

CONTACT

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The Looming Crisis in Personnel

Essays by Rabbi Joshua Elkin
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Jewish Life Network is dedicated to strengthening and transforming American Jewry to ensure a flourishing, sustainable community in a fully integrated free society. We seek to revitalize Jewish identity through educational, religious and cultural initiatives that are designed to reach out to all Jews, with an emphasis on those who are on the margins of Jewish life.

Some of the photographs in this issue appear courtesy of Art Today.

Finding and Preparing Tomorrow's Personnel

In recent months, headlines in Jewish newspapers have highlighted a disturbing trend in American Jewish life. On the one hand, some of the community's most prominent educational leaders announced plans to step down. Although their reasons were diverse, the announcements were taken as evidence of a looming "leadership vacuum" in American Jewish life. Meanwhile, a recent shortage of rabbis in the liberal denominations has meant that some congregations must wait as long as two years to fill a post. But this leadership drought at the top rungs of the Jewish professional world masks a deeper trend: in almost all areas of Jewish community work, the reservoir of workers — especially younger workers — is going dry.

It is an unfortunate fact that even as the Jewish community works to revitalize its educational, cultural and religious programs, we have not invested proper energies in creating a professional class of Jewish leaders to operate these programs. A case in point is day schools. The proliferation of non-Orthodox day schools in the past decade is unarguably a superb accomplishment. But if the schools are unable to fill their ranks with qualified teachers and administrators, they will not operate at a superior level. Schools are perhaps the most poignant example of the drought in personnel, but they are not alone. Jewish organizations everywhere are struggling to find qualified workers for a range of positions, from camp counselors to fundraising directors.

The moment is ripe for the Jewish community to devote its intellectual and financial resources to personnel development. Those involved in halting the erosion in personnel attest that it is not merely a matter of increasing the number of workers. Equally important is elevating the quality of professionals through superior training, mentoring and mid-career professional development. As in the secular world, salary levels and benefits are a vital concern if the community hopes to retain professionals for a life of community service. In a broader sense, attitudes within the community need to be fundamentally changed. A career in Jewish service should be accorded the same stature and respect as a distinguished career in the private sector.

This issue of Contact will explore innovative ways the community is using to meet the personnel challenge. Instead of retreading the theme of crisis and doom, contributors have used the crisis as a starting point to present visions of how to remedy the situation. Articles range from program appraisals to personal assessments of what kinds of recruitment methods work. Finally, we present essays by two young Jewish leaders, one of whom continued in Jewish service and one who entered the world of secular service. In so doing, we hope to stimulate discussion on the role of Jewish professional service in a time and place in which there are no limits on personal religious expression. With these perspectives as inspiration, we can begin to establish a professional infrastructure to ensure the revitalization of American Jewish life.

Eli Valley
Eli Valley



Day School Personnel: Needs and Promising Developments

by RABBI JOSHUA ELKIN and NAAVA FRANK

One decade ago, the report from the Commission on Jewish Education in North America, *A Time to Act*, pointed to personnel as one of the two key enabling options to improve the state of Jewish education. Since then, we have not made significant progress in recruiting, training and retaining qualified personnel for the field.

However, the topic of professional personnel for Jewish day schools is beginning to receive increased attention as many schools search for principals, key administrators and qualified Judaic studies teachers. The teacher problem is exacerbated by the shortage of teachers in the public sector. Day schools need teachers not only for Jewish curricula, but for general studies as well. The anticipated retirement of vast numbers of public school teachers is sending shock waves through the Jewish day school world.

Rabbi Josh Elkin and Naava Frank, Ed.D., are Executive Director and Senior Project Director, respectively, of the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education.

The personnel shortage in the burgeoning Jewish high school field is also of great concern. The increased desire for Jewish day high school education is far outstripping the community's capacity to provide qualified teachers and administrators.

The Moment is Ripe

While personnel crises in Jewish education are not new, we seem to be at a propitious moment. There are a number of developments and realities converging at roughly the same time:

- evidence that teaching and education are becoming more popular career choices among college and graduate students;
- rising salaries for day school administrators, and in some cases for teachers as well; and
- enormous growth in day school enrollment, which fuels the personnel needs and creates career opportunities at every level.

Within the Jewish community, we are witnessing the development of several promising new programs that address the personnel crisis on both the teacher and the administrator front. There are two areas of concentration: "pre-service," in which teachers and administrators are trained before they

enter day schools, and “in-service,” or on-the-job training. How to nurture these initiatives, how to build on them, how to increase the number of new initiatives and how to create synergy among the programs must be a high priority for all who are committed to improving Jewish day school education in North America.

In the initiatives described below, what stands out is the diversity of organizations involved, and the synergy from multiple collaborations. Through this synergy, we will see enormous progress.

York Initiative

The Western Canadian Coalition of Jewish Educators was formed from a group of schools working collectively to meet program and personnel needs. The coalition then partnered with York University, received a grant from the Covenant Foundation and created the York-Western Canada Jewish Teacher Education Initiative.

The initiative recruits students from Jewish communities in Western Canada to enroll in York University’s five-year Jewish Teacher Certification Program. Scholarships are provided by the coalition schools for up to 50 percent of the University’s tuition along with subsidies for travel and living expenses. After the completion of this program, graduates will have acquired a BA, B.Ed, provincial certification and a Jewish Teacher Certification. Graduates will be certified to teach both Judaic and general studies. In return for scholarships and travel subsidies, graduates of the initiative’s program are

expected to commit to three years of teaching in a Western Canadian Jewish Day School. The response thus far has been gratifying.

