The Glueck Center brightens up the campus and will serve to revitalize and energize the Yeshiva student body and the greater Jewish community." Overwhelmingly, the response towards the Glueck Center has been both bright and positive. 32% of students polled in *The Commentator's* Student Pulse survey said they were "very satisfied" with Glueck, and an additional 22% said they were "mostly satisfied."

A Pond? A Park? - The future of 185th Street

Given the Glueck Center's location on 185th street, Yeshiva has obtained a permit from the city of New York to close off the street to regular traffic between 8 AM and 11 PM during days when school is in session. Students are extremely pleased with this fortuitous change in traffic patterns. Indeed, many remarked how, "It's about time they did something like this around here." Others seemed more pleased, and offered praise to the administration for putting up sparkling metal barricades and greenery alongside 185th street.

Mr. Rosengarten elaborated on the background surrounding the recent partial closure of 185th street. Originally, he related how, "Yeshiva held a permit to make 185th street into a limited accesses thoroughfare, one which was unenforceable due to the New York Police Departments inability to do so... However, recently, we have been able to turn 185th into a limited use street, with hopes to eventually turn it into a restricted use space, one which will only be open to select vehicles."

Seemingly then, 185th street's future remains somewhat nebulous-

although some students were more than willing to venture forth their novel ideas. Avi, a YC senior, believed that it would be best for everyone if the street were entirely closed to traffic and made into an outdoor common areas of sorts with grass and perhaps a small central pond. As he put it, "YU needs a central place for interaction, a place for photo-shots of happy, energetic, and thoughtful students. All the Iviess have it, why can't we create one as well?" Not surprisingly, many students concurred with Avi's reasoning. Jeff, a SSSB Sophomore, related how, "Last year I attended a secular college in a different state, and there several such outdoor areas with greenery and places to sit existed. I think it's wonderful that YU has the potential to change the campus for the better. I hope they exploit the situation to their advantage."

Modern-ish Meanings

What does the Glueck Center represent? What message does YU send to its constituents with the newly constructed Glueck Center?

Rabbi Kenneth Brander, Dean of YU's Center for the Jewish Future, related how the Glueck Center represents, "The continued interest of YU to create an environment for its students and faculty that allows for intellectual growth and development of a community."

Rabbi Yona Reiss, Dean of RIETS remarked that, "The Glueck Center for Jewish Study is one giant leap for Yeshiva. It is a manifestation of the centrality of Torah as the core component of Yeshiva University." Further he added how the Glueck center is "a statement of our mission, our values, and our

responsibility to serve as a beacon of light to the world around us. The beauty and majesty of this building should serve as an inspiration for us to embody, through our learning and our behavior, the majestic beauty of the Torah."

In a similar vein, Yeshiva College Dean Barry Eichler remarked how "the Glueck Center which houses Yeshiva University's 'yeshiva' is an aesthetically beautiful building with state of the art functionality. As such, it is a dramatic statement of the centrality of Torah studies in YU's academic program. The Beis Medrash now physically stands as an equal partner alongside the College classrooms in Furst Hall, and is also integrally connected to the Gottesman Library with its major collections of Judaica and secular studies literature. All three buildings are symbolic representations of this educational partnership which is the core of Yeshiva University's academic mission."

God's Glass House on the Hilltop

With the entry of the Glueck Center onto the scene of the uptown campus, Yeshiva's physical dynamic has been altered to a considerable extent. With a semi-closed 185th street, greenery, and an Apple-store like facade, the Glueck Center has won the hearts of religious and secular alike on the Wilf campus. Indeed, the Glueck Center is only in its nascent stages and will enjoy many more years of influence and prominence amongst the students and faculty at the Yeshiva of today, and hopefully of the future as well.

Major Changes Arrive at English Department

continued from page 5

section IV of the major. The writing requirement strengthens the Department's commitment to writing as well as shapes students' own identities through exercising their own voice and argument. More thinking needs to be done, says Dr. Newton, about the place of writing in the major and refining the writing minor by proposing more advanced writing courses that take advantage of some of his colleagues' expertise as well as answering student's wishes for such opportunities. Numerous students have raised the issue of writing at several points during the year, including at the explanatory meeting, where a student asked why a writing major does not exist in YC.

Traditions, Forms, and Writing courses all aim to introduce students to the many different "topics" in an English major, helping them to decide where to spend time in section V of the major – fifteen credits of free electives, some from English and others from outside the department (contingent on department approval), for example, in Languages, Literatures, and Cultures; Jewish Studies; History; or the Arts. The most effective balance of Major, Electives, and General Education courses is something at the center of the YC curriculum review and remains to be clarified.

The new major will culminate in a Capstone Experience, a year-long Senior Colloquium and Orals in which all seniors will be given a reading list they will discuss with each other and a portion of the English faculty. Having just devoted their last department meeting to this feature of the major, Dr. Newton and his colleagues are particularly energized by the prospect, especially with the idea of more collaborative interaction between faculty and students. Neither a "coverage" MFAT-type exam (which will be retired as an exit requirement in 2010) nor a set of "key texts," the reading lists are designed to be a culmination, not a summary or rehash: exercises in intensive reading across a range of genres, periods, and discourses. Both English faculty and students will be engaged with the same texts in a given year (or will be "viewing" them, since at least one film or new media work will be included), and some of the choices may well be those that faculty either haven't encountered in a long time or at all. The rationale here is to consolidate community at all levels of the department: among faculty, among students, and especially between both groups. Colloquia and guest lectures may also be included on the model of the previously-popular Book Project and will be opened to the wider YC community. The department sees this pilot program as one model for "collective partici-

pation and "esprit de corps" in the Humanities at YU. At the conclusion of their final year, senior English majors will participate in a qualifying orals with committees of three faculty members each. The Capstone experience will serve as a means for students to join the conversation of the discipline, speaking as "peers" with their instructors, and more confident "owners" of the traditions and practices they have encountered in their coursework. This year's seniors have already received the list of readings, which contains, among others: The Mabinogion (a medieval Welsh epic); poems by John Donne and George Herbert (17th c); Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* (18th c. British); Susan Sontag's *Regarding the Pain of Others*; the 20th c African American dramatist August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson*; Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*; Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo*; and a set of essays about the meaning of "tradition" and literary authors' "ranking." This experience, the most experimental feature of the new English curriculum, has both department and students particularly excited about its potential for intellectual community and student "ownership."

