

HELPING JEWISH COMMUNAL SERVICE MANAGERS MEET THE CHALLENGE: An Evaluation of a Training Program

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This article reports the findings of an evaluation of the first year of operation of the Jewish Professional Leadership, a foundation funded training project designed to strengthen Jewish identity and managerial skills of Jewish communal professionals. Key to its success are the integration of the Jewish content and managerial components and more emphasis on group-building activities. Such a training program needs to be replicated in other communities with local relevant adaptations.

Recent concerns over the continuity of Jewish life in the United States combined with other demographic and communal changes have added emphasis to the importance of Jewish communal service workers. In an attempt to enhance the Jewish and managerial skills of Jewish communal workers in the mid-Atlantic region, a training program was designed and implemented. This article reviews the background to the training program, its implementation, and the results of an evaluation of its first year; the program is now in its third year, and many of the recommendations presented in this article have since been implemented. The training program itself and the findings would be most helpful to federations and communities interested in investing in their cadre of Jewish communal service workers who are charged with sustaining Jewish life in the community.

THE CHANGING TIMES AND THE CHALLENGE

Jewish communal services are a dynamic entity that responds to the issues and problems arising in the Jewish community. Such issues often move in concert with the happenings in the larger society. In the past five years, international concerns have ranged from the safety of Israel during the Gulf War to the resettlement of Soviet Jewry (Grossman, 1993). On the domestic front, debates have swirled around a number of areas, including intermarriage, increasing financial constraints, and demographic changes within the Jewish community (Bayme, 1990; Bubis, 1994; Cohen, 1994; Crohn, 1990; Grossman, 1990; Grossman, 1993; Haberman, 1992; Kosmin et al., 1991; Mayer, 1994; Petsonk, 1990; Rimor & Tobin, 1991; Solomon, 1995); and at the General Assembly meeting in Montreal in 1994, Jewish continuity issues surfaced as the central issue for the Jewish community at large and Jewish communal services in particular.

The challenge therefore falls on the shoulders of the Jewish communal professional to maintain the Jewish heritage de-

For further information about the Jewish Professional Leadership Program, please contact the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia, 226 S. 16th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102 (215-893-5650).

spite financial obstacles, to sustain Jewish identity, and to revitalize the Jewish community as a whole. Jewish agency personnel include a diversity of professionals with varying levels of Jewish knowledge and a broad range of living patterns and commitments to Jewish participation. Yet, their connections with many segments of the communal population place them in a superior position of influence with others as potential role models for committed Jewish competence (London & Chazan, 1990).

The problem then arises as how to best prepare these workers to deal with these challenges. As Reisman (1994) stated, "If the Jewish community is to mobilize its resources effectively to adapt to the watershed changes with which it is now confronted, there is no higher priority than strengthening its cadre of Jewish professionals" (p. 25).

How then will Jewish communal professionals rise to meet this challenge? The first step is to enhance their own sense of Jewish identity, and for this, adequate Jewish knowledge is essential (Bubis, 1990, 1994). Bubis (1990) contends that Jewish professionals "cannot be the shapers of Jewish destiny when they lack a sense of Jewish past and teachings" (p. 337). Further, this knowledge must work in concert with substantial leadership and managerial skills (Bubis, 1990, 1994). Thus, the enhancement of the Jewish identity and professional identity of Jewish communal service leaders is essential for the work they face in ensuring Jewish continuity.

Within this context, the Jewish Professional Leadership Program (JPLP) emerged. It is a three-year, foundation-funded training project to enhance both the Jewish identities and managerial skills of three cohorts of mid-level and senior professionals in Jewish communal agencies. The JPLP is the result of a joint effort among five Jewish communal agencies in three mid-Atlantic states: the Association of Jewish Agency Executives, the Jewish Communal Professionals Association of the Delaware Valley (of the tri-state area), and the Jewish Fed-

erations of Delaware, Greater Philadelphia, and Southern New Jersey. This article describes both the JPLP program and the findings from the evaluation of its first year of operation. It is our contention that many federations and other Jewish communal service organizations will be able to learn from this experience and replicate the training program more effectively and, as a result, better support Jewish continuity.

