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# YUTODAY

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY  
▶ WINTER 2009  
▶ ISSUE 1 • VOLUME 4

## No Increase in 2009/10 Undergraduate Tuition

“WE’RE PUTTING STUDENTS FIRST,” SAYS PRESIDENT RICHARD JOEL

Citing “our commitment to YU’s students and their families as they face their own tough economic times,” President Richard M. Joel has announced that there will be no increase in the cost of undergraduate tuition for 2009/10. Although the University itself is engaged in a concerted plan of budget-cutting, the President said, “We are putting students first.”

Two other important new initiatives will address family need:

- A new scholarship drive—supported by the Board of Trustees—will add up to \$5 million to the University’s scholarship budget for undergraduates.
- Students who spent their first YU year in Israel can add an optional fourth campus year to their degree program at just half the cost of tuition.

“In spite of Yeshiva University’s belt-tightening, we believe that we are in a position of strength that enables us to offer these initiatives, thereby helping to ease some of the burden for our students and their families,” President Joel said. “Our mission is to educate, and at

a time of global economic crisis, a YU education is more important than ever. We’re committed to being accessible and affordable for all our undergraduates.”

Tuition will remain at \$31,594 for the year, and there will be only a modest increase of \$250 per semester for room and board. While many American universities are hoping to keep tuition increases to a minimum, YU was among the first to announce a freeze at current levels.

The University is also putting a strong focus on growing its scholarship resources. The Board of Trustees is taking the lead by supporting a new scholarship drive, through which YU hopes to add \$5 million in new funds for undergraduate students, augmenting the approximately \$31 million in institutional aid that the University annually budgets.

Through a third initiative, new and currently enrolled students who start their YU undergraduate program with a year in Israel and plan to stay on the YU campus for four years after they return will be eligible for a half-tuition scholar-



YU is committed to keeping its Torah Umadda education accessible to undergraduates, said President Joel.

ship for that fourth year. They will work with an academic advisor to develop a comprehensive four-year academic plan. This applies to students returning from Israel and enrolling on campus in fall

2009 and is also being extended to students who are currently in their first or second year on campus.

Dr. Hillel Davis, vice president for university life, reports that the undergraduate programs

are at stronger admissions levels. “Our applications are running higher than last year,” Davis said, “and retention—that is, the percentage of students who remain

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### WHAT’S New?

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## YU Aims for \$36 Million in Scholarship Aid

TRUSTEE EFFORT TO RAISE \$5 MILLION MORE; STUDENTS ON BOARD TOO

Yeshiva University is embarking on a new campaign aimed at raising an additional \$5 million this year, and in each of the next two years, in new gifts for scholarships to help current families and students as well as incoming students. This broad-based appeal, spearheaded by the Board of Trustees, will augment the University’s \$31 million scholarship budget. Constituents from throughout YU—including students—are responding. To date, \$2.4 million—nearly half of the overall scholarship initiative goal for the first year—has been raised.

“Everyone has been affected by the economic downturn,” said Bob Friedman, director of student aid. “We’re aware that many of our families need additional support during this time and we’re responding to that call. These new



From L: Reena Ribalt of the student committee, Danielle Rohatiner, The Eisenberg Presidential Fellow in Institutional Advancement, and Arielle Frankston-Morris tell a fellow student about the Students Helping Students campaign at a tabling event.

fundraising efforts are vital to helping them out.”

Trustees have already pledged

significant funds toward the effort. “These are extraordinary times, and

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# Institute Partners with Schools to Improve Jewish Education

A new institute at Yeshiva University will apply the academic, religious and practical expertise of its faculty and staff to enhance the quality of education in North America's Jewish schools.

The Institute for University-School Partnership at Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration addresses

the most pressing issues in Jewish education today, such as attracting and training high-quality teachers and principals and finding solutions to school affordability.

"Faculty at Azrieli and other YU schools were regularly consulting with schools and conducting research on topics in Jewish education," Dr. Scott Goldberg, director of the Institute and assis-

tant professor at Azrieli, said. "By establishing the Institute, YU is now set to approach the most pressing challenges to the Jewish day school community in a more strategic and organized manner."

While the Institute continues to focus particular programs on the Modern Orthodox schools, it has become a resource for Jewish schools of all denominations across North America. Supported by the Azrieli faculty as senior fellows, it services schools through a broad range of programming focusing on networking, continuing education, research, professional development and recruitment and placement of teachers.

"The schools that we partner with benefit greatly from the services and training we provide at minimal or no cost," said Goldberg. "Our school-change projects in areas of bully prevention, religious purposefulness, and early Hebrew literacy, for example, are all ongoing research studies in which the schools receive continuing training and we receive data, which we then analyze and disseminate to enrich the Jewish educational community and the curriculum for our own students." (See box below.)

"We're creating a culture in the Jewish educational world of research, innovation and collaboration based on Jewish values," Goldberg said. "Beyond our specific research projects, our networking and continuing education activities also promote this goal."

Go to [www.yu.edu/school-partnership](http://www.yu.edu/school-partnership) to learn about the Institute's latest activities. ■



Dr. Scott Goldberg leads the Institute for University-School Partnership.

“The schools that we partner with benefit greatly from the services and training we provide at minimal or no cost.”

## RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY THE INSTITUTE INCLUDES:

- Dr. Rona Novick, associate professor at Azrieli and director of the Fanya Gottesfeld Heller Division of Doctoral Studies, is working with nine schools in five states to share her expertise in the area of bullying prevention. The educators participating in her BRAVE project convene for conferences, collect and share data relevant to the study and participate in training seminars.
- The RUACH (Religious Understanding in Adolescent Children) project, directed by Goldberg and Dr. David Pelcovitz, Gwendolyn and Joseph Straus Professor of Jewish Education at Azrieli, will collaborate with eight Jewish day schools to explore how best to promote growth in the areas of students' relationships with God, religious beliefs and religious actions. With multi-year support from the AVI CHAI Foundation, the Institute is working to create deeper spiritual connections for Jewish students and more religious purposefulness in Jewish schools.
- The Institute is also developing a Hebrew literacy evaluation modeled after the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), a well-

accepted literacy evaluation that is already on the market in other languages. Dr. Nina Goodman, a clinical fellow at the Institute and academic support coordinator and resource room teacher at the Abraham J. Heschel School, is consulting on the project. This evaluation is being piloted in a number of day schools before being published.

- Goldberg and a team including doctoral fellow Chana Maybruch are training educators in the area of differentiated instruction, a mode of teaching that allows educators to meet the needs of more students through proactive planning and classroom administration. This approach takes into consideration the diverse needs and talents of individual students.
- Pelcovitz and doctoral fellow Rabbi Steven Eisenberg are collecting and analyzing data for a study of the post-high school year in Israel. This research—which analyzes students before, during and after the year in Israel—will be used to train educators, guidance counselors and students to make wise choices about this transformational year before college. ■

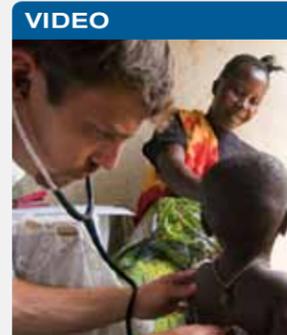
YUTODAY ON THE WEB  
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## WEB EXCLUSIVE: YU and the U.S. Presidency

Inspired by the historic inauguration of President Barack Obama, Yeshiva University looks back at its ties to the White House over the decades. From correspondence between President Calvin Coolidge and Dr. Bernard Revel in 1927 to President Richard M. Joel's visit to the White House in 2006, the University has paid homage to the U.S. presidency throughout war and peace.

➔ [www.yu.edu/news/uspresidency](http://www.yu.edu/news/uspresidency)



VIDEO

## Hear the Stories of Our Hanukkah Points of Light

➔ [www.yu.edu/flv/pol.html](http://www.yu.edu/flv/pol.html)



PHOTO GALLERY

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**Scholarship Aid Initiative**

*Continued from Page 1*

I'm glad we are able to take extraordinary steps to help our students," Lance L. Hirt, Trustee, said.

Expressing gratitude to the Board for making scholarships a priority, President Richard M. Joel said, "We can have the strongest Jewish studies and secular curricula, the finest honors programs, top student services and career development opportunities—but they mean nothing unless our students can enroll and earn their degrees. Our Board members are really stepping up to the plate."

A student-led initiative, Students Helping Students, has begun to raise awareness of the need. "We were amazed to learn that 70 percent of undergraduates receive scholarship aid from YU," said Arielle Frankston-Morris, one of the heads of the student committee. "We feel it's really important that we help each other." The first Students Helping Students fundraising event, a bowl-a-thon, took place on March 5.



Louis Tuchman

**'IMPORTANCE OF HELPING STUDENTS HIT HOME'**

Louis Tuchman '77YH, '81YC has spent the years since earning his YU degrees in several fulfilling ways: as a partner at the New York law firm Kaye Scholer, as a husband and father—and, he said, as an alumnus "always looking for different ways to give back to YU."

"YU holds a very important spot in my heart," Tuchman said. "It gave me a foundation, opportunities and commitment, and I wanted to express my gratitude in tangible ways." Like Louis

and his wife, Naomi, his daughters attended the Yeshiva University High Schools, and his older daughter will graduate from Stern College for Women this spring.

This fall, the Tuchmans just finished paying their three-year pledge to endow the \$25,000 Naomi and Louis Tuchman Scholarship Fund at Stern College. "My wife and I had both benefited from the scholarships I received when I was a student—and in recent months, the importance of helping out students who need assistance has really hit home," Tuchman said. As president of his children's day school, he has seen a big increase in the need for scholarships. "It's just extremely important for those who can't help those who can't. I wish I could do even more."

**'EVERYBODY NEEDS A BOOST RIGHT NOW'**

At a time when most people seem focused on their own financial future, Froma and Andy Benerofe continue to invest in the future of others. Their recent \$650,000 gift



Froma Benerofe

to Wurzweiler School of Social Work, which increased their overall commitment to \$1 million, will increase scholarship support for those entering the helping professions.

"I think everybody needs a boost right now," Froma said. "The times are bad, but we hope [our gift] will be a big boost to the whole community at Wurzweiler and encourage other people to think about what they can do, as opposed to what they can't do."

A clinical social worker in private practice for more than two decades, Froma first became

involved with Wurzweiler in 1998 and serves on the school's Board of Governors.

"It's been a great experience," she said of her involvement. "The Wurzweiler program blends many threads in my life in terms of my personal commitment to the values of *tikkun olam* [healing the world] as well as my professional commitment to social work. I'm grateful to be able to support and help the school."

Froma recently had the opportunity to meet Yael Koenigsberg, one of the Wurzweiler students whose life was changed by the Benerofe family's earlier gift. Koenigsberg, a graduate of Stern College for Women, is doing her fieldwork at Yeshiva Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (Breuer's) in Washington Heights.

