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HARVARD



HILLEL

STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2025

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INTRODUCTION

The Harvard Hillel Board of Directors and staff, under the guidance of the strategic planning committee, developed this 5-year plan to direct their efforts to meet the newly crafted [proposed] mission.

The creation of this document is only a first step in achieving Harvard Hillel's objectives. The next step is to further develop the appropriate plans, action steps, and timeline to meet the goals.

During the implementation of the plan, it is the Board's responsibility to ensure that the organization, through the actions of professional staff, is meeting its goals by monitoring progress on a regular basis and evaluating performance against each goal.

This is a working document, a tool to help Harvard Hillel achieve its goals. As such, it may be adjusted and modified as needed to support the changing environment and the needs of the organization.

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Consultants

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MISSION STATEMENT

Harvard Hillel is a Jewish home on campus that seeks to:

- Welcome students to experience the variety of Jewish identity, tradition, practice, values, culture, and community.
- Inspire and enable Jewish connection, celebration, and action.
- Prepare students to join, create, shape, and lead Jewish communities; strengthen the Jewish people; and live proud Jewish lives.
- Share Jewish sources, traditions, ideas, and innovations, and their relevance in our world.
- Forge connection and engagement with the State of Israel.
- Foster friendship in a nurturing and refreshing sanctuary amid the stresses of student life.
- Engage the unique opportunities of Harvard and make Jewish thought and culture integral in the life of the University.

GOALS

Goal 1: Undergraduate Students

Expand undergraduate outreach and engagement to connect with all Harvard College students who have a Jewish identity to inspire and support them in forging Jewish life.

Goal 2: Graduate Students

Build a Jewish community among Harvard graduate students and Harvard-affiliated young adults.

Goal 3: Community Engagement

Raise the profile of Harvard Hillel on campus and beyond.

Goal 4: Facilities and Rebranding

In service of Goals 1, 2, and 3, ensure that our physical space supports our new and expanded offerings and explore rebranding Harvard Hillel.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal 1: Undergraduate Students

Expand undergraduate outreach and engagement to connect with all Harvard College students who have a Jewish identity to inspire and support them in forging Jewish life.

Undergraduate students who have a Jewish background/identity¹ are the heart of our work at Harvard Hillel. We serve as a home base and hub of activity for all Jewish students. We support students along their unique paths, contributing to a meaningful Jewish life which sustains well after they graduate. We embark on this strategic plan resolved to know every Jewish undergraduate student at Harvard by name, to deepen relationships with and among students, and to use our knowledge of real student needs and interests to continue to offer dynamic programming for the diverse group of students in our care.

Strategy 1: Data Collection

Improve collection, analysis, and use of data to achieve greater understanding of our target population, discern and further develop effective engagement strategies, and sustain engagement with all students we identify.

- Survey students at least annually to understand their needs, measure their satisfaction with our programs and determine the impact Harvard Hillel has on their Jewish identity.

Strategy 2: Outreach

Increase the frequency and continually evolve the mix of outreach initiatives and programs to identify and involve all Harvard College students with a Jewish background/identity.

- Augment our peer-elected Undergraduate Steering Committee with an appointed student leadership team focused on outreach and engagement.
- Ensure outreach and engagement work is a consistent year-round focus, beyond current seasonal pushes (which include Freshman Week, High Holidays, Shabbat1000, Housing Day, Passover, Visitas).
- Strive to have at least 75% of Jewish undergraduate students attend at least one Harvard Hillel event per year.

Strategy 3: Engagement

Increase the number of Jewish Harvard College students who have deeper or more frequent involvement with Harvard Hillel.

- Further nurture and support our existing community of highly engaged students.
- Cultivate a broader set of undergraduate affinity groups within Harvard Hillel.
- Increase collaborations with student affinity groups on campus through joint programming and offering our facility to host collaborative events.
- Attract students by multiplying opportunities for student-faculty encounters.

¹ Note: future references throughout this document to “Jewish” students, or similar terms, are meant to encompass broadly those who have Jewish identity or background.

- Expand program offerings which educate and expand upon students' cultural fluency so that they can lead meaningful Jewish lives.
- Create opportunities for current students to develop relationships with Harvard Hillel professional staff so that we can support each student on their unique Jewish path.
- Strive to have at least 35% of Jewish undergraduate students attend 6 or more events or 1 or more immersive experiences.

Strategy 4: Professional Development

Provide ongoing professional development for the Harvard Hillel staff in outreach and engagement to improve effectiveness.