Joint Recruitment Through Hillel

In 1999-2000, Hillel partnered with the United Jewish Communities (UJC) to launch an aggressive Jewish professional recruitment program on college campuses. Along with individuals from other organizations, representatives from the Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA) targeted students with an interest in day school teaching and encouraged them to enroll in teacher training programs. The presentation of Jewish careers alongside traditional business options often surprised students who had not thought of Jewish education as a career. Many considered the option seriously, voicing a desire to give back to the community. The program was successful and will continue in future years.

United Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh

The United Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh undertook the funding of a series of initiatives through its Jewish Education Institute (JEI) to support the growth of Jewish day school education in Pittsburgh. A pre-service partnership was formed with JEI, Point Park College, Community College of Allegheny County and the University of Pittsburgh for a degree/certification program to bring new teachers into the field of Jewish education. An in-service program, Mekorot, is a two-



year initiative to strengthen the Judaic and pedagogic skills of teachers in the field that included a subsidized trip to Israel this past year. Last year, teacher bonuses of \$500 for full-time and \$250 for part-time day school educators were awarded as an encouragement for teachers to stay in the field. The Pittsburgh leadership is continuing its commitment to support the quality of Jewish education and has a new series of initiatives under development.

Training Day School Administrators

In response to the severe shortage of available and qualified administrators to staff the new wave of Jewish high schools being opened, the AVI CHAI Foundation partnered with the Jewish Theological Seminary to support the Secondary School Leadership Training Institute, which is dedicated to training qualified individuals to run Jewish day high schools. The program encompasses two one-month summer intensive programs and an internship in the intervening year, along with periodic gatherings of the twelve-person cohort group. The first cohort has completed its training and most of its participants have been placed in schools. A second group, which will focus on elementary and middle school leadership, is about to begin. Based on the successful implementation of the first pilot group, AVI CHAI has funded a similar program at Yeshiva University in the hopes of attracting individuals who will lead Orthodox schools. Both programs



feature academic preparation and opportunities to meet with seasoned practitioners to apply theory to practice.

In-Service Training Program for Day School Administrators

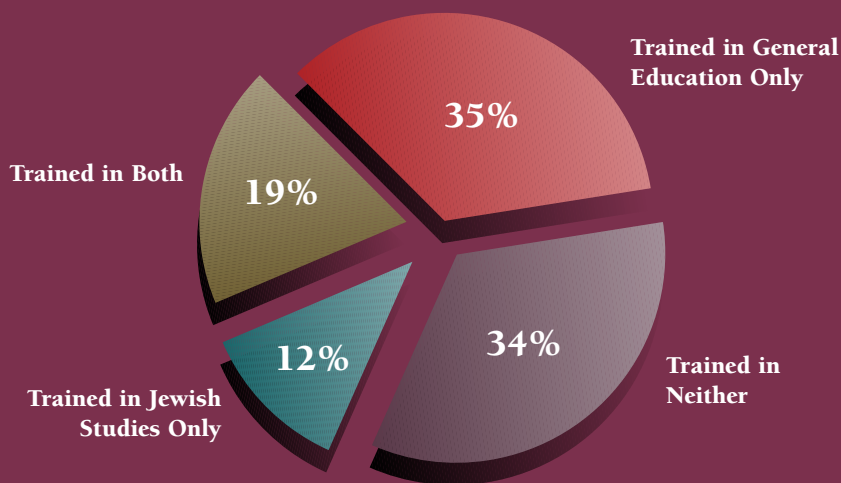
A second model focuses on the in-service training and retention of current administrators of day schools by bringing them together for an intensive professional development experience of study, reflection and hands-on learning. A strong example is the Principals Institute, which is run each summer at Bar Ilan University by the Lookstein Center for Jewish Education in the Diaspora. This program provides up to thirty principals with an intensive two-and-a-half week seminar in Israel. In addition, the Principals Institute includes a program of multiple readings, list serve communication and a series of gatherings throughout the year designed to keep the learning focused and to continue the sense of collegiality among participants. One of the unique features of this program is its multi-denominational base of participants.