"The meeting was breathtaking," said Froma. "I felt very privileged to have participated in helping this young woman develop her professional skills," said Froma. "She will be an asset to our profession." ■

**Sy Syms Adds Master's in Accounting**

This summer, Sy Syms School of Business will expand its curriculum to include a master of science in accounting, the first graduate-level program in the school's 22-year history.

"We are broadening our vision of the business school," Dean Michael Ginzberg said. "We have a unique approach to business education that places Jewish values and ethics front and center. We'll always be dedicated to undergraduate education; now we're ready to apply our mission to graduate education for the community at large."

The school hired Dr. Joseph Kerstein, previously associate professor of accounting at Baruch College, to direct the master's program. Kerstein holds a PhD from Wharton Business School and an MBA from New York University. The program's faculty—including senior professors at the school and new, yet-to-be-announced faculty—hold PhDs and conduct and publish research, qualifications that are required by the NY State Board of Regents.

The master's program begins this summer with co-ed classes on

the Beren Campus, conveniently located for those working in accounting firms in Midtown. It is the first of a number of planned initiatives including an executive master of business administration degree, joint programs with other Yeshiva University professional schools and a full-fledged honors program for the undergraduate school.

"We're moving into a higher gear with the school's growth," said Josh S. Weston, chairman of the Syms Board. "The graduate and professional programs are

a critical part of the portfolio for YU's business school. We felt all of these steps were important to make our graduates that much more competitive."

The accounting program will offer full-or part-time studies, both requiring a total of ten courses to be completed. In order to accommodate students' work schedules, the accounting program will offer two courses in the summer and four courses in each of the fall and spring semesters.

As the dean pointed out, there is an immediate need for the MS in

accounting program as, effective August 2009, accounting majors will need 150 hours of business accounting and liberal arts credits in order to be licensed in New York State.

"Students graduating with just a normal bachelor's degree will not be eligible to become CPAs without further education," Ginzberg said. "We wanted to make sure we are doing everything to help them get qualified." ■

**Hanukkah Dinner Redoubles Spirit, Raises Record Amount**

"After 122 years and only four presidents, this university is thriving," New York State Governor David A. Paterson said in his keynote address at the 84th Annual Hanukkah Dinner and Convocation at The Waldorf=Astoria.

"President Richard Joel is pursuing the opportunity to fulfill the true meaning of education: a higher knowledge and a greater spirit," Paterson added.

That spirit permeated the ceremony at which President Joel awarded honorary degrees to Paterson and four communal leaders: philanthropists David Feuerstein and Roslyn Goldstein; Elliot Gibber, president and CEO of Deb-El Food Products; and Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, rabbi of Con-

gregation Kehilath Jeshurun and head of the Ramaz School.

Almost 750 guests attended the event, raising \$3.2 million for the University, just over \$1 million more than last year.

Undoubtedly, the story of Hanukkah, which tells of the Maccabees' triumph over the Greeks and the miracle of the Temple candles that burned for eight days, had particular resonance at this year's dinner.

"Hanukkah commemorates the triumph of idealism over materialism, the victory of purpose over power, the enduring force of the light of faith and commitment," President Joel said at the convocation ceremony. "We as a community, even during seemingly dark times, focus on investing in

the world through the majestic and timeless Jewish mission to illumine, to ennoble, to enable."

He acknowledged the impact of tumultuous economic forces and "tragic failings that have caused harm to us and others," and assured the crowd that the institution would endure by remaining committed to its mission of educating the next generation of Jewish leaders.

"We are a community of inspired faculty, students, professionals, alumni and leaders singly committed to the promise of tomorrow and the responsibilities of today," the President said.

In a ceremony punctuated by moments of warmth and humor, President Joel spoke eloquently about each of the honorary degree



Gov. David Paterson received an honorary degree from President Joel.

recipients' achievements. To read more about the honorary degree recipients, go to [www.yu.edu/news](http://www.yu.edu/news).

The dinner portion of the evening showcased the Points of Light, a group of students, faculty, alumni and donors who represent the excellence that YU is known for.

To watch the Points of Light video, go to [www.yu.edu/multimedia](http://www.yu.edu/multimedia).

"The brilliance of our faculty, students, researchers, alumni and philanthropists inspires us and brings the promise of light and hope to the world around us," said President Joel. ■



**Dr. Jacob Wisse**, associate professor of art history at Stern College for Women, has been appointed as the **new director of the Yeshiva University Museum** following **Sylvia Herskowitz's retirement** after 32 years as director. Since 2005–2006, when he was appointed to head the art history program at Stern, Wisse has introduced courses that use exhibitions and museum collections to complement the classroom experience. He will continue to teach and guide the program. Herskowitz gave the nascent YU Museum an identity by shaping it as a teaching museum that collected, interpreted and exhibited the art and artifacts of Jews the world over.

Yeshiva University and **New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development** have created a **partnership** allowing eligible undergraduate students to take undergraduate education courses at NYU during their junior and senior years. Students who complete credits in the program will then be eligible to apply for admission to Steinhardt's Master of Arts program in math or science education with reduced credit requirements. The partnership will address the national shortage of highly qualified teachers of math and science in middle and high schools. More information and application instructions are at [www.steinhardt.nyu.edu](http://www.steinhardt.nyu.edu)

Wurzweiler School of Social Work recently hosted **"Social Work in Hospice and Palliative Care: The Emerging Landscape,"** a conference exploring the role social workers can play as part of an interdisciplinary palliative care team. The event was also sponsored by the Social Work Hospice and Palliative Care Network, the Center for Ethics at Yeshiva University and Columbia University School of Social Work, another Network member.