JEWISH PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM (JPLP)

The objectives for the three consecutive year-long training cohorts are as follows:

- help successive cadres of mid-level and senior executive leaders of Jewish agencies, organizations, and synagogues in the area to advance their Judaic and management values, information, and skills and to strive toward their meaningful integration
- assist participants to develop an understanding of the Jewish community as a significant context for staff and programmatic cooperation
- encourage each participant to continue his or her Jewish and professional development
- stimulate the use of a Jewish framework to conceptualize responses to societal issues
- establish an active network of alumni and others interested in enriching practice-oriented knowledge and skills

For the purpose of the program, management was defined as comprising leadership as a component of administration; professional development and performance; and productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness. Jewish content was defined as religious practices and vocabulary for Jewish living: (a) the Jewish calendar and (b) the Jewish life cycle, Jewish values and concepts, and historical connections.

A critical issue during the formative period and later was how to balance manage-

rial and Jewish content when the Jewish knowledge and managerial skills of the participants varied so widely. After an initial grant submission to the Wexner Foundation, it recommended (and funded) a planning session with local and national consultants to consider and sort out these content and methodological considerations. As a result of those deliberations, it was decided that the two content areas would be taught separately at each session of the JPLP and that the integration would take place in discussions and role playing. With the lack of known successful training programs that had integrated Jewish knowledge and managerial content (with the exception of a few articles such as Schnall, 1993), the selected approach was one of parallel knowledges; that is, to teach both content areas and to explicitly encourage their integration, but not to enforce it or attempt to list it as a formal goal. It should be noted, however, that such integration was expected and desired by the planners and participants alike.

History of the Project

The Jewish Communal Professionals Association of the Delaware Valley had sponsored training programs and forums since 1977 and had stimulated the interest of the other groups in seeking more in-depth Jewish and professional training opportunities. The five organizations that initiated the project formed a consortium for the purpose of instituting this training. The sponsors were encouraged to apply to the Wexner Foundation for what turned out to be the last award provided through its institutional grant program. As noted above, a first submission to the Wexner Foundation resulted in a planning grant to better plan and conceptualize the training program.

After receiving the planning grant, representatives of the sponsoring groups hired a planner to administer the consultation-planning session and to prepare the grant resubmission, which included JPLP's objectives, principal approaches, proposed fac-

ulty, curriculum, recruitment criteria, procedures, and timetable for implementation. A local professor of social administration who worked with the consortium in developing a proposal was invited to be the director of the program. The sponsoring agency representatives constituted themselves as the JPLP's Advisory Committee, which was chaired by the Philadelphia federation's associate executive vice president who, upon his retirement from the federation, assumed the functions of administering JPLP at the start of its second training year sequence.

The foundation granted a \$50,000 per year award for an anticipated three-year period beginning in 1994-95 to support the training of up to 25 professionals for each of those three years. Formally, the proposal was submitted under the auspices of the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia, and the project director was paid by and had an office in its building.

Recruitment took place in the early summer of 1994. JPLP was marketed as a prestigious program and as an expression of the commitment of the Jewish community to its professionals. Mid-level and senior managers in Jewish communal services were encouraged to apply with the support and agreement of their employers. Interviews were held later that summer, and 24 people were accepted into the program as the first cohort.

Of the 24 participants, six were employees of federations, four of Jewish Community Centers, three of Jewish family service agencies, two of Hillel, and the remaining nine were each from different organizations, such as a synagogue, board of Rabbis, community relations council, day care agency, central Jewish education agency, fund-raising branches of national agencies, and B'nai B'rith. They were all employed in these organizations for at least five years, and more than half had worked at their respective agencies for more than ten years. Some of the participants had a strong background in Judaism (as was the case with the Hillel professionals), whereas others had a

strong background in management (such as the majority of the federation employees). Yet, none had a strong background in both areas, and none could see how to link the two. Formal professional backgrounds included social work, education, the rabbinate and law. Participants ranged in age from the early thirties to the mid-fifties, with most between the late thirties and the early forties.