Public/Private Educators Moving Into Day School Leadership Positions

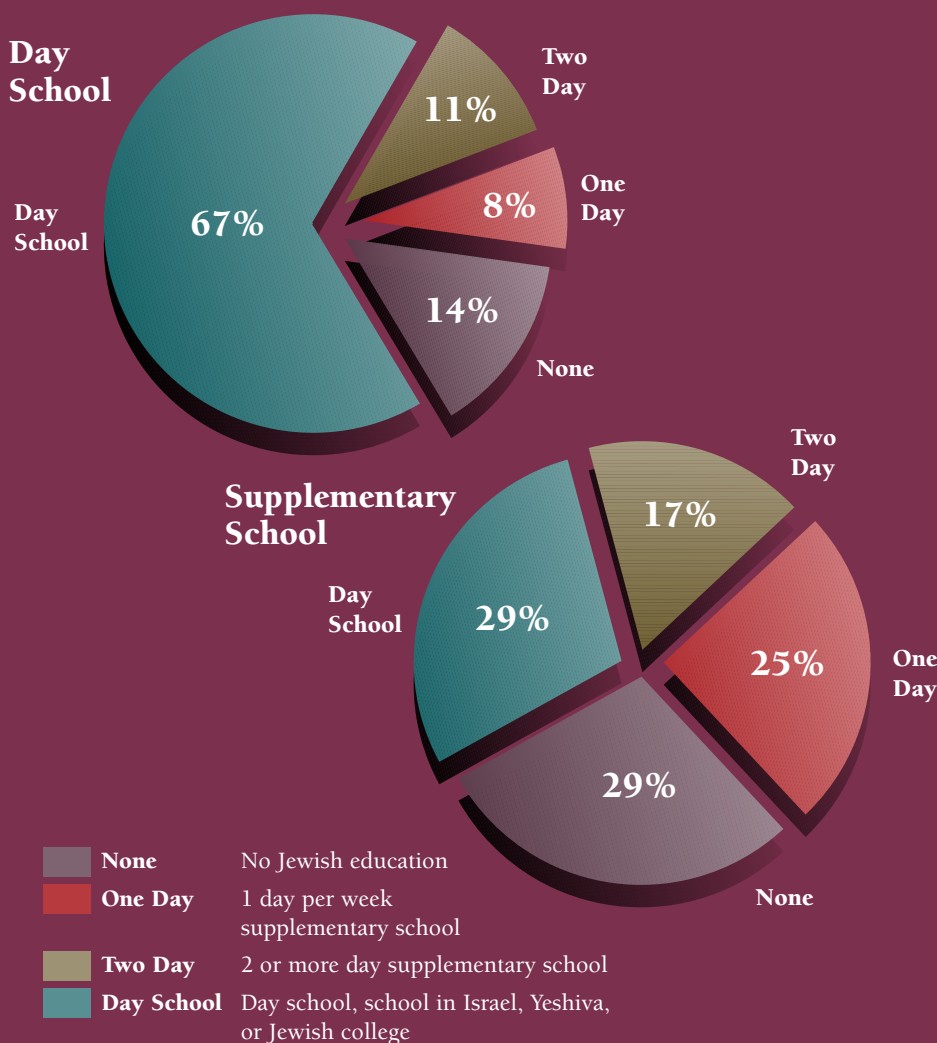
Finally, we point to an increasing trend in day schools of hiring principals who have worked extensively in public and private education but who have never worked in Jewish education. In many cases, these individuals, who are Jewish, have not been involved extensively in the Jewish community but have instead chosen to excel as general educational leaders. An observable number of these educational leaders have been attracted to the Jewish day school field. We now need to develop tools to help reorient these educators to the world of Jewish day school leadership. While each community can try to create its own program, it is also necessary for an institution to develop a transition and retooling program. In the meantime, schools will continue to respond to the shortage by seeking out these talented individuals.

While the needs are quite profound, the creativity and the rapidly developing synergies in various arms of the Jewish community are spawning new initiatives that will hopefully ameliorate the personnel demands of Jewish day schools. 🌸

Extent of Professional Training in General Education and Jewish Studies



Teachers' Jewish Education After 13



*In 1998 the Mandel Foundation (formerly CIJE) released **The Teachers Report: A Portrait of Teachers in Jewish Schools**, which painted a revealing portrait of Jewish educators in North America. Based on surveys of nearly 1000 teachers and interviews with over 100 educators in Atlanta, Baltimore and Milwaukee, the findings remain among the most recent available data on Jewish educators in North America.*



A “Jewish” Teach for America

by RON WOLFSON

There is not an educational director in a Jewish school in North America who isn't scrambling every fall to find teachers. Our schools are packed with kids. Not since the 1950's “baby boom” have we had so many children enrolled in Jewish schools.

The root of the problem is that, despite a rich Jewish tradition that elevates teachers to the highest stature, our community does not value teachers. The salaries of day school teachers have fallen behind those of public and other private school teachers. We don't support professional development; we don't provide a career track that encourages retention; and we do virtually no serious recruitment of our best and brightest college students into the field. In all the graduate programs of Jewish education, we have a grand total of 100 full-time students. It is a small drop in a very large bucket.

Ron Wolfson, Ph.D., is Director of the Whizinn Center for the Jewish Future and Vice President of the University of Judaism.

At the University of Judaism in Los Angeles, we are working on a big idea to bring hundreds of new teachers into Jewish education. It is inspired by Teach for America, the program that staffs under-resourced schools with recent college graduates. Teach For America has had more than 6,000 participants over the past ten years. Fifty-eight percent of Teach for America's teachers stay in the field of education, fully 40 percent as classroom teachers.

I am absolutely convinced that we can do the same for Jewish teaching. We will target the “usual suspects” — college kids who are already attracted to Jewish education and communal service, students who spend a year in Israel, Steinhardt Jewish Campus Service Corps fellows and Lainer Israel Interns for Jewish Education.

But we also have a whole new group of prospects — the thousands of birthright israel alumni who are excited about being Jewish and want to know how to give something back to the community. We intend to recruit them into

the Jewish Teacher Corps; to organize a Jewish teacher's “boot camp” at the University of Judaism's School of Education during the summer; and to work closely with synagogues, day schools and central agencies willing to assist with jobs, enhanced salaries, mentoring and ongoing professional development during the first critical months on the job.

The leadership of birthright israel, the Jewish Educational Service of North America, the United Jewish Communities Jewish Renaissance and Renewal pillar, and the University of Judaism has already begun planning the launch of this “Jewish” Teach for America program, targeting the summer of 2002 for the first group of participants. Our hope is to attract hundreds of new Jewish teachers over the next five years, teachers who will bring a new energy and vision to the field. We anticipate a significant number of these teachers will go on to careers in Jewish education, the rabbinate and communal service, thus helping to stem the crisis in personnel throughout the Jewish community. ✿

The New Teacher Initiative

by MIRELE GOLDSMITH

In recent years the number of Jewish community day schools has increased rapidly. Schools are increasingly striving for an integrated curriculum of Jewish and general studies to foster a well-rounded Jewish identity in their students.