- Partner with peer campuses for staff training in outreach and engagement.
- Take advantage of Hillel International programs to learn from the field.

Goal 2: Graduate Students

Build a Jewish community among Harvard graduate students and Harvard-affiliated young adults.

Approximately 2500 Jewish graduate students are enrolled in Harvard's eleven graduate and professional schools. Transforming this large and currently underserved population of Jewish young adults into a community is a worthwhile objective in itself and will broaden our reach as Jewish enrollment in Harvard College has declined. Creating a graduate student community requires a distinct and robust programmatic approach. In addition, a large local age peer community is greatly enmeshed with Harvard graduate students in Jewish life, presenting a challenge of mission scope, but also the possibility of partnerships with other organizations. The goal of Jewish graduate student community demands the most structural change – to staffing, facility, and funding – but we believe the opportunity is compelling.

Strategy 1: Data Collection

Collect data to better understand the needs and opportunities to engage Harvard graduate students and Harvard-affiliated Jewish young adults.

- Conduct an environmental scan of other Hillels and Jewish organizations who actively engage graduate students.
- Survey and conduct focus groups with Harvard Jewish graduate students to determine the type of programming which will meet their interests and needs.
- Improve our data on Jewish graduate student populations in Harvard's eleven graduate and professional schools, in order to improve communication, visibility, and outreach.

Strategy 2: Leadership

Create and staff a Council of the Jewish Student Association (JSA) heads from across schools for collaborative planning and programming.

- Work with JSA's to identify and reach all Harvard University graduate students with a Jewish background/identity.
- Hire graduate student interns to support JSA Council initiatives.
- Increase communication and visibility of the Harvard Hillel "brand" in the graduate school communities.

Strategy 3: Programming

Expand our programming and the calendar of events to build community across graduate schools and engage graduate students in Jewish life.

- Host more of our highly popular social gatherings for graduate students.
- Involve graduate students and young professionals regularly in each of Harvard Hillel's denominational prayer communities.
- Support small group "clusters" for Shabbat meals and Jewish learning.
- Multiply opportunities for encounters among students and faculty across Harvard schools and young professional communities.
- Increase mentoring of undergraduates by graduate and professional students.

Strategy 4: Partnerships

Explore partnerships with outside organizations who are already working to engage graduate students and young professionals.

- Investigate a partnership with Combined Jewish Philanthropies to establish Base Hillel Cambridge.
- Develop a more consistent collaboration with the Cambridge Conservative Minyan.
- Explore potential collaborations with Chabad, Moishe House, et al.
- Collaborate with local organizations to build broader post-graduate Cambridge Jewish social and cultural community.

Goal 3: Community Engagement

Raise the profile of Harvard Hillel on campus and beyond.

Harvard Hillel engages our community in compelling ways when we create featured programs that leverage the special assets, opportunities and setting of Harvard. Sharing Jewish ideas and culture and Israel with all of Harvard is an essential role; and our setting at the core of the Harvard community, along with our network of thought leaders and accomplished alumni, enable us to create and convene conversations of the highest caliber. Harvard Hillel will build on our current high-profile forums and initiatives to a) engage our University community and increase our appeal on campus by showcasing thought-leadership on relevant issues; b) share this aspect of Harvard Hillel with our widespread alumni and other supporters; and c) increase the renown of Harvard Hillel as a thriving community and center of Jewish excellence.

Strategy 1: Student Leadership

Amplify students' voices on issues of the day and increase dialogue among students, faculty, and special guests on critical issues facing the Jewish community and Israel.

- Cultivate and promote an expanded set of major programs conceived by students (e.g. Israel Summit, Israel Trek, student-invited speakers).
- Increase student involvement in the conception, planning, and implementation of further high-profile programs.
- Strengthen Harvard Hillel's position as the center of Jewish and Israel activity on campus.

Strategy 2: Partnerships and Programs

Multiply and diversify collaborations with faculty, academic departments, offices, and centers of Harvard to consolidate and promote our distinctive platform for featured conversations on important ideas and issues.

- Continue and highlight our faculty and guest speaker series and continue to share it online.
- Build on the success of the Riesman Forum on Politics and Policy, Brachman Israel Initiative, and Harvard College Israel Trek to convene further high-level events and conversations.
- Partner with Harvard departments, offices, and centers to develop and launch relevant, proactive, and responsive events on campus.
- Increase student-faculty interaction through these collaborations.