Selection criteria for participants included the following:

- a managerial or supervisory position in a Jewish communal agency
- work in Jewish communal service (later changed to and/or volunteer) for a minimum of five years
- demonstrated leadership attributes
- supportive of the integration of Jewish traditions and values in the administration of Jewish agencies and organizations
- a 500-word essay detailing the applicant's aspirations for the program

Each first-year applicant was interviewed by a member of JPLP's newly formed Selection Committee. The director of each applicant's agency was required to complete a form verifying permission for released time, and a nominal fee was required of the participant and his or her agency to underline their commitment to full participation.

Overview of the Program

The JPLP used a variety of formats: readings, exercises, small-group participation, mentoring, and teaching sessions prepared and delivered by both management and Judaica experts. Common educational goals were set by the program, which were supplemented by individual personal goals determined by each participant.

The first year of the program began with a one-day retreat in October 1994 and ended with a Shabbaton, which included an overnight weekend stay, in May 1995. In between, the program met for one day each

month (the meeting time was later extended to a day and a half). Each meeting covered both managerial and Jewish-related topics.

The program had three major components:

1. *Formal training sessions:* Participants met monthly for eight training sessions (including the opening and Shabbaton sessions) held at a local college. The initial six-hour format—over Sunday afternoon and Monday morning—was expanded when it became clear that more time was needed. Thus, the February, March, and April sessions also included Monday afternoon. The scheduling represented a strong commitment by both participants (who gave time on Sundays) and their employers (who gave employees time on Mondays). The sessions and their major purpose and content are presented in Table 1.

Two other informal events were added to the program. In January, a party was held for participants and their spouses at the program director's house to enable interaction in an environment outside the classroom. In February, there was a luncheon session on confidentiality in mentoring, which was open to both mentors and participants. This session was based on a discussion of Jewish texts and was followed by three discussion groups.

2. *Mentoring:* Each participant was paired with a mentor, based on the expressed needs of the participant. For example, participants who wanted to work on board-executive issues or improve accounting and fiscal management skills were matched with experts in these areas. Mentors served as volunteers and did not report to employers, thus creating a "risk-free" environment. Mentors and participants agreed, in writing, to meet monthly or more often if needed.

Most mentors were executive direc-

Table 1. Topics Covered, Key Content, and Reading Samples of JPLP Sessions

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES TO SELF, AGENCY, AND COMMUNITY

- *Mentoring*: Orientation session for participants and mentors on their roles designed to give each individual the opportunity to acknowledge his or her learning baseline to gauge future growth. The mechanisms of mentoring and principles of successful mentoring were also discussed.
- *Community implications of the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey*: Major American Jewish demographic trends and the sobering implications for individual, family, local agency, synagogue, and community life. Readings included Goldstein, S. (1993). *Profile of American Jewry: Insights from the 1990 Population Survey*. Council of Jewish Federations, North American Data Bank, Occasional Papers, no.6, May; Kosmin, B. (1992, August). The permeable boundaries of being Jewish in America. *Moment*, 17, 30-33, 51.
- *Building blocks for successful agency, community, and beyond*: How to create a "whole" in agency and community: presentation of a case study with in person representation from a local agency that had renewed its mission and empowered its staff to develop collaborative arrangements and community linkages. High standards for evaluating staff performance and using the agency as a Jewish and professional learning community were also points of emphasis. Readings included Helgesen, S. (1990). *The female advantage: Women's ways of leadership*. New York: Doubleday,
- *Community planning and action simulation*: Opportunities and barriers to priority setting, linkages, and resource development: community simulation that involved participants in identifying crucial community issues, connecting allies and coalitions for dealing with these issues, and searching for resources. Readings included Bubis, G. (1992, December). Jewish dollars drying up. *Moment*. Lauffer, L. *References on grants and grants seeking*, abstracted from materials prepared by Jon Harrington, Reference Librarian at Michigan State University for use at the University of Michigan School of Social Work.
- *My stake and vision as a professional in the Jewish community*: Responses to a survey on the characteristics of "a good Jew" and comparison of their choices with a list of preferred choices for Jewish communal renewal (continuity). A beginning exploration of formative influences. Readings included Wachs, S. P. (1974, Spring). Learning and the teaching of Jewish tradition. *Jewish Education*. Reisman, B. (Ed), *Experiential learning in Jewish groups: Principles and activities*. Waltham, MA: Lown Graduate Center for Contemporary Jewish Studies, Brandeis University (undated monograph); Woocher, J. S. (1985). Sacred survival: The civil religion of American Jew, in D. J. Elazar & S. M. Cohen (Eds.). *The Jewish polity: Jewish political organization from Biblical times to the present*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- *Realities on the ground: American Jews' romance with Israel: the new paradigm of American Jews viewing Israel and Israelis as partners and not exclusively as charitable beneficiaries*.