According to Dr. Newton, the new curriculum hopes to address the department's most serious challenge or "question": its place in the college curriculum as one vital expression of the Humanities (broadly defined) and its relevance for students who already spend half of each school-day among texts and interpretive practices. The hope is that students will come to see more of a dialogic connection between morning and afternoon practices across the spectrum of textuality, a call-and-response that dignifies both its partners in conversation, "ennobling and enabling" each in turn. Since the department recognizes that a portion of the student body come to English courses with preconceptions (or even anxieties), the hope is to "make a positive and cultivating mark on every student," including those not already comfortable with what the department website (quoting one of Dr. Newton's favorite literary critics) calls "a disposition, a habit, a way of being in the world of words." Students are strongly encouraged to visit that website which explains the new curriculum in greater depth and to seek out its faculty for further information and advice. Finally, a new English major or curriculum is only as good as the faculty who teach it, Dr. Newton emphasized, and Yeshiva is extremely fortunate to boast such a dedicated and talented group of teachers, scholars, and colleagues within the intellectual life of the College.

Summer School

What Happened in YU While You Were Away

BY YITZCHAK SCHWARTZ

With most students spending their summers out of school, it is easy not to realize how much goes on at YU during break. But this year as in years past, the University ran a number of very exciting summer programs for students, ranging from community learning programs to a camp for underprivileged children in southern Israel.

Summer Courses

This summer, Yeshiva College and Sy Syms School of Business offered a wide variety of undergraduate courses with, many courses open to both men and women. Many students availed themselves of the summer courses as an opportunity to take requirements in a more relaxed environment when not faced with the pressures of the dual curriculum. Mark G., a senior in Yeshiva College, said that he found the campus atmosphere during the summer pleasantly less intense. "People don't have the hectic schedules they have during the year, so everyone isn't always running to get to their next class," he said. Mark also noted that, despite this more relaxed environment, he was surprised by how alive the campus was over the summer. He said that, in terms of the vibrancy of campus life, "it didn't feel that different from the school year."

CJF Community Kollels

The CJF sponsored four community summer kollels in Teaneck, Denver, Los Angeles, and YU's Gruss Institute in Israel. Almost 50 students from the YU undergraduate schools participated in the kollels where they studied Halacha during the day and learned be-chavruta with local ba'alei batim and youth in the evenings. Students in Denver, LA, and Israel studied a variety of Halachic subjects and were treated to seminars on special topics by YU Rebbeim, faculty and guest presenters. One such presentation, held in Denver, was a panel on the future of Modern Orthodoxy featuring YU faculty members Rabbi Daniel and Dr. Chaya Rapp, and three Denver-area Rabbis. The Teaneck kollel was geared towards Semicha students and studied Hilchot Niddah, a requirement for RIETS students. Members of the kollels studied Halacha during the day and learned Be'Chavruta with local Baalei Batim and youth in the evenings. The program was designed both to reach out to the communities as well as provide leadership experiences to the student participants, according to Phillip Moskowitz of the CJF.

Manhattan Beit Midrash for Women

At Lincoln Square Synagogue in Manhattan, the CJF sponsored its third annual month-long Women's Beit Midrash during the month of July. The theme of this year's program was "Crisis, Hope and Leadership in Jewish Tradition." Ten female college students and recent graduates were selected to study Tanach, Jewish Thought, and Talmud in the Beit Medrash, full time, for the month. Classes were taught by Rabbi Moshe Kahn of Stern, Dr. Shawn Zelig Aster of YC, and Elana Stein Hain, Community Scholar at Lincoln Square. Fellows learnt with local women and girls in the evenings. The Women's Beit Midrash is a branch of the CJF's Manhattan Beit Medrash Community Program, which offers programming open to Manhattan men, women, and youth out of Lincoln Square Synagogue during the summer.

Counterpoint Israel

In Israel, the CJF ran its annual Counterpoint Israel program. The program consists of two camps in the development towns of Yerucham and Dimona staffed by 21 college students working under the guidance of CJF staff. It aims to promote Jewish identity and build positive life skills among participants, 14-17 year old Israeli teens, mostly from secular and underprivileged backgrounds. In addition to an impressively large array of camp activities, ranging from sports and music to fashion design and art classes, the camps had daily workshops revolving around specific life skill themes. This summer's themes included self-esteem, drug and alcohol abuse, Shabbat, and community. The programming was designed to give campers exposure to experiences that will help them succeed in life despite their socially disadvantaged backgrounds, according to Aliza Abrams of the CJF.

Einstein Research Fellowship

Ten students from Stern and Yeshiva College were awarded prestigious Roth and University summer research fellowships at YU's Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Students were given housing by the University on the Resnick campus as well as a stipend, and worked directly under faculty at the Sue Golding Graduate Division of the Medical School. Students were treated to weekly lectures by professors on their research and seminars given by Graduate students on various scientific topics.

Honors

The Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein Honors Program sponsored a five week intensive French language course this June that culminated in a two-week long trip to France. The course covered a year of college French, using the most up-to-date in language teaching methods to fit the material into just five weeks. The nine students participating in the course spent four weeks on campus in New York studying basic French vocabulary and grammatical structure, and then two weeks in Paris, where they applied their knowledge in a practical setting. In addition to language proficiency, the course aimed to educate students in French culture through daily excursions around Paris and several day trips to destinations including Giverny and the Loire Valley. The students were accompanied in France by Professors Rachel Mesch and Matthew Udkovich of the YC French Department, and Michael Stein, a rabbinic intern from RIETS. "It was a once in a lifetime experience," said Ari Feldman (YC'11), a math major who participated in the program. Daniel Winchester voiced surprise at how much he enjoyed his stay in France, a place that doesn't have the best of reputations among Jewish tourists. "France is like Israel," he said. "It gets a bad rep, but once you go there you see that it's really a great place." The Honors Program is planning trips for next summer to Spain, and to Israel, where students will study the ethical dilemmas faced by soldiers in the Israeli military with Professor Daniel Statman of the University of Haifa.

Meeting the Dean: An Interview With Dr. Eichler

[Editor's Note: This interview was conducted during the spring 2009 semester, prior to Dr. Eichler's appointment as Dean of Yeshiva College.]

Interview with Dr. Barry Eichler as he talks to *The Commentator* about the development of academic Bible at YU, hashkafa inside the classroom, and why he is disappointed with *The Commentator*.

Dr. Barry Eichler was born in Borough Park, New York in 1940, obviously "not the Borough Park of today." At the age of two, his family moved to New England where he attended public schools and was privately tutored in limudei qodesh. His family decided to move back to New York so that he and his brother could get a good Jewish education. He attended Ramaz for junior high and high school, enrolling in Yeshiva College in 1956. He spent one term of his junior year studying at the Hayim Greenberg Institute in Jerusalem where such famous personalities as Nechama Leibowitz and Yehuda Amichai taught classes in Tanakh and modern Hebrew literature, respectively. He graduated YC magna cum laude in 1960. In 1967, Dr. Eichler received his Ph.D., with distinction, from the University of Pennsylvania. After completing post-doctorate research at Yale, he returned to the University of Pennsylvania and taught courses in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations for forty years. He takes pride in having founded Penn's Jewish Studies Program which he chaired for many years. Following his retirement from Penn, Dr. Eichler returned to YU and is now a full time professor at the Bernard Revel Graduate School and Yeshiva College.