Yeshiva University's **Albert Einstein College of Medicine** and **Fordham University** have agreed to a **collaborative relationship** that will strengthen their science and medical offerings. The agreement will give Fordham access to Einstein's vast array of clinical medical resources, with undergraduates participating in a hospital mentorship, lab-based coursework and a summer research program at the medical college. In addition, Fordham's science and pre-med students may take two-semester, lab-based electives at Einstein. Likewise, Einstein students may take a research elective or other graduate course at Fordham.

Eighteen students in Wurzweiler's **Jewish Communal Service Certificate Program** visited **New Orleans** in November to learn about the revitalization of its Jewish community after **Hurricane Katrina**. Under the guidance of **Dr. Saul Andron**, who heads the certificate program, and Professor **Lynn Levy**, they studied the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans's strategic plan to reenergize the community and met with leaders of Jewish agencies. The group also volunteered with the St. John's Baptist Church Social Ministry in the city's desolate Seventh Ward.

A student-organized *yom ivun* [day of learning] focusing on **"Controversial Figures in Tanach"** drew an overwhelming 800 people on Nov. 2—double the number of attendees at the previous yom ivun. The day of Bible study was part of the hugely popular Abraham Arbesfeld Kollel Yom Rishon and Millie Arbesfeld Midreshet Yom Rishon, run by the Center for the Jewish Future-Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary. Lectures can be downloaded at [www.YUTorah.org](http://www.YUTorah.org).

**Dr. Lata K. McGinn**, director of the clinical program and associate professor of psychology at Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology, was appointed a **Beck Scholar** by the Beck Institute of Cognitive Therapy and Research, which was founded by Dr. Aaron T. Beck, the founder of cognitive therapy, and his wife, Dr. Judith Beck. The Beck Scholar Program recognizes individuals who have made a significant contribution to the field of cognitive therapy.

**Mentoring in Medicine**, led by **Dr. Lynne Holden**, associate professor of clinical emergency medicine at Einstein, hosted **"Yes, I Can Be a Health Care Professional"** to address the critical shortage of minorities in the health care workforce. A record turnout of 1,800 students joined parents, educators and nearly 150 health professionals for educational workshops, an "Ask the Expert" Fair and lunches with health professionals.

## Student-Run Panel Probes Role of Ethics in Kosher Food

A student-run panel discussion on the role of ethics in Jewish dietary laws, "The Kosher Quandary: Ethics and Kashrut," brought together rabbis from major Orthodox organizations to address a timely topic on Dec. 9.

Hundreds of students and guests attended the event, which was presented by the newly founded student-run organization, TEIQU (A Torah Exploration of Ideas, Questions, and Understanding). Student organizers put the event together in response to the controversy surrounding AgriProcessors, which until recently was the largest kosher slaughterhouse and meat-packing plant in the United States. After being charged with numerous violations of child labor laws, immigration and bank fraud, AgriProcessors filed for bankruptcy in November.

"We want to facilitate the opportunity for dialogue on a subject that has received considerable attention in our community," said Stern College for Women senior Gilah Kletenik, who co-founded TEIQU with Yeshiva College student Simcha Gross. "While we may not arrive at all the answers tonight, we are certainly asking the right questions."

The panelists were: Rabbi Avi Shafran, director of public affairs at Agudath Israel of America; Rabbi Menachem Genack, rabbinic administrator and CEO of the Orthodox Union's Kashrut Division and a *rosh yeshiva* [professor of Talmud] at YU's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary; Rabbi Basil Herring, executive vice president of the Rabbinical Council of America; and Shmuly Yanklowitz, co-founder and direc-

tor of Uri L'Tzedek, an Orthodox social justice organization.

While all the panelists agreed that any form of unethical behavior is unacceptable, they differed on their opinions of what role ethics plays in kashrut.

"Experts who have argued this case over and over and suggest that the kashrut at AgriProcessors has been compromised are simply inaccurate," said Rabbi Genack. "But that's not to say we are not concerned about these issues; we have to be very concerned."

Yanklowitz said focusing exclusively on kashrut and not paying attention to ethics made Halakhah morally irrelevant. "Even if ethics and kashrut are not connected, they are connected in people's minds. We must have the moral courage to tackle this crisis head on." ■

## Volleyballers Earn All-Conference Honors

Women's volleyball senior Adira Katlowitz and junior Nili Block have been named to the 2008 Hudson Valley Women's Athletic Conference (HVWAC) All-Conference team. After leading Yeshiva to a 2–14 overall record during its inaugural varsity season and 2–4 in HVWAC play, Katlowitz and Block became the first Yeshiva University women's volleyball players to earn All-Conference honors.

Katlowitz averaged 0.59 kills, 1.16 service aces and 0.75 digs per game during an outstanding overall season. Block emerged as the top defensive standout on the team during the 2008 season, averaging a team-best of 2.68 digs per game.

The Lady Macs volleyball team was elevated to varsity status after last year's truncated season as a club team. In the past three years, the Athletic Department has doubled the number of sports offered to students at the Beren Campus. With a successful first varsity season behind them that included a trip to the HVWAC quarterfinals, Yeshiva looks forward to its second season, as at least 11 team members are expected to return for the 2009 campaign. ■



Nili Block (left) and Adira Katlowitz (right).