UNIT 2: LEADERSHIP ETHICS, QUALITY MANAGEMENT, AND A VOCABULARY FOR JEWISH LIVING

- *Textual-based linkages between management and Judaica: Exploring leadership principles and practices in managing organization*: Knowing what kinds of expectations to set for staff, how to recognize quality in people, and balance short- and long-range priorities; having open communication and a zest for quality. Rabbi Gamliel, Peter Drucker and others were cited for their observations and insights on leadership, program quality and ethics. Readings included Drucker, P. (1990). *Managing the non-profit organization: Practices and principles*. New York: HarperCollins.
- *Practices and vocabulary for Jewish living—The Jewish calendar*: Familiarity with the Jewish calendar, its lunar nature, its corrections for the Gregorian system, and most importantly the meaning of the seasons and the holidays upon which programs and initiatives can be tai-

lored. Readings included Greenberg, I. (1988). *The Jewish way*. New York: Summit Books; Greenberg, B. (1983). *How to run a Jewish household*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

- *Case studies of leadership and ethical dilemmas*: An instance of embezzlement, a messianic group requesting use of agency facility, Jewish communal organizations and their volunteer and professional leadership accepting gifts from individuals with known public liabilities or questionable reputations, and reports of harassment by volunteers and/or senior staff. Readings included Elon, M. (1994). *Jewish law: History, sources, principles* (Vol. I), Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society.
- *Jewish identity—Goals and commitment*: seeking authentic Jewish experiences and heightening consciousness of calendar, language, community, learning, and sacredness/spirituality for practice. Participants were exposed to resources to empower them to seek increasing Jewish competence. Mini-Jewish and professional autobiographies were elicited from participants for a segment on Jewish identity, memory, personal and community goals and professional commitments.
- *Steps for successful resource development and grantsmanship*: Exploration of sources of funding information and techniques to improve the likelihood of success in receiving funds.

UNIT 3: BUDGETING, MANAGEMENT MODELS, BOARD RELATIONS, SUPERVISION, AND JEWISH LIVING

- *Experiencing Jewish living for the Jewish professional*: Approaches to professional practice, including expectations that professionals will be able to turn to Jewish values for guidance; exploration of an individual's conscious use of Jewish values in terms of the dimensions of self, professional responsibilities, colleagues, the agency, and community acknowledgement and support.
- *Managing budgets and finances*: Use of strategic and operational planning to control budgets; demonstration of a financial management change process. Readings included a case study of a Tel Aviv municipal agency introduced to computer technology, Herzlinger, R. E. (1994). Effective oversight: A guide for nonprofit directors. *Harvard Business Review*, 72(4), 52-60.
- *Alternative approaches to quality management*: Topics and exercises included the questions: In what activities does the organization engage to improve quality? Are these ongoing or isolated activities? How are staff involved in the process of quality improvement? How does the organization solicit feedback from consumers and other constituencies on the quality of services? What are the uses and components of outcome-oriented program evaluation? How do Jewish values, priorities, and program components inform judgements about program quality. Readings included Bryne, J. A. (1993). The horizontal corporation. *Business Week*, Dec. 20, pp. 76-81; Impartaro, N. & Harari, O. (1994). When new worlds stir. *Management Review*, 83(10), 22-28.
- *Preparing leaders as strategic change agents*: Developing organizational plans in a climate of shrinking resources. Planning was viewed as attempting to create readiness, overcome resistance, articulate a vision, generate commitment, and institutionalize implementation.
- *How to run a Passover Seder*: At the request of many of the participants this session was added on traditional Seders and their variations.
- *Executive leadership and board leadership*: Role of board members in agency operations; changing staff and executive roles as they relate to agency missions and goals.