In addition to his prolific scholarly output, Dr. Eichler has written and spoken in popular forums about the interaction between the Bible and contemporary knowledge of the Ancient Near East, including "Study of Bible in Light of Our Knowledge of the Ancient Near East" published in the 1996 Orthodox Forum.

Dr. Eichler has taken time out of his busy schedule to talk to *The Commentator* about his exciting field, the risks and rewards of teaching, and some observations about the development of Yeshiva College over the past fifty years.

Commentator: Why did you choose to go to YU?

Dr. Barry Eichler: While at Massad, the Hebrew speaking camp, I met some Yeshiva College boys who strongly influenced my decision to come to YC. Since my limudai qodesh had not come easily to me, I had a strong desire to continue to increase my knowledge of Torah. My friends convinced me that YU would be the ideal place to grow intellectually in both secular and Jewish learning

C: And what did you think when you got here?

BE: I got hooked on the Jewish

studies program here. They had a junior year term studying in Israel. (Having graduated Ramaz in '56, post high school programs were not an option in my day.) In my junior year, I attended to Machon Chaim Greenberg, which was a program for people interested in teaching Jewish studies as a career. However, at that time I was still unsure of whether I would make it a career. In Israel, I was exposed to great teachers, including Nechama Leibowitz and Yehuda Amichai. It was very exciting. I trekked up and down Israel, visited many archeological sites, and attended many public lectures at the Hebrew University. Getting to see the Tanakh come alive in that way was a very moving experience. Nechama Leibowitz was also very influential in my decision to go into Jewish education. She made the point that, if you are going to teach Jewish studies, you have to make the effort to become the very best you could be. She stressed that her hatred of math stemmed from her having had lousy math teachers. If you are a lousy Bible teacher, look at what the consequences will be!

C: What was academic Bible like at YU when you were a student?

BE: At that time, academic Bible as a field was not well developed in YU, but the ancillary areas were well developed. You could get to it by learning Semitic languages such as Aramaic and Arabic, as well as taking classes in rabbinic and medieval biblical parshanut. The Bible classes themselves offered a very solid foundation.

C: Why did you choose to pursue graduate study specifically at Penn?

BE: In those days, and in many ways like today, there were very few places where the Bible was looked upon favorably as an integral part of the study of the civilization of the Ancient Near East. The discipline of Assyriology was coming to its own, and most Assyriologists did not want to see the discipline as the handmaiden of Biblical studies. "Leave the Bible to the theologians," they said. The Assyriologist, Ephraim Speiser, the Sumerologist, Samuel Noah Kramer, and the Biblist, Moshe Greenberg, all taught at Penn and all combined ancient Near Eastern and Biblical studies in their teaching and research. They were not apologetic – to them the Bible was a vital part of the civilizations of the Ancient Near East to be studied and appreciated within that context.

C: Do you see yourself as something of a theologian in your classroom?

BE: At Penn and at YU, I usually don't talk about hashkafa in my classes, but I'm more than happy to talk about issues of hashkafa with students outside of the classroom. The information I try to elicit from the texts is more about what we have to gain from the study of texts as human beings, how does it speak to us culturally, how does the Biblical message fit into the broader world of ideas, how to address issues of conti-

nity and discontinuity in traditions. Basically, my teaching was not hashkafically tainted. At Penn, people saw that I wore a kippah and there were no classes during Jewish holidays, so they knew I was religious. In no way, however, did I act any differently from any of their other professors. Obviously, there would be a give and take on a different level with the Jewish students at Penn's Hillel, in which they tried to understand how to deal with biblical issues on the hashkafic level. In class, I really did separate these issues and focused on the message of the biblical text. But the Jewish students knew that, if something came up in class with which they had issues, I was available after class to discuss it with them.



Dr. Eichler, no stranger to the YU scene, is proud of Yeshiva's "serious commitment to undergraduate education."

C: Do all teachers keep this kind of academic distance?

BE: My attitude was definitely different from that of some other professors. People knew I had an appreciation of the message of Tanakh, that it was meaningful to me. I could imagine that someone who was an anti-Biblist or anti-religious could present the material superficially as very primitive, very bloody, very gory. In this deconstructionist era, there is no absolute truth. But, despite that, many professors have an ax to grind. They not only want to tell their story, but they want to convince students of their story. Therefore, an intro to a political science or psychology class can become a platform for promoting certain political views and sexual orientations, which are not necessarily germane to the discipline or subject matter. Tolerance and free exchange of ideas are laudatory but biased, and one-sided presentations are not good models for promoting civil discourse. I know many students who found such courses to be offensive. Whatever you present must be presented in a fair light and must be a balanced presentation. People saw I had an appreciation for the material, but that didn't mean that I used it as a platform to prove Torah

min ha-shamayim.

C: Were you worried about the difficulties of being religious while studying academic Bible?

BE: To answer this question, I usually tell a ma'aseh shehaya. When I applied to Penn, an acquaintance of my parents inquired what I was doing after graduation, and they told him that I was studying to become an Assyriologist. Their acquaintance, who was a Rabbi, told them that he was involved with a family whose son had become an Assyriologist and lost his faith. The family fell apart, and the Rabbi blamed it on his studies.

C: How did that affect your decision?

BE: I thought about it for a while, and it scared me because I thought, "What would I find? What would it do to me?" So I went to my high school Tanakh teacher to discuss this with him, and he gave me a vort of the Chasam Sofer. He said that Jews have a funny way of asking questions. In Ain Kailokainu, we ask, "Who is like our God?" only after affirming "There is no one like our God." The answer precedes the question. He said that it is up to each of us to know how much we really believe in the "ain kailokainu" before we allow ourselves to ask the question. It is up to each individual person to know the limits of his or her own faith. You are the only one who can tell what you feel about "ain kailokainu"; you have to determine how confident you feel about the centrality of Torah in your life and how paramount your relationship with Hashem is in your life - then you can ask the questions. But, if you are looking for a way to cement your emunah that is not really there, then it is dangerous to start asking questions. Just ask yourself - am I studying academic Bible to enhance my appreciation of Torah or to discover "the truth"?

C: Did you ever feel threatened by academia?

BE: After studying the Tanakh, Near Eastern civilizations, and their methodologies, I realized that academia doesn't have the answers for everything either. Theories and basic suppositions change over time and new insights and answers are found. That's what makes academia such an exciting and invigorating place! Especially in the field of Biblical studies, where our knowledge is dependent on the accident of the archaeologist's spade, one must be cognizant of the limits of our knowledge. Just because I don't have an answer for something now, doesn't mean that there is no answer, nor does that mean that there is a reason to doubt the mesorah that has been handed down to me. Any academic field you go into can present issues that put your religion into question and raise doubts of the existence of God. This is part of the natural exposure once we leave the four cubits of halacha and we try to understand ourselves not only as Jews, but as members of humanity at large. But it is

important to appreciate the contributions that humankind as a whole has brought to us and how that can help us in our avodat Hashem. To me, life's personal challenges are more dangerous to faith than the documentary hypothesis or the sciences or the humanities.