But where will the teachers come from? It is hard enough to find educators with either one or the other set of skills. Schools are struggling to find knowledgeable Judaic studies teachers and committed, creative general studies teachers. It seems almost impossible to find teachers who can integrate general and Jewish studies and thereby fulfill the exciting potential of day school education.

This is the challenge Laura Lauder set out to meet. Laura is a parent of students at the Mid-Peninsula Community Jewish Day School in Palo Alto, California. Consulting with PEJE and JESNA, along with day school representatives and experts in teacher training, Laura developed a plan to create a new corps of teachers

trained to implement the vision of an integrated education.

The New Teacher Initiative, still in its planning stages, is designed as a comprehensive approach to recruiting and preparing general studies teachers for the elementary grades, primarily in community day schools. A special feature of the program will be a recruitment partnership with day schools. In researching the needs of schools, the New Teacher Initiative's planning committee learned that heads of schools often know of people in their local communities who are interested in teaching but who lack

the proper training.

New Teacher Initiative participants, or Fellows, will be awarded a 15-month Fellowship that will cover the costs of the training program and a living stipend. Fellows will participate in two intensive summer institutes that will draw on the resources of both academic institutions and successful day schools. During the intervening year, Fellows will complete internships in day schools while continuing their preparation for teaching.

Following completion of the New Teacher Initiative program, each Fellow will commit to teach in a day school for at least two years. Studies of teacher

induction have found that the first two years of teaching are a critical time for the development of teaching skills and for the retention of new teachers. The New Teacher Initiative intends to provide Fellows with continuous training during this period, along with financial incentives and encouragement to enroll in a graduate

program in education.

Recognizing that the Jewish community has so far failed to meet the challenge posed by the shortage of teachers, especially teachers who can integrate general and Jewish studies, plans for the New Teachers Initiative are being developed very quickly. A pilot program will be launched in June 2002 with training sites on the East and West Coasts. In a little over three years from now, New Teacher Initiative Fellows will be entering the classroom. They will nurture the Jewish spirit and wrap a Jewish cloth of history and culture around the core curriculum of reading, science and math. The partnership between schools and the New Teacher Initiative will engender a new crop of teachers imbued with a passion for excellence. ✿

The New Teacher Initiative ... is designed as a comprehensive approach to recruiting and preparing general studies teachers for the elementary grades, primarily in community day schools.

Mirele Goldsmith, a consultant specializing in program evaluation and accreditation, is currently working with Laura Lauder to launch the New Teacher Initiative.

UPCOMING RELEASES

Much of the Jewish community has mobilized efforts recently to address the problem of professional development. In the coming months, several publications will focus on recruitment and retention of Jewish education professionals.


CAJE: The Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education is devoting its Summer issue of Jewish Education News to teacher recruitment, with articles about current programs nationwide that seek to ameliorate the teacher shortage as well as philosophical pieces on this topic. The issue will be released in August. Inquire at 212-268-4210 or publications@caje.org. In addition, CAJE's Hanukat CAJE committee is focusing on recruitment throughout the year, publishing several pamphlets and hosting discussion groups on the topic of recruitment in Jewish education. Materials and information are available at www.caje.org.


JESNA: Jewish Education Service of North America has formed a national task force on professional recruitment, development, retention and placement in formal and non-formal Jewish education. The task force is currently completing its work, and a report will be available at the UJC General Assembly in November 2001. It will be formally published and distributed thereafter by JESNA. Contact info@jesna.org for more information.

Jewish Early Childhood Education Partnership is a new initiative founded by six foundations, including Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation, to advocate for early childhood education as a gateway to lifelong Jewish affiliation. One of the foundation's goals is to focus attention on the state of early childhood teaching today. As such, the Partnership has set out to obtain broad data concerning the professionals who teach young Jewish children. The survey will be completed and its findings presented in November 2001. For information about the study or the Partnership, contact Ilene C. Vogelstein at JECEP1@aol.com. ✿

Staffing Jewish Overnight Camps: A Challenge and a Necessity

by RABBI RAMIE ARIAN

 *Jordan, age 19, wanted to work at camp for the summer. He knew the experience would be rewarding, and would coordinate well with his university psychology major. But the \$1375 salary did not meet the minimum he needed to qualify for his college's financial aid package. Working as a waiter, or a sales job at the mall, he knew, would pay about \$2500. And he had no trouble at all finding work at a temp agency that paid over \$4000 for the summer.*

 *Rebecca, age 20, is headed for a career in law. She is an achiever who sets high goals for herself. She really looked forward to going back to camp, but her campus career officer says she can't afford to "waste a summer" if she wants to get into a quality law school. Rather, she needs an internship at a prestigious firm. Money really isn't an issue for her, but her parents insist that she put her career interests first, and take the career officer's advice.*

Jewish overnight camps are among the most powerful and effective means to build Jewish identity and commitment. Operating 24/7, they quickly achieve a close-knit community and a programmatic intensity that enhances and magnifies their Jewish educational power.

There are some 120 not-for-profit Jewish overnight camps of all movements in North America, serving 50,000 children every summer (a substantial number, but only 7% of the camp-aged Jewish population). These camps operate at full capacity every summer.

For their staffs, Jewish camps provide highly satisfying, highly meaningful summer work, with valuable skills and experiences that transfer well to a wide variety of work and career situations. But with low pay scales and the widespread perception of low status, it is increasingly difficult for camps to recruit

their collective staff of 10,000 individuals, most of whom are college students like Jordan and Rebecca.

(Jewish camps also need qualified personnel for senior, year-round positions, a challenge not unlike that faced by Jewish schools and other agencies which is addressed elsewhere in this issue.)

Jewish camps cite the recruitment of sufficient qualified Jewish summer staff as their most important challenge. Jewish college students serve as role models to campers and give camp its remarkable educational power.