UNIT 4: CLOSING SHABBATON

- *Rites of passages: Celebration and renewal*: Readings included Geffen, R. L. (1993). *Celebration and renewal: Rites of passages in Judaism*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society.
- *How have we been strengthened by the Seminar year?*
- *How do we respond as Jewish professionals to major issues of our times?*
- *Where do we go from here?*
- *Small groups on gender and employment issues and on Jewish prayers*

tors or senior staff of Jewish agencies and organizations who were themselves committed Jewishly. A mentor coordinator recruited and screened mentors and matched them to program participants. Participants were contacted in the summer about their preferences and were offered a list.

3. *Readings:* Detailed and comprehensive reading materials were provided at the beginning of the program. Additional materials were mailed out before each session, and others were given out during them to enable participants to learn more on their own. Participants were furnished with folders containing journal articles, book chapters, and bibliographies related to the presentations; this practice served to prepare participants for each week's session as well as facilitate further information gathering on an individual basis (see Table 1 for some of the reading materials provided).

Evaluation Goals and Methods

Knowing that Jewish communal workers are expected to play a key role in the Jewish community, this training program was designed to enhance both managerial and Jewish skills. To what extent did this training program achieve its goals, and to what extent was the program implemented in a way conducive to its goals? More specifically, the key objectives in evaluating the program were to:

- assess the implementation of the program (process evaluation)
- identify areas that could be improved in the two successive training years (process evaluation)
- determine what participants gained from the program (summative evaluation)
- determine the extent of integration between the two key content areas of training: management skills and Jewish issues (combined summative and process evaluation)

In evaluating this large-scale and complex project, we used a combination of four research methods to triangulate the data:

1. Review of all written materials: the grant proposal, educational program, reading materials, class handouts, mailings to participants, and notes taken by several participants who were interviewed.
2. Analyses of the form developed by the program director and the coordinator of the mentorship component of the program to assess the quality of the various sessions: participants rated each session on a scale of 1 (low quality) to 5 (high quality) and added written comments. In addition, we developed a survey form to assess the degree to which the mentoring program was successful.
3. Personal interviews with people involved in all aspects of the program: 17 participants (of 24); 7 mentors (of 24); 5 presenters (of 24); 4 members of the advisory board (of 15); 4 agency employers (of 17); and the project director and mentorship coordinator.
4. Discussion of key issues at a luncheon meeting that included all participants, coordinators, and the evaluation team.

FINDINGS

Overall, participants were highly positive regarding the benefits derived from the Jewish Professional Leadership Program. They rated the monthly sessions based both on the overall quality of the presentation, as well as the topic. Scores for the 17 rated sessions were quite high ranging from 3.0 to 4.82, with an overall mean of 4.02 (Table 2).

Another indication of JPLP's overall success was the fact that not one participant dropped out of the program. Although a few missed more than three meetings, even the one person who missed half the meetings came to the closing Shabbaton and assessed the overall program as a success. (This person cited workload issues as the

Table 2. Ratings of Individual Training Sessions

<u>Presentation Topic</u>	<u>Mean Rating</u>
Mentoring	3.83
Community implications of the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey	3.00
Building blocks for successful agency, community and beyond: How to create a "whole" in agency and community	3.86
Community planning and action simulation: Opportunities and barriers to priority setting, linkages, and resource development	3.84
My stake and vision as a professional in the Jewish community	3.91
Realities on the ground: American Jews' romance with Israel	3.09
Textual-based linkages between management and Judaica: Exploring leadership principles and practices in managing organizations	4.66
Practices and vocabulary for Jewish living: The Jewish calendar	4.82
Case studies of leadership and ethical dilemmas	3.88
Jewish identity: Goals and commitment	3.88
Steps for successful resource development and grantsmanship	4.12
Experiencing Jewish living for the Jewish professional	3.89
Managing budgets and finances	4.42
Alternative approaches to quality management	4.25
Preparing leaders as strategic change agents	3.78
How to run a Passover seder	4.61
Executive leadership and board leadership	4.53

reason for missing so many meetings, yet he saw himself as part of the cohort).