C: Was it difficult to find a job as an Assyriologist?

BE: I finished my doctorate in 1967. It was a bit traumatic because my dissertation advisor had died from cancer a year before I finished. It was clear towards the end of my next to last year, that he would not be able to serve as my dissertation advisor. He contacted a colleague at Yale who agreed to take over. I was concerned about what I would do after receiving my doctorate, but this professor had a research grant to hire someone as a post-doc in Mesopotamian law which he offered to me. I immediately said, "Great!" talked it over with my wife and then said "Yes." I got my degree in December, and I was going to start my post-doc in July. During the spring term I continued to teach at Penn as a lecturer. One March day, the dean at Penn told me that I was nominated by the faculty to replace my advisor, who had just passed away, to become an Assyriologist at Penn. It was kind of overwhelming, but I told him that I couldn't accept the offer because I had committed to a post-doc at Yale. The administration allowed me to accept the post-doc. I spent the year at Yale and returned to Penn to spend 40 years, teaching at that wonderful institution. While at Penn, I commuted to New York to teach at Revel and now I teach here full time -- so my career has been pretty boring.

C: Would you advise teaching as a career?

BE: Yes - it is very rewarding both personally and intellectually. I have always enjoyed the intellectual give and take that teaching provides. My students challenge me to better understand the subject matter under discussion and to help clarify my thinking through the issues. It is always exciting to open new vistas for students and to help them grow.

C: Have you noticed any changes at Yeshiva College since you've been here?

BE: On different levels, I've seen changes at YU for the positive. There is a serious commitment to undergraduate education. The professors now spend time with their students, are much more readily available to them. The faculty is committed to them and to furthering their education. Professors are interested in how their students express themselves both in writing and orally. They are willing to spend time and energy to come up with a system of advising. It is a much more pleasant environment in which to study now than when I was a student. I feel that today there is a more serious commitment to academic Jewish Studies. The spe-

continues on page 17

Why Hermann Hesse and Jean-Paul Sartre Matter

By JOSEPH ATTIAS

"I know of no other advice than this:

Go within and scale the depths of your being from which your very life springs forth."

-Rilke, Letters to a Young Poet

To read Hermann Hesse (1877-1962), is to put Rilke's words to the test. There are only a handful of authors who make the plea for the 'inward turn' as strongly as Hermann Hesse. In an era when the aura of the individual has almost vanished and the path of the herd is most opted for, Hesse's works become even more vital in preserving the uniqueness of personage and self. "The majority's path is an easy one, ours is difficult," remarked Demian, one of the protagonists of Hesse's eponymous novel, highlighting an elemental theme that would permeate many of his later works such as Siddhartha, Steppenwolf and Narcissus and Goldmund.

Hesse's novels fit roughly into the genre of Bildungsroman. This means that the reader is privileged with the opportunity to observe the development of the novel's protagonist, whether moral, spiritual or psy-

chological. Accordingly, what Hesse attempted to accomplish as a thinker and a novelist went beyond the classical faith/reason dichotomy. His exemplary characters, such as Demian, Emil Sinclair, Siddhartha, among others, were on a path to self-realization. They forsook the illusory world of the bourgeoisie and plunged into the depths of their person; to do so of course, came at a fantastic expense. Siddhartha had to leave his comfortable home and the faith of his father, to dabble in the ways of the world, only after achieving Enlightenment. Emil Sinclair, Hesse's more eerie and mysterious Nietzsche-reading character, upon noting the 'stone dropped in the well of his youth,' embarked on a journey to self-hood that almost by necessity included the destruction of his former weltanschauung.

In order to create, or even to discover what lies beyond or within the walls and partitions of one's youth, these protective barriers are required to crumble. The protective walls guarding the pristine castle of youth must be brought to the ground for any true objective inquiry into selfhood to take place. We are hindered in the path to self-knowledge in a most gruesome way by the

ideas imbued in us from our formative and overly porous years. "Sooner or later," remarked Hesse, "each of us must take the step that separates him from his father, from his mentors..."

What might be misconstrued as an exaltation of nihilism and the absurd, is quite conversely an embrace of the 'here and now,' void of relentless gloom and negativity. Well aware of the duality of nature and personhood, Hesse's books, Steppenwolf in particular, tackle the issue of a paradoxical existence, but simultaneously strike a balance between Schopenhauerian pessimism and the 'this-worldliness' of Nietzsche's thought. Hesse acknowledges the anxiety that can be caused by the realization of a paradoxical nature, such that which his Steppenwolf was dealing with, but Schopenhauer allowed for healing and optimism, as opposed to preaching suicide. In this respect, and due to his embrace of reality, Hesse closely resembles Nietzsche who urged the injection of one's own meaning into life, as well as even Albert Camus, who, in his famous Myth of Sisyphus, calls for the seizing of reality, no matter how absurd it may be.

Nietzsche's vindication of this

world, and his argument against the possibility of another chance, are ideally supposed to result in the most fruitful and meaningful life. But before such meaning can exist, one must fulfill the Delphic maxim of 'know thyself.' Such a fulfillment is positively impossible if one turns not to his innermost self to examine the contours of his soul. For such lessons we have Hesse's enigmatic characters; however, self-definition is taught by another great mind of the twentieth century: Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980). The infamous Frenchman left an indelible mark on modern thought with the publication of his novel *La Nausée* in 1938. There he espoused his philosophy of 'existence precedes essence.' Man, according to Sartre, unlike an inanimate object, should not be conceived as entering the world with a preconceived essence. Accordingly, his essence should not precede his existence, in the way the essence (task) of a pencil exists before it is even conceived. We must first live (exist), and only then can we define ourselves and give our persona an essence.

This emphatic claim to individualism is just as apropos as it was when Sartre put pen to paper in the early twentieth century. Man is a

work of art, yet he is churned out as mechanically as pizza pies - and plain ones at that. Sartre's message reminds us of the white canvas that we all begin with, while Hesse leads us down the path to discover the paint with which we decide to color our respective canvases. These days, and especially in such insular communities as ours, self-molding and the 'turn-within' appear to be rarer and rarer commodities. It is almost as if people fear looking into the mirror of their soul, or even approaching the consolation of their personality. Blindly miming the part in life they were written in for, the mass appears content with following convention for fear of being chastised. But to truly come to fruition, one must slip out from the noose of custom and precept and allow his mind to soar, for a shackled mind is really no mind at all. We might conclude by citing Hesse's notorious phrase from his novel *Demian*: 'The bird struggles out of the egg. The egg is the world. Whoever wants to be born must destroy a world.' Hesse and Sartre matter because they teach us to think as well as to ultimately recreate ourselves.