How can the recruitment challenge be met? The issue must be addressed from several directions at once. The Foundation for Jewish Camping has made a start in several areas. There is much more to be done. Here are some of the principle challenges, and some possible responses:

- *A perception persists that camp experience is not valuable in the workplace.*

This is a faulty perception. Where but in camp can a college student gain experience that teaches transferable, marketable skills that employers value throughout the workplace — skills like negotiation and conflict resolution, giving and accepting supervision, time management, program planning, working as a team, group leading? Where but at camp can a 20-year-old be a team leader, supervising other staff?

The Foundation for Jewish Camping has mounted a campaign, targeted to Jewish collegiates, that articulates in "resume language" the benefits of working at camp. Still to be done: a campaign to articulate to employers the benefits of hiring camp alumni, starting with the many lay leaders in the Jewish community who influence employment decisions at work, and continuing with college career officers and with Jewish parents.

- *Summer camps will never meet their staff recruitment needs when other jobs pay twice their salary scale and more.*

Camps vie in the open marketplace for staff who have many other options. Camp salaries must increase at least

\$1,000 per person in order to be competitive. With 10,000 camp staff needed, \$10 million in additional compensation will be required each summer.

The Jewish community, through the Federation system, private foundations and philanthropists, must redouble its financial support of the precious resource represented by its overnight camps.

One option is to raise camper tuition, with Federations providing expanded, need-based scholarships, without regard for movement affiliation, for those who can't meet the higher fee scales. Camp tuition could still be held well below the level of the private camps with which they compete, and Federations would assume a "safety net" function with which they have a level of comfort and significant expertise.

Another option is to create a community support system to allocate funding on a national basis for Jewish camps, similar to the system the Federations use to support Hillel. In addition, we should work to generate a significant, consistent stream of foundation and philanthropist support for the camps, either nationally or locally organized. We should also raise permanent endowment funds for camps that would generate revenue annually to supplement staff salaries. (Each of these options requires a redoubling of development efforts on behalf of Jewish camps, and highlights the shortage of qualified development personnel, which is addressed elsewhere in this issue.)

- *Staff shortages are epidemic throughout the Jewish community, and Jewish agencies need to collaborate to exploit areas of natural partnership.*

The boundaries among the various areas of Jewish professional life — Federations, JCCs, camps, schools, synagogues — are highly permeable. All institutions must recognize that individuals who are recruited into one area of Jewish life often migrate during their careers to positions in other areas. Therefore, it is logical for diverse agencies to support one another's staff recruitment campaigns, to meet their common staffing

Rabbi Ramie Arian is Executive Director of the Foundation for Jewish Camping (www.jewishcamping.org).

needs. In particular, agencies throughout the Jewish community should exploit the unique position of summer camp as a recruitment vehicle for potential entry level Jewish communal professionals.

Work at a Jewish summer camp provides an easy way for a collegiate to taste what it is like to work professionally in the Jewish community, without making a long-term commitment. The Foundation for Jewish Camping has initiated a wide variety of recruitment partnerships, seeking access to college students through venues such as Hillel and Birthright Israel, and in turn, offering access to camp staff as a recruitment pool for agencies such as the Jewish Education Service of North America and the Jewish Community Center Association. The Foundation has created its own web-based staff recruitment and referral system, and cooperates with other agencies in their recruitment projects.

These programs should be expanded, and others like them should be created. Instead of guarding their respective turfs, agencies throughout the Jewish community will be better served by seeking partnering opportunities, and cooperating to meet their common staff recruitment needs. Recognizing that college students seek summer "internships" to support their career aspirations, one logical area of collaboration would be between agencies and camps. Together they can create job packages in which one month's internship in the agency (perhaps in May or June) would be matched by a summer season at camp.

Recruiting large numbers of Jewish collegiates to staff Jewish overnight camps is a significant and critically important challenge. The Foundation for Jewish Camping has begun to address the challenge in important ways. With time, adequate funding and community support, the challenge can be met. Not only can Jewish summer camps attract the many students like Jordan and Rebecca needed to meet their own staffing needs, but more important, they can become a valuable recruitment asset for other agencies throughout the Jewish community. ✿



The University as Training Ground for a Jewish Professional Elite

The diverse institutions of American higher education have an important role to play in the preparation of a leadership elite for North American Jewry.

by **ROBERT CHAZAN**

Recruitment and training of skilled — indeed, inspired — Jewish professionals has become a high priority for the American Jewish community as it seeks to insure its continuity and enhance its creativity. A vital training ground can be found in North American universities. Jewish studies programs have proliferated, offering undergraduates the opportunity to extend their Jewish education in meaningful ways. Many of these programs are producing a new generation of scholars in North America and abroad. They are also beginning to make a contribution toward the training of skilled professionals for the American Jewish communities, but this effort is in its infancy. It is to the enhancement of this effort that two new, experimental programs are being launched at New York University.

Both efforts are predicated on the assumption that excellent Jewish professionals of all kinds — federation personnel, Jewish foundation personnel, Jewish community center personnel, and, of course, Jewish educators — must be Jewishly literate. Thus, campuses with

large and diversified Jewish studies programs have a special contribution to make. In this regard, New York University occupies an especially favored position, since it houses the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies, one of the largest and most diversified programs of Jewish studies in North America. Students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels can take courses that range the lengthy spectrum of Jewish history and culture and that approach Jewish experience from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. This richness and diversity of offerings provide considerable opportunity for future Jewish professionals to enrich their knowledge and appreciation of Jewish thought and culture.