Many reasons were given for this general level of satisfaction. First, participants cited improved relationships with colleagues and the opportunity to network. They welcomed the chance to "do something intellectual with colleagues with a Jewish aspect to it." Participants further stated that the sessions brought together members from a number of agencies and provided an arena where ideas and experiences could be shared in a way not otherwise possible. Participants felt strongly that much of their learning was a result of these peer interactions. Many participants noted that they were able to view the Jewish aspect of their daily work more closely. Finally, the sessions afforded participants the time to step back from their daily routines at their agencies and think deliberately and consciously about their purpose and role in the Jewish community.

The interviews supplemented this numerical data and provided much detail about the positive and negative aspects of the program. A key problem in this program was the diversity of the participants. Participants varied in their expectations as well as in their levels of knowledge and expertise. Some had more knowledge of Jewish issues, and others had more knowledge of managerial issues. Thus, almost all participants claimed that there were topics they could have presented to the class at the same level, and some expressed frustration that their strengths were not acknowledged and utilized. A few suggested that participants with expertise in particular areas might be asked to co-teach with the presenters as one way that they could have served as more active agents in their own learning process. Finally, several presenters were not aware of the diversity of the group in terms of knowledge and experience; consequently, their presentations were at a level

that was inappropriate for some participants.

Other frustrations also emerged regarding the curriculum. One group of participants reported that they did not know what to expect over the course of the year-long program; they described themselves as "guinea pigs" who were not privy to the entire process. It should be noted, however, that all participants had been sent a curriculum plan in November 1994 and were asked to comment on it. Nevertheless, no one responded, and a few said they did not remember receiving a curriculum. Others stated that a number of issues that they had hoped to have discussed were not addressed in the program. These issues included the role of women in Jewish agencies, the future of Jewish communal services in light of the changes in the Jewish community and in society at large, community organization skills, greater emphasis on supervision, how to meet and work with top-level management of Jewish federations, and how to balance family and working demands as a Jewish communal service professional.

Mutual learning and interpersonal exchange among mid-level and senior executives came to be important components in the learning process. Participants noted that they learned much about services in other agencies as well as the possibilities for networking and joint ventures, even though such information was not a highlighted part of the curriculum. Further, many noted that they gained a greater appreciation for funding priorities and procedures in their respective federations. This interagency interactive process was not an intentional part of the program, but many participants believed it should be. Although most presenters included time for small-group discussion, several participants thought that this interaction was so valuable that it should be allotted more time, and they felt very strongly that they learned not only from the lectures but also from the comments of other participants. Furthermore, many complained that the first session did not include enough time for interpersonal interac-

tion; they noted that many participants did not know one another well, and group camaraderie emerged only toward the end of the program. The common perception was that the learning could have been better facilitated if group interaction was fostered from the outset.

One venue for group interaction that was almost universally praised was the Shabbaton. This weekend retreat allowed for significant personal interactions that many felt had been missing. The Shabbaton was of personal significance as well, as it incorporated a spiritual element in the program through the Shabbat services, the Havdalah service, and the opportunity to pray together. For these reasons, many participants recommended that the Shabbaton be the first meeting of the group. Finally, participants noted that presentations at the Shabbaton were among the best in the program; topics covered over the weekend were found to be particularly useful in integrating the Jewish and management aspects of the program.

The integration of the two components—the Jewish and managerial aspects—was generally problematic in earlier sessions. Participants were expected to gain knowledge in both areas that would enable them to view their work in Jewish communal services as a combination of both. Although the program emphasized the parallel knowledge approach, participants desired a strong integration of the two content areas. The interviews indicated that only a few participants achieved this goal. Those who did were, for the most part, successful managers of services that did not have a strong Jewish emphasis, and they themselves had limited Jewish backgrounds and experience. The result was that this group began to actively initiate ways to make their agencies more Jewish and thus felt more positive about the process of integration. In fact, several sent letters to the presenters thanking them for such a "transformative experience." This group, though small (N=5), is already applying their learning from the program.