### LEAPING LEIBOVICH NETS WEEKLY AWARDS

Men's basketball junior Martin Leibovich, a native of Argentina, earned four major weekly awards after an outstanding week of play during which he led the Macs to a 1–1 record. For terrific play during a competitive loss to Baruch College and a 74–71 overtime win of Maritime College on Dec. 11, Leibovich was named the Skyline Conference Player of the Week and ECAC-Metro Co-Player of the Week and was named to the PrestoSports/Metropolitan Basketball Writer's Association Honor Roll and D3Hoops.com Team of the Week. The honors were the first weekly awards of Leibovich's career. ■

**FACULTY**Profiles  
TORAH UMADDA IN THE CLASSROOM

► TORAH ◀

DR. MICHELLE LEVINE

## For Advanced Students of Bible, a Guide Who Brings an Open Mind



Dr. Michelle Levine encourages her students to “make the text theirs.”

What can a 13th-century Jewish scholar from Spain teach young women studying in Midtown Manhattan 800 years later? Dr. Michelle Levine, associate professor of Bible at Stern College for Women, believes the biblical scholar Nahmanides, also known as Ramban, exemplifies the active approach she wants her students to take when analyzing medieval Jewish texts.

“Nahmanides demonstrated a refreshing willingness to analyze the Bible based on his close reading of the biblical text and context, without feeling bound to uphold a particular interpretive approach,” said Levine.

Whereas many of his predecessors generally adhered to certain principles and applied them almost universally, Ramban’s exposure to both Ashkenazic and Spanish Andalusian exegesis allowed him to decipher difficult passages with an open mind, said Levine, who received tenure at Stern in December.

Levine teaches a course at Stern on Ramban’s literary approach to the Bible and has written a book, “Nahmanides on Genesis: The Art of Biblical Portraiture,” due for publication soon by Brown University Press.

“I’m presenting Ramban against the backdrop of his exegetical predecessors and in light of modern literary scholarship on

biblical narrative,” Levine said. “His successors have not appreciated significantly what they can gain from Ramban’s analysis of biblical narrative.”

For Levine, biblical exegesis offers unlimited opportunities for analysis and investigation of Torah narratives. She teaches the students in her advanced Bible classes to become involved in the intricacies and complications of the story and “make the text theirs.”

“The students at Stern College are wonderfully enthusiastic and passionate about Torah learning,” she said. “They are bright young women who desire to achieve high academic levels in their knowledge of the Bible and *parshanut* [biblical exegesis].”

Levine, who received her master’s degree in Bible from Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies and her PhD from New York University, recalled a student’s comment in a final paper that illustrated just how seriously she had taken Ramban’s teachings.

“She wrote that she had learned a major life lesson from the course: that life is not black and white but often gray, and that it is important to analyze every issue from more than one angle,” she said.

For Dr. Levine, this is the best proof that the lessons of Ramban’s erudition and exegesis continue to resonate. ■

► UMADDA ◀

DR. NEER ASHERIE

## On the Cutting Edge of Biophysics and Taking Students With Him

Dr. Neer Asherie, assistant professor of physics and biology at Yeshiva College, conducts a large part of his research in the dark—literally. In a darkened laboratory in Belfer Hall, he ran a thin red laser beam through a vial containing a protein solution.

“I determine the changes in size and interactions of the molecules by measuring how they scatter light,” Asherie said.

On a nearby computer screen, a graph appeared, registering the amount of light that changed over time. “By analyzing the pattern of that change, you can deduce the sizes of the particles and how they interact,” the professor explained.

The protein solution was then mixed

This has applications in the human body, as some diseases such as Alzheimer’s and genetic cataracts are caused by a condensation of protein.

Asherie came to YU in 2004 from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he did postdoctoral work in biophysics and from which he received his PhD in physics in 1998. As an experimentalist—a scientist who conducts research in a lab as opposed to a theorist or a computational researcher—he has made a large effort to involve undergraduates in research.

Samuel Blass has worked closely with Asherie this year, an experience he said has made all the difference when applying to graduate programs in chemical engineer-



Students Jacob Berger (left) and Samuel Blass (center) work with Dr. Asherie (right).

with a precipitant to form crystals.

Using a very powerful X-ray source at Brookhaven National Laboratory, Asherie studied the structure of the proteins. He discovered that the chirality of the precipitant molecules—the way that the individual atoms are positioned—changes the crystalline arrangement of the protein.

“The left and right forms of the molecules are different, much like the difference between your left and right hands, and the way they combine affects the crystal structure that is formed,” he explained.

ing. He credited the professor’s “love of science and his eagerness to share it with his students” as inspiring him to pursue a career in research. “We have spent many hours together in the lab, sometimes working late into the night to ensure that a particular task gets done,” Blass said.

What motivates Asherie to immerse himself in this painstaking work? “Curiosity will drive you very far,” Asherie said. “And because research with undergrads involves a lot of teaching, you get satisfaction out of seeing them get it.” ■

## Webcast Offers Rabbis Advice for Supporting Community in Hard Times

Close to 100 rabbis from different denominations tuned in to a two-part interactive Webcast, “What the Rabbi Needs to Know about the Current Financial Crisis,” organized by the Yeshiva University Center for the Jewish Future (CJF) and Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) in January.

Members of the faculty and administration and other commu-

nity professionals offered practical financial and pastoral advice for rabbis as their congregants feel the impact of the financial downturn.

“Every rabbi without question has seen economic difficulties descending without warning on members of the community,” said Rabbi Shaul Robinson of Lincoln Square Synagogue.