Arts & Culture: A Call for Action

By RAFI BLUMENTHAL

Far too often, while walking through the halls of our university, I hear all sorts of complaints. While some tend to be about topics such as Caf-food/prices, Rabbi Reiss policies, and lack of dormitory air conditioning, another popular complaint is about plain ol' boredom.

As the semester has just begun and the frenzy of midterms is not yet upon us, many students find themselves with enough free time on their hands to realize that they

don't have much to do with it.

Now, everyone has different ways of filling their free time. People like to read, write, watch movies or TV, listen to music, go out to eat, etc (etc etc). But, despite our varied interests, we all have one thing in common: we're always looking for more - a new TV show, band, restaurant, or chill-spot. It is, therefore, my wish that, with the ushering in of a new year's worth of Commentator issues, we kiss this yearning goodbye. We, here at Arts & Culture, have made it our express

interest to enlighten our YU brethren with the coolest going-on's in and around New York City.

But, that's not all. We also intend to feature short works of fiction or poetry as well as insights or reflections about literature in general or specific authors/books (see, for example, "Why Hesse and Sartre Matter"). In that sense, the Arts & Culture section will also function as a quasi-literary magazine - one where YU students will be given the opportunity to publish their works of, or thoughts on, literature.

There is, however, a catch to all this: we can't do it alone. Therefore, we formally call upon you, our readers, to help us with our goal. Went to a good comedy show? Read a good book? Went to a good concert? Seen a good movie lately? Know about a cool event coming up in the city (or already went to one)? Well, share the wealth! We want to hear about it. Write an article about it and share it with your YU brethren.

I often find that I have to remind students that we live in one of the

greatest, most happening cities in the world. We are but a subway-ride away from all the forms of dashing excitement and entertainment that this city boasts. All we need is someone to guide us in the right direction. It is my goal this year is to provide that guidance, and, hopefully with some of your assistance, we - together - will be able to succeed.

To submit an article to the Arts and Culture section, contact Rafi Blumenthal at rmlumen@yu.edu.

Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul

At The Metropolitan Museum of Art

By JOSEPH ATTIAS

Today we think of Afghanistan as a war-torn, culturally oppressive, and intolerant nation. While there may very well be good reason for this view, Afghanistan possesses a little-known history as rich and complete with wonder as any other. Millennia before the Taliban, Islam, and even Christianity, settlers, attracted by the natural resources of the region (gold, tin and lapis lazuli) began to settle in the area presently called Afghanistan. These early settlements can be traced back over 7000 years, and by the Bronze Age, the area had developed an urban center that displayed early contact with Egypt and Mesopotamia.

The Met's exhibit draws on artwork from four primary sites. The Bronze Age settlement of Tepe Fullol; the Greco-Bactrian city of Ai Khanum established by the successors of Alexander the Great; the sec-

ond century trade settlement of Belgram, which prospered as part of the Silk Road; as well as a funerary site of a wealthy warrior and his five princesses discovered beneath ancient temple ruins.

What makes this particular exhibit noteworthy is the fusion of cultures observable through the displayed artwork. Due to the Hellenism that permeated the region with the attempted conquest of Alexander the Great, Greco-Roman statues and bronzes can be observed in all their grandeur, and bear testimony to the Hellenizing of a region we might have otherwise thought quite dull. Works of art include depictions of Aphrodite, Eros and Dionysius, as well as Gorgons and other Classical motifs. But Western art is far from the only style to be seen in this exhibit. Due to contact with Mesopotamia, India and China, there is a wealth of stylistic variation among the pieces. Intricate

reliefs depicting birth scenes of Buddah, as well as Mesopotamian bearded bulls, reveal the Eastern stamp that was also left on the region.

But due to Afghanistan's privileged position at the crossroads of the Silk Road, what can be viewed is more than just a collection of Eastern and Western artwork. Craftsmen from Bactria (Northern Afghanistan) were privy to such a multitude of diversity that they fused East and West together to produce some of the most startling examples of artistic amalgamation from the ancient world. The most fascinating example of the synthesis between East and West is the solid gold statue of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, bearing an Indian spot on her forehead. This combination of Greece and India, Homer and the Vedas, is an indication of the mastery of cultures the craftsmen possessed and the artistic bril-

liance they poured into their respective works. Other examples include Indian style gold pieces inlaid with turquoise, depicting a Greek mythological scene including the gods Nike and Dionysius atop what may very well be the deeply symbolic lion of Hinduism. There is even a monument brought by Greek philosophers as a gift to the head of one of the towns. The philosophers came due to their curiosity about Eastern religion, and brought as their gift the monument inscribed with maxims from the Oracle of Delphi.

This fascinating display brings together the meticulous genius of Bactrian craftsmen who, deriving influence from opposing traditions, splendidly blended them together to create eye-popping spectacles. The exhibit abounds with gold and turquoise and is a fantastic demonstration of creative brilliance. The litterateur of the Helens united with

the Sanskrit tradition comes alive in works of art that shine and glitter behind their glass cases as if they were crafted only yesterday.

Present-day Afghanistan is a region that has received visits and attempted conquests from Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, the British, the Soviets, and most recently the United States. It is mistakenly thought of as void of any culture and history; as just another dry spot in the complex of states that make up this scorched region. While presently the region may be headed by a culturally suppressive force which does its utmost to obliterate evidence of their past, as evidenced by the Taliban's blowing up the massive 1500-year-old statue of Buddha, if we merely scratch the surface, we can uncover one of the most captivating examples of cultural synthesis in world history.

Another Look at Glueck

BY JULIAN HOROWITZ

As I hurried towards the annual "One Main Minyan" held each year on the morning of the first day of classes, I wondered if there would be "One Main Breakaway" for those of us who were running late, or for others who were simply looking for faster services. If I were to daven Shacharis elsewhere, would that disqualify me from partaking of the "One Main Breakfast," a typical Student-Government-sponsored royal rumble for bagels, pastries, and orange juice?

But this was no typical YU morning; this was the inaugural prayer at the Jacob and Dreizel Glueck Center for Jewish Study, our glass-and-yellow rose amongst the thorns of the ugly 185th street brickwork (see, for example, the library). Prayers took place in the two-story, five-hundred-or-so seat Beit Midrash, the modernly decorated white room which would house the main part of the Mazer Yeshiva Program. It was bright (finally, a Beit Midrash with real windows!) and beautiful, and hadn't yet acquired the faint smells of coffee, body odor, and hair oil which usually reside in Jewish study halls. Though I was already running late, I couldn't help but pause for a second to take it all in.

I took a seat on the mostly-empty second level, the excited murmurs of prayer coming from below. Being away from the action felt unusual – was this how the

Jewish woman always felt during public prayers? Would they be shooting t-shirts up between innings? The strangeness quickly subsided, as I was pleasantly surprised to find that despite my distance from the baal tefilah, voices in this room carried quite well – a positive feature, despite the fact that it would come back to haunt us later that day with chavrutot barely hearing each other across the table.