Some participants were distressed that there was no formal procedure or designated individual to ensure continuity and integration of the Jewish/managerial content of the sessions. Several felt that one particular presenter had, to some extent, served in this integrative capacity. However, this presenter did not attend all of the sessions, and he did not receive the reading materials of other presenters to enable him to be fully informed and to make the appropriate linkages between sessions. His integrative work, therefore, was done unofficially and marginally.

One positive effect of the program was that many in the group believed that this experience enabled them to reflect on their future professional lives. This group comprised individuals who had worked at the same position for a number of years with limited opportunity for career advancement. They stated that although they were still uncertain about their future course of action (some are more active than others in searching for change), the training prompted them to seek more fulfilling work in another Jewish agency.

One negative aspect of the program was reported by participants and employers alike. Both felt that not enough work was done to bring participating employers into the training program, either as active members of the group or as partners who should appreciate its importance. In fact, some employers noted that they saw JPLP as a means to reward loyal employees regardless of the need to enhance their Jewish and managerial knowledge. This appreciation, however, was not always conveyed to participants. Indeed, participants often complained that their agencies expected them to carry out their work as usual, despite the fact that they were involved in a time-intensive training program for which the agencies had nominated them. Employers too felt uninformed about what was occurring in the program and therefore claimed they lacked a basis to use participants' newly acquired knowledge.

Finally, participants reported diverse reactions to the mentorship component of the program. For purposes of evaluation, participants and their mentors were asked to rate each of their stated goals on a scale ranging from 1 (no progress) to 10 (goal achieved). Given the confidentiality of participants' personal goals, they were identified to us only by number. The mean rating for all mentors on all goals was 8.50, and the mean rating for the participants on all goals was 7.01. Clearly, mentors were more positive about goal achievement than were participants. In addition, the ratings by mentors ranged from 7 to 10, whereas those by participants ranged from 4 to 10. Some participants explained why they rated certain goals as not having been achieved. Their comments were as follows: "I'm getting this quite sufficiently from the session, not from my mentor," "My goals may have been too ambitious because our encounters have not been beneficial," and "Based upon our several meetings and my professional follow-through, I am in progress of achieving this goal."

Use of the mentoring component was very uneven. Many participants had only one or two meetings with their mentors, although in many cases the low frequency of meetings was due to distance, scheduling problems, or confusion as to who was to initiate contact. In fact, most of these participants assumed responsibility for not meeting with their mentors on a regular basis. A few who met with their mentors more frequently found the mentoring extremely helpful. Others reported that they did not learn from or had personality problems with their mentors. Nevertheless, most participants found the mentorship relationship to be a valuable professional experience and blamed themselves for not taking full advantage of this program component.

These interviews revealed many problems in implementation of JPLP. For example, the time allotted to some presenters was shorter than they had been told it would be, and as a result some interactive activi-

ties and discussions were curtailed or eliminated. Furthermore, although participants praised the quality of the reading materials, most had not read them before coming to the sessions. Although some cited the late mailing and others a lack of time as reasons, most said that they were discouraged by the quantity of the materials. Finally, inattention to details, no matter how minor, is unseemly in a prestigious program for mid-level and senior executives. Some of the difficulties called to our attention were that the original schedule included a session too close to Passover; letters had typographical errors; some xeroxed reading material was hard to read; directions to training locations were unclear; and the university-based facility was not conducive to adult learning. In addition, in some sessions there were no name tags; in others, planned breaks were not respected, and often attendance was not taken.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The Jewish Professional Leadership Program's concept and first-year implementation were first steps in bridging the gap between Jewish content and managerial skills for Jewish communal managers. However, several modifications are needed to enhance its effectiveness.

First, continuing efforts should be made to improve integration of the Jewish content and managerial components. Inclusion of an educational facilitator who attends all sessions and who can make connections and discern themes across presentations would be helpful. For this processing and interactive training to be successful two conditions are necessary: more time should be set aside for this purpose, and there should be clear, strong expectations for reading the prepared materials. Reading materials need to be sent out early enough so that participants, with their busy work schedules, can be given an adequate amount of time to prepare for the sessions.