At the same time, New York University is home to a number of outstanding professional schools. One of these schools, the Wagner School of Public Service, offers one of the largest programs in North America for the training of future administrators for both the public and private sectors. Its Master of Public Administration program has been carefully conceptualized and highly successful. The leadership of the Wagner School has joined with the Skirball Department in the creation of a double-degree program in public administration and Jewish studies.

Students for this program will be chosen carefully. They must meet the rigorous requirements of both the Wagner School and the Skirball Department. These students will pursue a full masters program in public administration and a full masters program in Jewish studies. In addition, they will have at their disposal a number of courses designed specifically to introduce them to the American Jewish community, its institutions, its contemporary needs and the special issues that affect professionals serving it. The capstone experience in the Wagner program will offer dual-degree students the opportunity to study in depth a major institution of the American Jewish community. Upon completion of this demanding program, graduates should be well-qualified for careers of service to American Jewry.

New York University's second new enterprise is a doctoral program in education and Jewish studies. Over the past decade, a growing number of highly impressive young men and women have committed themselves to careers in Jewish education. The challenge is to create the venues within which they can prepare themselves properly for such careers. There are currently a number of institutions to which these young men and women turn. Fundamentally, these training venues fall into two categories.

Robert Chazan, Ph.D., is the S. H. and Helen R. Scheuer Professor of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University.



The first is the Jewish institutions of higher learning, such as Hebrew Union College, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and Yeshiva University, to name only the most obvious. The second category is composed of the outstanding schools of education in major American universities. The question that has plagued many of us is whether it is possible to bridge the gap that separates the two types of institutions. Might it be possible to create on one campus a doctoral program that builds on the riches of an established school of education and a large and diversified program in Jewish studies?

The new doctoral program in NYU's Steinhardt School of Education seeks to attract and train educational leaders who will administer schools, write and test desperately-needed new curricula for Jewish schools, explore new paths in informal education and research the achievements and shortcomings of the current Jewish educational enterprise. Once again, the program imparts a vital combination of Jewish knowledge gained in the Skirball Department, and

professional expertise gained in NYU's Steinhardt School of Education.

This new NYU doctoral program in Jewish education offers considerable challenge and opportunity to all parties involved. For the Steinhardt School of Education, the new doctoral program is a radically innovative venture. Here, too, there has been a sense that this new program and new set of students will bring further stimulation to a school already known for the broad range of educational constituencies it serves. Indeed, for New York University in general, this program continues a trend toward reaching across school boundaries to create diversified programs. Thus, while at first blush this might seem like a curious experiment for a major university, it, in fact, dovetails nicely with the general mood of American academia: a desire for innovation and a thrust toward putting

disparate intellectual orbits into fruitful interplay with one another.

We at New York University are delighted to lead the way in these experiments. We have no aspirations to exclusivity, however. We hope that our success will embolden other universities to follow our lead. The American Jewish community needs a well-trained cadre of professional leaders. Many of these leaders will be groomed at the important institutions of higher learning that American Jewry has created and nurtured. At the same time, the diverse institutions of American higher education have an important role to play in the preparation of a leadership elite for North American Jewry. Such a well-trained elite is surely a critical component in the enterprise of maintaining and enhancing twenty-first century Jewish life. ✿

Revitalizing *the* World of Development Professionals

by HERB TOBIN



The North American Jewish Community is in the midst of a crisis in professional personnel, both in terms of quality and quantity. Nowhere is this crisis more pronounced than in the area of financial resource development. Shifting communal interests and priorities; changing practices in the field of development; paradigm shifts in volunteer/professional relationships; and profound changes on the part of American Jews with regard to their own giving are all exacerbating this personnel shortage. We must implement radical changes in how development professionals are recruited, trained, retained and recognized if the shortage is to be solved.

Recruiting a New Generation of Development Professionals

Financial resource development and its less prosaic partner, fundraising, are often viewed as drudge work, difficult and undesirable. In fact, the field of development is a challenging and stimulating profession whose practitioners can achieve significant, measurable success. Development professionals are often satisfied with their choice of profession – with the work itself, remuneration, status and professional recognition. Indeed, mid-career moves from the for-profit world to development positions are far more common than moves in the opposite direction.

Thus, development must be marketed as an exciting, desirable, satisfying profession. The community must emphasize the positive aspects of development, paying careful attention to the negatives with which it is sometimes associated. Development must be marketed as the quintessential liberal arts profession, readily absorbing whatever education, world-view and life experiences the individual brings to the field.

Highly competent, successful pro-

Herb Tobin is Principal of Herb Tobin Consulting in Boston, Massachusetts.

Development must be marketed as the quintessential liberal arts profession, readily absorbing whatever education, world-view and life experiences the individual brings to the field.

professionals must serve as role models and active recruiters for prospective practitioners. Indeed, in recruiting individuals, as much attention must be paid to personality traits as to educational achievements. Creative, entrepreneurial, energetic, mission-oriented individuals are those who will succeed in this profession. Academic credentials are of secondary importance. What is of greatest importance is the individual's ability to easily express complex ideas, both verbally and in writing, and relate to a wide array of people with ease. In the past, the community has often focused too much on the educational credentials of the wrong type of individuals.

A New Way of Doing Things **Training**

As noted above, it is personality, not education, that is the most important determinant in predicting the success of an individual. Prospective development professionals should be encouraged to pursue a variety of educational avenues, not merely concentrating on social work or Jewish communal service. A well-rounded liberal arts education will help make for a broadly-educated professional, conversant in a variety of disciplines. Of course, an ongoing commitment to Jewish learning, in either a formal or informal venue, is to be highly encouraged.