Avi Lauer, general counsel and vice president for legal affairs

at YU, noted the importance of finding resources within the community. “Since rabbis often fall into the trusted capacity of advisor for their congregants, it is important to have a network of lawyers and advisors in your community who could help your congregants,” he said.

Rabbi Hershel Billet of Young Israel of Woodmere shared expertise gleaned from setting up Proj-

ect Eliezer, a recently launched initiative that enlists the help of volunteer advisors on mortgage payment, credit card debt, budgeting, unemployment, resume writing skills and applications for unemployment insurance.

The first panel—which included Dr. John Malindretos, associate professor of finance at Sy Syms School of Business, and Rabbi Yossie Stern, founder and

executive director of Project EZRAH—also addressed issues such as school tuition and helping people find employment.

In the second session, which focused on the psychological ramifications of the crisis, Dr. Sara Barris, a clinical psychologist in family practice, urged rabbis to “keep an eye on persistent hopelessness and isolation and identify

*Continued on Page 6*

## David Berger Takes Helm of Jewish Studies

NEW REVEL DEAN OVERSEES 'SYMBIOSIS' OF UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE JEWISH STUDIES BEGUN BY ARTHUR HYMAN

Dr. David Berger may have signed on as a professor of medieval Jewish history at Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies and Yeshiva College two years ago, but he quickly got more than he bargained for. Before he could teach his first course, Berger was appointed head of the academic Jewish studies cluster at YU. Now he has been appointed dean of Revel, replacing long-time dean Dr. Arthur Hyman, who is returning to his research interests.

For Berger, an internationally known scholar of Jewish history, Revel Graduate School combines the worlds of academia and Judaism on the most ideal level. "Torah Umadda means not just the co-existence of traditional Torah studies and secular learning but also the application of the methodologies of academic scholarship to the study of Judaism and its texts," Berger said.

The melding of these two worlds in an environment of traditional commitment to Judaism sets the school apart. "It's safe to



Dr. David Berger taught as a visiting professor at Revel for two years.

claim that this is the only place in the U.S. to do that," he said.

Berger's recruitment from Brooklyn College two years ago was a coup for YU, which is building its offerings as a center for excellence in Jewish studies.

"He is one of the leading scholars in America in Jewish his-

tory and is known throughout the world for his books and articles," Dr. Morton Lowengrub, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, said. "We look forward to his leadership in academic Jewish studies on the undergraduate and graduate levels."

As dean of Revel and chair of

the Wilf Campus Division of Academic Jewish Studies, Berger is overseeing a "symbiosis of graduate and undergraduate Jewish studies" that began under Hyman's tenure. "We are utilizing faculty across undergraduate and graduate lines, not erasing those lines altogether," he noted.

The ranks of Jewish studies faculty have grown steadily over the past few years. Revel Graduate School now has 13 core faculty members, seven associate professors and two adjuncts.

The most recent hire is Dr. Daniel Tsadik, an expert in Middle Eastern Jewry with a focus on Iranian Jewry. Additionally, a search is being conducted to fill the new Chief Rabbi Dr. Isaac Abraham and Jelena (Rachel) Alcalay Chair in Sephardic Studies, established as a result of a gift received this summer through the efforts of Dr. Herbert Dobrinsky. "This will produce a quantum leap in our status as a locus for advanced Sephardic studies," Berger noted.

Dr. Mordechai Cohen, recently appointed associate dean, has begun

planning a program for enhanced mentoring of students in a one-on-one relationship with faculty. "We want students to be able to discuss their programs and receive advice from people who know them as well as the field," Berger said.

The doctoral program is another focus of the new dean. Applicants to the PhD program now no longer need to have a master's degree.

"We still expect most of our students to have already earned an MA, but we are opening a track for direct application to the PhD program by outstanding students who are now graduating from college," he said. "We've also tightened some procedures so that students will complete their courses within a reasonable period of time."

Revel Graduate School may be small, but it is thriving. With its stellar academic record and focus on Jewish studies, it holds a special place at the heart of its parent institution. Said Berger, "I am convinced that the success of Revel is central to the mission of the entire University." ■

## YUHSB Honors Program Stretches Minds

Yeshiva University High School for Boys (YUHSB) inaugurated its Honors College last semester, which provides enhanced spiritual and intellectual stimulation for gifted students.

Twenty-four students were recruited from the top echelons of their elementary school classes for the incoming class of the Honors College.

Dr. Edward Berliner, director of the Honors College, who teaches calculus and AP physics at YUHSB, said the program creates an "intellectual hothouse for participating students," combining Torah principles with the broader world of ideas.

"We spend a lot of time at yeshiva high schools with students who need extra attention, but the question is: How much time are we spending with students who

need and deserve special attention to further their intellectual growth?" Berliner, who is also the executive director of science management and clinical professor of physics at YU, said.

The program features academically challenging courses, student/staff-led seminars and other interdisciplinary studies, experiential learning and directed mentoring.

Throughout their four years in the program, students are given additional thematic readings and study in-depth the perspectives of various authors such as Mark Twain, Friedrich Nietzsche and Rav Joseph Soloveitchik. They also go on field trips, which include preparatory research.