From that first moment, I realized that Glueck, despite all the pronunciation quips and uncertainties, is a tremendous gift. It is incumbent upon us, the direct beneficiaries of the new edifice, to extend tremendous hakarat hatov to both the donors and administrators who brought this project to fruition. But at the same time, those who sit in the beit midrash – among whom I am fortunate enough to count myself – are left with some questions. First, a bit about the history of what is today known as the Glueck Center:

A November 1999 Commentator article announced that "An eight million dollar donation from philanthropist Jacob Glueck will be utilized to erect a new building on the undergraduate men's campus of Yeshiva. The structure is to serve as a 'Torah Technology' facility combining Torah study with modern technological advances." Already then, "many [were] worried" that "University officials may not be following through on the specific intentions that Glueck had

expressed for his contribution," originally conceived as a "Virtual Beit Midrash (sic)" and later "revised to the more encompassing technological Torah center."

Work on the building was slow to begin, ground finally being broken to much fanfare in September of 2006. A university press release from that year upheld the dream from seven years earlier: "The facilities will incorporate state-of-the-art technology. Students will have electronic access to the resources of the Gottesman Library and to the growing array of texts, research and commentaries available online from the world over."

As late as September of last year the message became slightly more vague, but the basic idea stayed the same; *The Commentator* reported that "the building will be tech-savvy, and will accommodate laptops more easily in the Beit Medrash." The laptop – over the last several years this handy piece of equipment has become a chavrusa to some, a sefer for many, and notebook for most. The advent of devices like the Amazon Kindle tells us that paper is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Unfortunately, the battery capacity of most laptop computers has done a poor job of keeping up with their increasing importance and ubiquity, so in order to successfully use his laptop through an entire morning seder or a particularly ambitious shiur, our student must situate himself within range of outlet. All too often, these outlets are too few

and too close, leading to humorous scenarios which have a sizable portion of a class sitting in one corner of the room engaged in high-level negotiations for valuable plug-time. Some schools have picked up on this; I know of at least one Israeli yeshiva's Beit Midrash which, several years ago, installed three outlets for every seat. Another rabbinic training program on the Upper West Side has a power strip under every table.

You can imagine that when we read the words "accommodate laptops" in last year's Commentator, we had high hopes. In my head, I pictured the new Beit Midrash looking something like the bridge of the Starship Enterprise, every spare surface covered with computer screens, "Torah Technology" gizmos, and – most importantly – outlets.

In fact, we were unpleasantly surprised – and more than a little disappointed – to discover that the new Beit Midrash had about as many electrical outlets as the old Beit Midrash, and that the new classrooms had just about as many outlets as the old classrooms. The new beit midrash was little more than a room with some tables and chairs. Nice table and nice chairs, but that was it – no technology to speak of (excluding the wireless internet which now seems to be available throughout the campus).

This leads us to our next and final question: is anything really different now that we have the Glueck center? Does this building,

aesthetically pleasing as it is, really justify all the hype and excitement that it is receiving? The new Beit Midrash is nice, but there was still plenty of room in the old Batei Midrash. There are plenty of new classrooms, but were we ever short on classroom space? Actually, last year's Commentator reported that this semester is witnessing fewer course offerings than previous semesters. Yes, the lounge is wonderful and I think it has the potential to change the fabric of undergraduate life (not to mention reducing the number of rudely noisy study groups in the library). But that space has been there for a decade, all it needed were some sofas, area rugs, and cool hanging lamps.

The Glueck Center may change the nature of the entire uptown campus. If the rumors are true and 185th is to be closed permanently and replaced with grass or pavement, then we may be witness to the real campus that YU's 1920s leaders envisioned. I simply may have preferred to see the Jacob and Dreizel Glueck pedestrian bridge over Amsterdam Avenue, or the Jacob and Dreizel Glueck Belfer Hall express elevator, or any number of other projects for which we had slightly more need.

Julian Horowitz was last year's opinions editor for The Commentator and is still looking for a suitable replacement

Interview with Dean Eichler

continued from page 15

cific teachers in the past were great, but academic Jewish Studies was not the administration's central focus in the past.

Also, when I was a student at Yeshiva, the college faculty was mostly comprised of Orthodox Jews. That was important because students were able to have role models, with whom students were able to talk about hashkafa in areas other than Torah, such as, biology, physics, political science, the humanities, etc. When I got here, I didn't realize the percentage of secular faculty teaching here. It has been a wonderful addition to YC. I've been very impressed with the academic credentials and integrity of my colleagues and their sensitivity to the mission of Yeshiva College. Their presence and commitment open up new worlds to the students, enabling them to become citizens of the world. The downside to having only Orthodox teachers is that it maintains a cloistered environment which can be detrimental to our growth as human beings.

C: Do you have any advice for current Yeshiva Students?

BE: I'm a big proponent of a four-year college education. It's very diffi-

cult to be able to really become educated in three years. I think students don't appreciate the fact that this is the best time of their lives to be students -- to study and to grow and to be exposed to different ideas and to think of their place in the world as they are maturing. I don't blame them for being in a hurry. I had a very similar experience. When I left Revel to pursue graduate work, I was very anxious to move ahead. I was dating my wife at that time. It was very important to me to move forward with my professional goals. I didn't want to become a practicing Rabbi. So, when I was accepted at Penn, no one stopped me and said, "You have the opportunity to spend a year studying with the Rav." No one said to me, "You know, Barry, when you are fifty years old, it isn't going to matter whether you are fifty or fifty-one. That one year means nothing in the totality of your life, and for an educational experience of that kind, defer Penn and seize the opportunity to learn with the Rav." But, there was this internal pressure -- I had to move on with my life. Now, if a student is bored to death here, I'm not talking to him. But for a serious, thinking student, just know that, where you are now, a year seems like a big deal, but in the totality of life, it's nothing.

C: Do you read *The Commentator*?

BE: Yes. Though, I'm not sure if I should say this, but I am kind of disappointed in how *The Commentator* seems to have become all about getting the scoop. That doesn't mean that one cannot present material that is controversial. But it has to be done in the spirit of "Why am I doing this?" and, "How does *The Commentator* contribute in a positive way to campus life?" The motivation should be for the betterment of the college as a whole, doing the right thing, facilitating good communication. There is a certain maturity needed for that, as opposed to finding a leak and getting the scoop. This is not "Let's have a lot of fun and see how we can rile people." This is a responsibility, and it is part of your educational process. In college, you are learning to become responsible adults and partners in a larger process. But I do read it because it tells me a lot about the student body, about what students are thinking. It is indispensable for a college to have a strong student newspaper and yasher koach to all of you who take out large chunks of your time for this extracurricular activity.