Second, there should be more sessions, such as "Textual-based linkages between

management and Judaica: Exploring leadership principles and practices in managing organizations," which look at management issues from a Jewish perspective. These sessions were rated among the highest and consistently drew praise from participants who felt that they synthesized both areas of knowledge.

Third, more attention should be given to group-building from the outset of the program. This group-building may take the form of a Shabbaton or weekend session early in the program year; the crucial issue is that coordinators should ensure sufficient time to allow participants to get to know each other personally. This experience will produce at an earlier time a sense of group loyalty and collegiality transferable to the field. It also may allow participants to discover similar interests and goals, as well as to discuss educational needs in an environment of trust.

In addition, all the building blocks of a complex new venture must be in place simultaneously. Details relating to the learning environment should be given high priority. If this type of program is to be a continuing locally supported activity, participants and potential funders should perceive it as prestigious from the outset. Attention should be given to a location that facilitates adult learning; one innovative idea suggested by several participants was to rotate sessions at the various agencies in order to help familiarize participants with the various local Jewish organizations. This would also serve the function of increasing contact with employers, as there was a call for more interaction with and involvement of employers.

A few participants suggested that during the year the program coordinators should invite one or two participants to lunch to discuss how they feel their goals are being achieved and how the program could be enhanced. Doing so would provide current feedback on the program, as well as convey respect and concern to the participants. Another suggestion for greater involvement

of employers was to use more of them as presenters, which would certainly make them more aware of the program and the potential benefits it has to offer their agencies. A trade-off must be made between finding the most talented presenters and using local agency staffers who may not necessarily meet the highest academic standards.

Some notes on governance of such a program are worthwhile. Like any new enterprise, establishing a governance structure to develop policies and curriculum, oversee personnel, and evaluate progress will influence short- and long-term outcomes significantly. Four governance-related issues must be successfully addressed by this (or any replicating) community. First, should the group representing the sponsoring organizations be an advisory group to the project director or a full-fledged governing body? During the first year of JPLP, its advisory committee reconstituted itself as a governing board. Although all players, including staff, kept the best interests of the program in mind as formative issues were resolved, the program would have benefited from an early clarification of this issue. Second, opinions were and continue to be mixed on whether the advisory board members who are also program participants should relinquish their board role during the year in which they participate in the program. Those who were both participants and board members functioned in both capacities while other participants felt powerless and marginalized. Third, an open dialogue would be useful at the outset on whether this type of continuing education program should be administered and educationally led by a communal professional or an academic. The professional would likely prefer a more practical curriculum and the use of more local executives, whereas the latter would tend to adopt a more conceptual curriculum and use national academic leaders. Fourth, lay leadership with access to local foundations and other resources should be nurtured from the outset to elicit necessary

continuing support (fiscal and political) for the enterprise.

Finally, more attention needs to be paid to the mentorship portion of the program. Guidelines for the intended relationship between participant and mentor need to be explicit. For example, a directive can be given to participants to initiate monthly contacts with their mentors and to report it. Alternatively, mentors can be asked to report about contacts with participants. Participants also requested guidelines as to possible topics for discussion in mentoring sessions. Mentors should also be given the information and articles that participants receive so as to further facilitate discussion.

With the support of the five organizations that sponsored JPLP, the participants in the first cohort are continuing to meet as a group with one of the presenters. They have plans to interact with participants of succeeding years. It is hoped that three successful program year graduates will provide a "critical mass" that will attract the attention of community leaders for continuing and ongoing support for this critical training effort.

The JPLP steering committee has discussed these evaluation findings and has already made significant strides in improving the program for the incoming cohort of participants. The committee has also enabled the participants in the first cohort to develop a continuation program to address issues not covered in the original program, especially in the area of integration of the Jewish and managerial and administrative issues. This type of program is important for Jewish communal service professionals nationwide, and such a program needs to be replicated with local relevant adaptations.

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