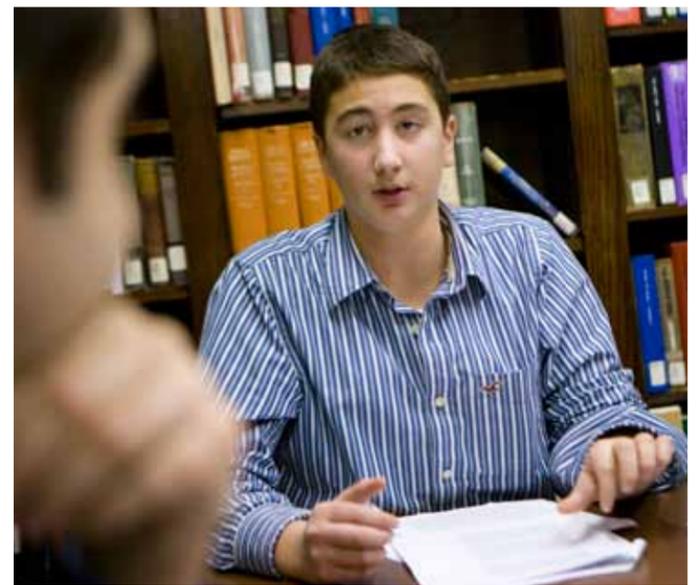
Members of the Honors College are selected based on academic achievements and interpersonal skills. During their first

year at YUHSB, candidates are observed and counseled by members of the faculty to determine if the program is a fit.

It is only then that the student will be invested as an Honors College *chaver* [member], a term chosen by the faculty to indicate "a combination of brotherhood, peoplehood and responsibility," Berliner explained.

The program will be adjusted as it progresses based on student feedback. Taking into account the transition to a heavier workload and longer hours of high school, the faculty want to be careful not to overburden the students, Berliner said.

Meir Hirsch, a freshman from Teaneck, NJ, said he joined the Honors College in the hope of a deeper challenge in both his secular and Judaic studies curricula. "I saw



Sam Wall is one of 24 YUHS-Boys students in the Honors College.

the opportunity as a chance to gain knowledge and skills from sources that are not available to all the high school students, such as advanced field trips, speakers

and closer contact with teachers," Hirsch said.

Berliner concluded: "These kids want to be challenged, and it is our job to live up to that." ■

### Webcast Offers Rabbis Advice

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red flags for professional referral."

Dr. David Pelcovitz, the Gwendolyn and Joseph Straus Professor of Jewish Education at Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration, focused on the impact that financial instability can have on children. "While there is no research

that proves children get depressed when there is monetary loss because they can adapt quicker than adults to a different lifestyle, there is a risk in general because of the stress caused by the change," Pelcovitz said.

Rabbi Shmuel Goldin of Congregation Ahavat Torah in Englewood, NJ, and Rabbi Jonathan Schwartz of Congregation Adath Israel in Elizabeth, NJ, also participated. ■

### No Increase in Undergrad Tuition

Continued from Page 1

enrolled throughout their degree program—is extraordinarily high. Moreover, our honors programs are larger than ever, with nearly 300 qualified students overall.

"By keeping our tuition at this year's level, encouraging our students to spend that fourth year on campus, and increasing the

amount we can give to scholarship, we're ensuring that qualified students can come to and remain at YU," Davis said.

The overall undergraduate population stands at 3,044 (which includes students in Israel and New York), the largest in YU's history.

The Admission and Student Aid offices have been fielding an increase in calls from parents, according to Davis. "No student should hesitate to apply for sup-

port," he said "We have scholarship specialists available to meet confidentially with families."

- To apply for scholarship aid, e-mail [scholarships@yu.edu](mailto:scholarships@yu.edu).
- To learn more about the fourth-year-on-campus option, e-mail [vpuniversitylife@yu.edu](mailto:vpuniversitylife@yu.edu).
- To make a gift to scholarships, visit [www.yu.edu/giving](http://www.yu.edu/giving), e-mail [give2yu@yu.edu](mailto:give2yu@yu.edu) or call 212-960-0863. ■

SCENE&Heard



▲ **"I am living proof that slavery continues to exist in modern times,"** said Simon Deng, a former child slave from the Sudan. Deng spoke to hundreds of undergraduates at "Slavery Unshackled: An Exploration of Modern Day Slavery," sharing the podium with Mary Temple (far left), volunteer coordinator for the Free the Slaves organization, and Rabbi Shalom Carmy, assistant professor of Bible at YU, who offered a biblical perspective on the topic. The discussion was co-sponsored by the student-run Social Justice Society, the Center for Ethics at Yeshiva University and the Marcia Robbins-Wilf Scholar-in-Residence Program in November. ■

▼ **"If you tell yourself you're unworthy to be a leader of the Jewish people, that's a pretty good sign that you should be a leader of the Jewish people,"** said Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks, the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, during a shiur he delivered in November to a capacity crowd of nearly 800 Yeshiva University students studying in Israel with the S. Daniel Abraham Israel Program. Sacks spoke about the impact that students can have on their communities and the world around them. The lecture at the Renaissance Hotel in Jerusalem was sponsored by YU in conjunction with the Bi-Annual Convention of the Orthodox Union. ■



▼ **"At the moment of freefall I said, 'What have I just done? I don't want to die,'"** said Kevin Hines, who survived a suicide attempt off the Golden Gate Bridge, to students in December at "Suicide and Mental Illness Discussed." The event was sponsored by the Counseling Center, undergraduate student councils and Active Minds at YU, a local chapter of the student-run mental health education organization Active Minds on Campus. Hines, now an activist, spoke articulately to students about his struggle with bipolar disorder, recounting the extreme paranoia, terrible depression and visual and auditory hallucinations he experienced. ■