Development professionals should also possess an understanding of the particulars of the organization or field in which they are engaged. They must have a thorough knowledge of the organization, including its greatest projects and especially its history. All too often practitioners have little understanding of the history of the field in which they are working.

The most important aspect of training a new development professional is hands-on "field work." Only through experience can a development professional truly learn the art of fundraising. Rigorous field work, mentoring and reinforcement by senior professionals is a must. Field work must include intensive work on interpersonal skills and leadership development, as well as the

art of speaking. The ability to put abstract ideas in writing — the essence of grant writing — is also important.

Retaining the Best

Along with senior development professionals, volunteers have a critical role to play in recruiting, training, mentoring, and above all, helping to retain professionals. There are among us a number of "tzedakah heroes," those individuals who epitomize the qualities of tzedakah leadership and vision. They can potentially have a huge impact on individuals attracted to development work. Volunteers must also play a key role in retaining young professionals. Too often, the best and brightest professionals leave. Bureaucracy and the lack of opportunity to work on a grand scale frustrate professionals. So, too, does the need to manage unrealistic expectations. Working in fruitful partnership with volunteers, however, can create a stimulating, productive environment for professionals.

Recognition

Only by radically breaking with past practices of recruitment, training and early job experiences will the current personnel crisis in development be ameliorated. Bold new steps for recruitment must be taken. A much broader vision of what is an acceptable and desirable training program must take hold. And more careful, thoughtful attention must be paid to how practitioners are trained early in their careers. Finally, with the understanding that excellence is a key element to solving the personnel crisis, performance must not only be recognized but rewarded. Development professionals should be appreciated for their talent, skills and energies. This recognition should exist on its own terms, not merely in a subordinate position to the volunteer. When the recruitment, training, retention and recognition of financial resource development professionals is changed, the American Jewish community will be on the road to solving perhaps its most troubling personnel crisis. ✿

Personnel Recruitment in *Cyberspace*

The challenge of Jewish professional recruitment has been exacerbated by the lack of a central resource for jobs in the Jewish community. A new website hopes to change this. Scheduled to be launched by JESNA this August, JewishJobFinder.com will be a comprehensive website where job-seekers and employers can turn to find the right match.

Made possible through the support of Henry and Edith Everett and other contributors, JewishJobFinder.com is targeted at college students, young adults and people in mid-career seeking a profession in the Jewish community. The site will include resume postings and job search capabilities for entry, mid-level and senior-level jobs. It will also feature tips and resources to assist people in finding jobs in the Jewish community. Offerings will include practical advice (e.g., resume writing, interviewing tips, job fair calendars) as well as broader articles covering career paths, recruitment services and continuing professional education. Links to a variety of personnel and training institutions as well as to fellowship opportunities and internships will supplement the site.

Judith Goldstein, coordinator of the website team at JESNA, hopes that through the Internet, Jewish organizations will reach a new generation of job-seekers who have been turning to other professions. "We're engaging the power of the Web to draw people into this career path," she said. "By using the Web, the site will create a new world of professional recruitment and appeal to a younger audience that is often overlooked as well as a more mature, mid-career one that is equally Web-savvy." ✿

Jewish Professional Service: Two Views

Hillel's Steinhardt Jewish Campus Service Corps is a one-year fellowship that enables recent college graduates to work on campuses across North America helping students explore and celebrate their Jewishness. We asked two JCSC alumni — one who continued in Jewish service and one who opted for the secular non-profit world — to share their views on Jewish professional life.

Why I Love This Job

by MELANIE SASSON



The young adults I interacted with as a Jewish campus professional were making choices during college that would shape their lives as adults.

I met Miriam at a Passover seder during her freshman year. I was the Program Director of Hillel at the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB). She came to check out the scene. She stood up during the seder and announced that she wanted to read the section about Miriam because it mentioned her name. Impressed by her dynamic approach and charisma, I called her for a coffee date. We chatted about her campus experience and her feeling of disconnection from the Jewish community. I piqued her interest in Hillel's building project and recruited her as a student member of the Community Advisory Board. Soon enough, she participated in a B'nai Mitzvah program run by the rabbi and started hosting Jewish events at her home. During her senior year, Miriam was elected by her peers to be the president of Hillel, and she attended Hillel's Israel 2000 trip, our first participation in birthright Israel. She graduated last spring and still calls me when she is looking for a place to connect Jewishly.

Miriam, and countless students like her, are the reason I chose to work in the Jewish community. The young adults I interacted with as a Jewish campus professional were making choices during college that would shape their lives as adults. They were no longer being driven to religious school or youth groups by their parents. They were driven by their own motivation to find a Jewish space and to make a Jewish connection on campus. I had the opportunity to engage them in their search for Jewish meaning.

My satisfaction in working for Hillel is not only about the students and the long-term impact on the Jewish community. It is also about my own growth and personal fulfillment. I have been fortunate to have a job in which both my Jewish and professional growth are priorities. I have a career that is about who I am and what my passions are — one in which I can be a Jewish professional and a professional Jew. I work for an organization that celebrates my personal *simchas* and reflects my religious sensibilities. I have chosen to pursue a career where I touch people's lives, make an impact on the Jewish com-

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munity and build Jewish identity in myself and in others.

As an undergraduate, I was not a "super-Jew." I had a strong Jewish identity from my upbringing in a Conservative home, but I was definitely not "doing Jewish" at college. I went on a trip to Israel during my senior year, a trip that lit my passion for exploring my role as a woman in the Jewish community. With that fire, I became a Steinhardt Jewish Campus Service Corps Fellow at Arizona State University. It seemed like the perfect way to spend a year learning Jewishly and professionally — creating encounters for college students who, much like me, had little involvement in Jewish campus life.