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Message From the YSU President

Welcome to Yeshiva University! My name is Shloimie Zeffren and I have been elected your YSU President for this year. For those of you who do not know me yet, I am from Los Angeles, CA. After graduating from YULA high school I attended Yeshivat Shaalvim in Israel for two years, and I am presently a Senior in the Sy Syms School of Business.

This year I am proud to say that I am joined on my executive board by a highly capable, innovative and driven crew, who support the same goals as I do: Vice President Eli Malikan, Secretary Yitzchok Davidowitz, and Treasurer Eric Israeli. I am also joined by the student councils of SOY/ JSS, YC and Sy Syms who, along with me, hope to have a very productive and fun year.

Now that we know each other, I would like to explain why I decided to run for the YSU Presidency. My goals from the moment that I arrived here on campus were to provide a conducive environment for growth and student activism. Too often I would speak to students and alumni and be saddened to hear that they wished that they had been more involved in on-campus programming. I decided to take it upon myself to improve student activism on Yeshiva University's campus. I realized, however, that this would have to be a gradual process. Over the past two years I have had the privilege of watching our past YSU Presidents, Daniel Stokar and Marc "Ziggy" Zharnest make our campus a better place. They created programming and clubs that not only provided students an outlet from their studies, but also bolstered their resumes, making them competitive in the job market and setting the stage for them to be leaders in the Jewish community. I am honored to follow in their footsteps, and my hope is that together we will be able to further their journey and reinvigorate a base of student leaders.

We had a fantastic start to this school year. During the Orientation and the Welcome Back Bash we greeted both new and returning students from around the world. I imagined that their thoughts were similar to mine on my first day in YU. I had feelings of excitement, nervousness, and anticipation for what was to come over the next several years. I looked into the faces of my peers and I saw a group of friends with similar hopes and aspirations. Over the course of this year, we plan not only to entertain, but to support your education and help you meet your personal goals.

As soon as September 3 we will be having our second annual "Screen On the Green" event in Tenzer Gardens. It will bring together both new and old students from across our Manhattan campuses as they help each other acclimate to university life. Soon after, we will be holding our largest club fair to date, where students will be able to join the clubs of their choice, with hopes of making a difference on campus. In addition, on November 1, we will be having the first-ever YU 3-on-3 basketball tournament. Aside from following our theme of school unity, we hope to raise money for a notable charity. These events will of course be followed by an incredible Chanuka concert and many more exciting events.

As you can see, I am very excited about the prospects of this upcoming year and I look forward to providing a productive and fun-filled year. I am always open to ideas for school programming. If we have yet to be acquainted, please feel free to come over and introduce yourself. Perhaps we can have lunch or a coffee.

May it be Hashem's will that as we usher in this new year, we come together as students to create a conducive environment for both religious and secular growth.

Sincerely,
Shloimie Zeffren
YSU President



Message from the SOY/JSU President

Dear Students,

I would like to welcome you all to what I hope will be a great year here at Yeshiva University. This year, we have the tremendous privilege of being part of the first ever combined SOY/JSC Student Council. Part of this privilege is to help define what will be different this year than previous years and to decide how SOY/JSC will impact the various Jewish studies programs in YU.

In the months that have passed since the elections last spring, I have heard many opinions and suggestions as to how SOY/JSC should function; my vision is as follows: Because the student body in YU is so diverse, trying to represent everyone under one student council could very well end with no one being represented at all. This is why each morning program will continue to have its own respective student council to oversee its students, but when appropriate, the various morning programs will come together as one united SOY/JSC student council and offer programs that will help bring the students in the various programs together.

When Steven Paletz, chair of the Student Life Committee, first proposed the idea of uniting the undergraduate Jewish Studies councils last spring, my desire to be a part of the new council only increased. I decided to run for SOY president after serving as Secretary on the 2008-09 SOY board, where I had the privilege of helping Jeremy Weg during his term as SOY president. This year I hope to work with the entire SOY/JSC board to maintain the success that Weg and his board had and to build on it as well.

Some of my goals this semester are to uphold the high level of shuirim and Torah-gearred events that are offered in YU and to diversify these events to meet the interests of the different students here. I would also like to lead a conversation with the higher administration to discuss reforming the current Jewish Studies requirements to better fit the interests of the students. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, I want to work hard to help erase some of the dividers that unfortunately separate so much of our student body.

During the past few weeks alone, I have received numerous phone calls and emails from students with ideas and suggestions for what SOY/JSC can do this year. After only a few days as president, I am beginning to see just how great the possibilities are. I encourage everyone who has any ideas that could potentially help YU to please come speak with me or anyone on the SOY/JSC board. Hopefully, we can together succeed in bringing these ideas to fruition and make Yeshiva University a better place.

Best wishes for an enjoyable and productive semester,

Jason Jacobs
President, Student Organization of Yeshiva



Two YC Professors Denied Tenure

Dr. Pimpare to Leave Yeshiva After This Year, Dr. Hrnjez to Appeal the Verdict

Continued from front page case.

THE TENURE PROCESS

The three major components that generally affect a tenure decision are scholarship, teaching, and service. Provost Lowengrub declined to comment on the details of the case, and full knowledge of Dr. Pimpare's tenure denial is limited to a select few administrators. As a result, confusion abounds, and most faculty and administrators do not actually know the technical grounds for denial.

While not a closely guarded secret, the tenure process at YC, and at Yeshiva in general, is quite complicated. Initially, new tenure-track hires receive three-year contracts. At the end of these three years, the professor comes up for review, at which point a committee evaluates the progress the professor has made toward tenure. If the committee finds in favor of the professor, the professor then receives a new three-year contract, after which the professor comes up for tenure. If the professor is denied tenure, then he or she is given a grace period of one year to find a new job.

The tenure review itself has many stages. First, the department or cluster in which the professor teaches makes a recommendation, only after which the case moves to the dean or deans involved. If the recommendations of the faculty and the deans are positive, the case is reviewed by Provost Morton Lowengrub, who then makes a recommendation to University President Richard M. Joel. If the President approves, the case goes before a committee of trustees, and eventually returns to the Provost for a final decision.

Wurzweiler Dean Sheldon R. Gelman recalled that Dr. Pimpare was originally hired to be a professor in YC, but when Wurzweiler discovered that his research greatly overlapped with work being done there, he began teaching at Wurzweiler as well. Because of this, there were two separate sets of consultations and recommendations on Dr. Pimpare's behalf. There were two sets of faculty comments – one from the social sciences cluster in YC and SCW, and one from the faculty of Wurzweiler – and recommendations from then-YC Dean David Srolovitz and Dean Gelman.

BEHIND THE DECISION

Although the exact reason for the outcome is unclear, senior faculty members and upper administration officials have been quite willing to speculate about why Dr. Pimpare was denied tenure. There

is a distinct sense of unrest among the YC faculty, with a large community of professors voicing their support of Dr. Pimpare.