◀ **"Shylock should be returned his money,"** was the opinion of Hon. Dianne T. Renwick '86C, who serves on the New York State Supreme Court, Appellate Division, at a mock appellate trial based on "The Merchant of Venice" at Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in December. "Shylock v Antonio on Appeal" featured scenes from the play; arguments by two prominent New York attorneys representing Antonio, the merchant who defaults on a loan, and Shylock, the lender who demands a pound of flesh as repayment; and public deliberations by a panel of judges composed of authors, lawyers, academics and real judges. Renwick added: "Vacate the convictions, as there was a total lack of due process. And someone should report Portia to the authorities." ■



▲ **"Can you love someone whose views you hate?"** playwright Joseph Telushkin '70YC, '73RE, '74BR asked of a group of new honors students after a special performance of his play, "The Quarrel," on campus. Telushkin engaged the students in a discussion of the issues at the heart of the play, which revolves around the chance reunion of two Holocaust survivors—a rabbinic scholar and a secular writer—after the war. The play starred Reuven Russell, an instructor of speech and drama at Stern College for Women, as one of the two lead characters in its revival off-Broadway in September. ■



▲ **"There is no such thing as the end of Wall Street,"** Lance Hirt '87YC, a partner at Lindsay Goldberg and YU trustee, told students at a Wall Street Connection Series panel discussion and networking event in November. Hirt reassured the students that the services Wall Street provides will always be in demand. Students interested in financial careers networked with over 50 alumni in senior positions at top firms. ■



# Scholars Find Link Between Religiosity and Mortality

EXTENSIVE STUDY SHOWS 20 PERCENT DROP IN RISK OF DEATH AMONG WOMEN WHO ATTEND RELIGIOUS SERVICES

A study published by researchers at Yeshiva College and Albert Einstein College of Medicine strongly suggests that regular attendance at religious services reduces the risk of death by approximately 20 percent compared with those not attending services at all.

The research was conducted by Dr. Eliezer Schnall, clinical assistant professor of psychology at Yeshiva College, and co-authored by Dr. Sylvia Wassertheil-Smoller, professor of epidemiology and population health at Einstein. It was an ancillary study of the Women's Health Initiative (WHI), a national, long-term study addressing women's health issues and funded by the National Institutes of Health.

The findings, published in "Psychology and Health," were based on data drawn from the religious practices of 92,395 postmenopausal women participating in the WHI. They examined the pro-

spective association of religious affiliation, religious service attendance and strength and comfort derived from religion with subsequent cardiovascular events and overall rates of mortality. The women were followed by WHI researchers for an average of 7.7 years.

Although the study showed a decrease in the overall risk of mortality for those attending religious services, it did not show any consistent change in rates of morbidity and death specifically related to cardiovascular disease, with no explanation readily evident.

The study adjusted for participation of individuals within communal organizations and group activities that promote a strong social life and enjoyable routines, behaviors known to lead to overall wellness. However, even after controlling for such behavior and other health-related factors, the improvements in morbidity and mortality rates exceeded expectations.

"Interestingly, the protection

against mortality provided by religion cannot be entirely explained by expected factors that include enhanced social support of friends or family, lifestyle choices and reduced smoking and alcohol consumption," said Schnall.

"There is something here that we don't quite understand. It is always possible that some unknown or unmeasured factors confounded these results," he added.

The study's investigators concluded that, although religious behavior (as defined by the study's criteria) is associated with a reduction in death rates among the study population, the physical relationships leading to that effect require further investigation.

"The next step is to figure out how the effect of religiosity is translated into biological mechanisms that affect rates of survival," said Wassertheil-Smoller. "However, we do not infer causation even from a prospective study, as that can only be done through a clinical trial." ■



Dr. Eliezer Schnall, who teaches psychology at Yeshiva College, co-published the research.

## Cardozo Professor Awarded Highest French Honor

Richard Weisberg, Cardozo's Walter Floersheimer Professor of Constitutional Law, was awarded the Legion of Honor, the highest decoration given by the French Republic for outstanding service to France, at a special ceremony on Jan. 22.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy signed a decree awarding Weisberg the Chevalier of the National Order of the Legion of Honor in recognition of his "contribution to the development of French-American relations in the defense of human rights and in striving for the reparation of wrongs and of losses suffered by Jewish families during World War II."

Weisberg has taught at Cardozo since 1977, is an expert on



Richard Weisberg is an expert on practice of law and the Vichy regime.

the practice of law during the regime in the 1940s and wrote "Vichy Law and the Holocaust in France," published in 1996 by

New York University Press and translated into French in 1998.

Since 2001, he has represented plaintiffs to an oversight

committee, consisting of American State Department and French government officials, which has responsibility for the restitution of banking assets stolen during the Vichy regime to victims or their heirs. He also worked on cases in American federal court against various banks and other institutions for their actions during the Holocaust.

Created in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte, the Legion of Honor recognizes distinguished military or civilian service and professional prominence. Nominees are appointed for life through a decree signed by the President of the Republic. Each year, about 10 Americans are recognized with this honor. Among those have

been Colin Powell, Ronald Regan, Neil Armstrong, Robert De Niro and Estée Lauder.

"We are very proud that Richard Weisberg's extensive legal and historical research and service to the French people are being recognized," Cardozo Dean David Rudenstine said. "His work has uncovered disturbing truths that have important legal and civil implications worldwide, and here at Cardozo, his contributions enrich the law school for students and faculty alike."

Weisberg is the second faculty member to receive this honor, after Michel Rosenfeld, the Justice Sydney L. Robins Professor of Human Rights, was awarded the Legion of Honor in 2004. ■