Inspired by my JCSC experiences with students exploring their identities, I became Program Director at the Hillel Foundation at UCSB. During the four years I spent there, I learned much about myself as a Jewish woman and as a Jewish leader. Rabbi Stephen Cohen, the Hillel Director at UCSB, promoted spiritual growth and Jewish learning in a nurturing environment. I was encouraged to lead Shabbat services and give *divrei Torah*. I was welcomed into a supportive community where I could give of myself and take risks. One of my programmatic initiatives involved *tzedek* (social justice); another involved women's programming. It was immensely satisfying to be able to research the Jewish sources related to these areas, and impart this knowledge to the students. Regular supervision sessions incorporated structured Jewish learning and discussions about spiritual struggles. Only in the work of a Jewish professional could these areas be intertwined!

Today, as the Jan Mitchell Assistant Director of Hillel's Center for Jewish Engagement, I help in the development of new Hillel programs, as well as recruit, place, train and supervise JCSC Fellows. The energy I put into my occupation spreads to over 85 JCSC's, and informs the impact they have on hundreds of students every day.

Why do I work in the Jewish community? It's the kind of career where I touch people's lives, affect the Jewish community, build Jewish identities and am rewarded in a multitude of ways. Having a career that is so much about who I am makes each day more fulfilling. ✿

Once campaigned for Jewishness. Now I campaign for equality. As the Steinhardt Jewish Campus Service Corps fellow at Johns Hopkins University, my job was to reach out to those individuals who felt alienated by Jewish life on campus. My own background was Orthodox; I graduated from Stern College and had been immersed since childhood in Jewish tradition. At Johns Hopkins, I saw that the Jewish communal structures catered to Jews who, like me, already identified as Jews. It was not a welcoming atmosphere for those who did not pray, observe Jewish dietary laws or partake in Shabbat festivities. Many students were starved for a community that was open to marginally-affiliated Jews.

From the start, the students and I talked, shared and toiled with difficult philosophic notions, mostly related to Judaism. As the months progressed and the conversations became deeper, many questions became more unanswerable. Where do ethics originate? Is God an objective reality? How does Judaism have relevance in a world where God's presence is difficult to find? With these pressing questions, I wondered whether I was really the proper person to be an advocate for Judaism on campus. This ultimately propelled the broader question of whether Judaism even needed spokespersons or professional messengers.

Despite the exhilarating programs and meaningful conversations, I continually found myself revisiting my initial intent for joining the Jewish communal work force. I could no longer understand why people would make their religion, which ultimately stems from a place of faith, into their profession. In short, I found it difficult to understand the need for professional Jews. Granted, Christian missionaries operate out of divine belief, and likewise, certain Jewish outreach efforts are motivated by religious impulses. But the vast majority of professional Jewish outreach in America seemed to exist independent of any theological mission. What, then, were we campaigning for? Is Jewish identity, devoid of anything else, a worthy cause to fight for?

My religious questions also led me to

ponder pragmatic issues of ethics and equality. On *Tu-Bishvat* I hosted a *seder* with a bounty of food and deep conversations, but I wondered why I wasn't asking these students to help feed the hungry and homeless instead. To me, helping the hungry seemed a more worthwhile endeavor than helping Jewish students discover their identity.

On the other hand, I realized how vital these outlets were for students. They had found a home within the community and were able to explore who they were as Jews. I started a Freshman Jewish group that evolved into a thriving network for students who wanted a Jewish connection. At the group's final meeting, more than 20 students ran for president because they wanted to continue after I left campus. I understood the need for someone to have my position. It could not, however, be me anymore. It was time for me to leave not only the fellowship program, but the role of Jewish professional as well. For me, increased Jewish affiliation alone does not merit the same energy and attention as other causes that seek to right the wrongs of our world.

It was not an easy choice to leave. Judaism was the only thing I had ever known. But I decided to channel my passion into something that would have a tangible impact on the world. The numerous statistics of lower synagogue affiliation and higher intermarriage rates do not have the same concrete resonance to me as do statistics of educational inequality in America. As the Development Director at Teach For America New York, I am helping to bridge the opportunity gap in low-income communities. I have deep-rooted satisfaction as part of a movement and culture that is closing major educational gaps that plague our nation. Unlike a campaign to promote Jewish identity in the absence of religious belief, this is a tangible cause, with clear goals, a mission and measures for success. To me, the satisfaction of seeing an underprivileged child learn to read, think critically about an issue or even get accepted to an Ivy League university is more rewarding than working to increase the statistics of Jewish affiliation.

I cannot say that I don't have doubts about having left the Jewish communal world. I carry my strong Jewish identity

Grappling With the Profession of Jewish Communal Work

by NITZAN PELMAN



For me, increased Jewish affiliation alone does not merit the same energy and attention as other causes that seek to right the wrongs of our world.

wherever I go. In that vein, I have maintained relationships with many former students from Hopkins and have watched them mature in tremendous ways. When they return to New York during school vacations, I can always be assured of a solid debate, usually drawing upon Jewish philosophy, that forces me to think on a higher plane.

On the other hand, I spend my days talking to people about the overwhelming effect Teach For America is having in New York City. These conversations are accompanied by concrete statistics and profound anecdotes about children who were once failing and are now accepted to some of the top schools in the nation. How does that compare to my coffee dates with Hopkins students discussing the meaning of life? I'm sure that as I get older my thoughts will continue to evolve, but for now I'm headed back to school for a masters degree in Public Policy so that I can continue to fight for equality. ✨

Nitzan Pelman is Development Director at Teach For America New York.



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—HERB TOBIN