Dr. Ellen Schrecker, professor of history at YC, once sat in on one of Dr. Pimpare's classes. "Dr. Pimpare was able to harness the energy of the classroom for intellectual participation," Dr. Schrecker said. "He was pushing students to excel. He has a strong personality, which is probably an asset in the classroom."

Various faculty members also spoke about Dr. Pimpare's service to the university. Dr. Gabriel Cwilich, professor of Physics and Director of the Jay and Jeannie Schottenstein Honors Program, noted that Dr. Pimpare served on numerous faculty committees in YC. Dr. Pimpare also had responsibilities at the Advising Center. Dean Gelman was also impressed by Dr. Pimpare's service to the university on multiple levels. "Dr. Pimpare actively engaged with our students and faculty," Dean Gelman said, "and they benefited from their interaction with him."

However, the level of impact Dr. Pimpare's service had on his case is unclear. One senior faculty member investigated the matter himself. "Normally, I assume that the professor [under review for tenure] would have told [administrators] what committees they served on, and then members of those committees would be contacted for comment and recommendation." After speaking with virtually all of these colleagues, though, the faculty member concluded that in Dr. Pimpare's case, "This didn't happen. Every single one who worked with him on any committee said that they were not contacted by people involved in the tenure case." One administration official noted, though, that since 'service' is generally considered to be the least important of the three evaluation criteria, this is not necessarily out of the ordinary.

Most of those upset by the tenure denial also pointed to Dr. Pimpare's scholarship as a positive factor for him. Dr. Pimpare has written two books, and is currently at work on a third, entitled *The Celluloid Poorhouse: Poverty in American Film*. He has also published many book chapters, articles, and reviews, and has lectured widely.

Dr. Schrecker also praised Dr. Pimpare's publication record, and suggested that people involved in the decision to deny tenure expect an unreasonable amount from the faculty up for review. "To set this artificial high standard of scholarship – if this is, in fact, the reason for the denial – it's depriving

Yeshiva of one of its liveliest minds, and also has the impact of demoralizing junior faculty."

Other faculty members echoed the concern that denying tenure to a seemingly qualified professor would cause anxiety among the junior faculty. In fact, over the summer, Provost Lowengrub and then-Dean Srolovitz called a meeting inviting junior faculty to share their concerns about the tenure process, and allaying any fears which were brought about by Dr. Pimpare's tenure denial.

Another senior faculty member emphasized that Provost Lowengrub generally gives significant weight to external reviews of the scholarship of those who are up for tenure. That same faculty member, though, believed that the external reviews of Dr. Pimpare's scholarship were positive. Another senior faculty member who has some knowledge of the case noted that external reviews are among the most important factors in evaluating tenure cases, and intimated that, in the case of Dr. Pimpare, these reviews may indeed have been positive.

WHERE DID IT END?

Many faculty members and administrators believe that the process ended on the desk of Provost Lowengrub. Dean Gelman confirmed that the recommendations of Wurzweiler faculty were extremely positive, as was his own. Sources close to Dr. Srolovitz and other YC administrators, as well, reported that Dr. Pimpare "had the strong support of most of his colleagues", and received very positive recommendations from Dr. Srolovitz, and also from Dr. Joanne Jacobson, then Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

The case, then, would certainly have made it as far as Provost Lowengrub. Numerous faculty members and administration officials, though, believed that the case stopped there as well. If Provost Lowengrub decides to deny a tenure request, the process need go no farther.

In spite of the recommendations of faculties and deans, then, the case was denied. "This kind of action basically says that we don't trust the judgment of the faculty," said Dr. Schrecker. Dean Gelman felt similarly affronted. "I wouldn't use the word surprised – rather, disappointed," Dean Gelman said. "I would have hoped that the process would have ended up reflecting the faculty and dean's assessments." This case is particularly troubling for Wurzweiler, as there was a similarly upsetting tenure denial the year before as well.

TENURE TRANSPARENCY

One major issue which Dr. Pimpare's denial has raised is that of transparency in the tenure process. As it stands, the first time a professor who is up for tenure will hear anything about the way the case is proceeding is when that professor gets a call from Provost Lowengrub telling them whether or not they have received tenure. This lack of information flow causes the process to be one of anxiety and dread.

This absence of transparency was a focus of the summer meeting with Provost Lowengrub, then-Dean Srolovitz, and junior faculty members, about twelve to fifteen of whom were present. According to one junior faculty member who attended the meeting, the Provost and the Dean agreed that they were committed to making the process more transparent and pledged to try to keep tenure candidates more informed about their cases as they unfold, and when the deadline for the next stage in the process would be.

Dr. Shawn Zelig Aster, professor of Bible, was also at the meeting. He noted that while Provost Lowengrub discussed general tenure procedures, he did not comment on any specific cases.

Dr. Cwilich hailed more transparency in the tenure process as a possible positive outcome of a negative situation. Dr. Cwilich recently attended a meeting along with representatives from many of the top small liberal arts colleges to which YU likes to compare itself (Middlebury, Haverford, etc.). One of the topics of conversations was governance, and many of the representatives from these schools noted that their tenure committees were very transparent, and many of them had a faculty committee which rigorously investigates the candidates for tenure.

IMPACT ON THE UNIVERSITY

Many other faculty members are disappointed that YC will be losing Dr. Pimpare. Professor Adam Zachary Newton, University Professor, Ronald P. Stanton Chair in Literature and the Humanities, and Chair of the English Department, reflected on Dr. Pimpare's involvement in the faculty community at YC. "He has played a very significant role in multiple capacities at YU," Dr. Newton said, "not the least of which is that of peer in an intellectual community and faculty culture vital to the flourishing of the college."

Student opinion on the impact that Dr. Pimpare's denial will have on YC was similarly dour. Shalom Isaacson, who has taken three classes with Dr. Pimpare, described

him as "extraordinarily knowledgeable and informed about his area of specialty, domestic policy." Other students spoke highly of his classroom presence, and the way in which he fosters vibrant classroom discussion. Steven Paletz, a political science major who took courses with Dr. Pimpare in all five of his semesters on campus, stated, "It is shocking that Dr. Pimpare, who has given so much to the university, was not awarded tenure."

The YC political science department will be significantly affected by Dr. Pimpare's departure, given that they currently only have one tenured professor, and are only offering five courses this semester. One political science student described the state of affairs in the department as "the biggest department that doesn't get enough attention."

STILL A MYSTERY

Dr. Schrecker noted that, in general, 90% of those who get hired for tenure-track jobs get tenure. Especially when – as was the case for Dr. Pimpare – the initial hire was the result of an exhaustive search, "the expectation is that, unless the person completely blows it, there will be tenure," Dr. Schrecker said. It seems, though, that, while the exact reasons for Dr. Pimpare's denial remain unclear, Provost Lowengrub may not have agreed with Dr. Schrecker's assessment.

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