Strategy 3: Wider Audience

Share selected high-profile Harvard Hillel programs with our wider constituency of alumni and supporters in convened programming at Harvard and in online modalities that increase our visibility and reach.

- Build a core set of programs and opportunities for alumni to foster connection and engagement with Harvard Hillel and one another.
- Promote and share signature Harvard Hillel programs with alumni via in-person and digital platforms; live-stream and web-cast major programs to beyond-campus constituencies and a wider audience.
- Create a featured program each year at reunion time.

- Consider new forums for engaging students, faculty, alumni, and others around topics of Jewish- and Israel-related interest
- Foster an online community among Israel Trek returnees, including current students and alumni (already numbering in the hundreds); consider creating an Israel Trek for alumni and supporters.

Goal 4: Facilities and Rebranding

In service of Goals 1, 2, and 3, ensure that our physical space supports our new and expanded offerings and explore rebranding Harvard Hillel.

Strategy 1: Facilities

Decide on the extent of renovations to Rosovsky Hall needed to meet our future needs.

- Ensure we can provide ample space for simultaneous graduate and undergraduate events and incorporate graduate students into Shabbat community and Sabbath meals.
- Ensure that we have the financial resources in hand to support any expansion/renovation of our facilities and increase endowment levels to secure Hillel's continued programming role on the Harvard campus.

Strategy 2: Rebranding

Determine the advantages and liabilities of rebranding Harvard Hillel, whether in the near term or as programming evolves.

- Survey and conduct focus groups with undergraduate students, graduate students, alumni, and other supporters.
- Conduct a study of Hillels who have undergone a rebranding effort.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of this plan, particularly the goal of building a Jewish graduate student community, will require additional funding and staffing as well as modifications to the facilities at Harvard Hillel. It is important to make provisions to secure these resources to ensure the success of the strategic plan. Therefore, a task force with representatives from the Strategic Planning Committee, Development Committee and Building Committee will meet to coordinate their plans.

Human Resources

In order to successfully implement the strategic plan, we will have to reassess our staffing structure. Parts of this plan, particularly Goal 1, can be executed with minor realignment of the current staffing levels. However, some initiatives, such as those in Goal 2 and possibly Goal 3, will likely necessitate additional staffing and/or repurposing of current staff once the amount and types of new programs are determined for each goal.

Financial Resources

The additional programming and staffing needs, along with the required building renovations, have significant associated costs. Fundraising, which has been integral to Harvard Hillel's success, will become even more of a priority for both the organization and the board.

This strategic plan and the vision for our building necessitate a robust, multi-year fundraising plan to ensure that we have the resources we need and remain sustainable. Year 1 of the strategic plan, when we have relatively few additional expenses, will be spent creating the fundraising plan which will include a major gifts program, outreach to untapped foundations, and an expanded capital campaign. Implementation of the fundraising plan will begin in year 2 when we need more resources to implement Goals 2 and 3.

TIMELINE

	Year 1 2020-2021			Year 2 2021-2022			Year 3 2022-2023			Year 4 2023-2024			Year 5 2024-2025			Notes
	fall	spring	summer	fall	spring	summer	fall	spring	summer	fall	spring	summer	fall	spring	summer	
Goal 1: Undergraduate Students																
Data collection	√	√		√	√											Data collection = population study; database updating is constantly ongoing.
Increase outreach initiatives	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Deeper student involvement	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Professional development		√	√		√	√		√	√		√	√		√	√	Spring and summer lend themselves to professional development as lessons from autumn semester can be included, especially for new staff; and the autumn calendar with its holidays is less conducive.
Goal 2: Graduate Students																
Data collection	√	√		√	√											Data collection = population study; database updating is constantly ongoing
JSA Council				√	√											Best to do in the first normal year following the pandemic
New grad student programming				√		√	√	√	√	√	√					'New' = beyond current areas; requires new funding
Introduce outside partnerships						√	√		√	√						Partners (e.g. CJP) will be more receptive post-pandemic
Engage non-Harvard peers	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	A constant in the nature of grad student life
Hire additional staff						√										
Goal 3: Community Engagement																
Student leadership	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	Already active and increasing
Partnerships and programs	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	Already active and increasing
New high level events				√	√		√	√		√	√		√	√		
New Harvard depts., offices, center partnerships				√	√		√	√		√	√		√	√		
Wider audiences	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	Already active and increasing
Alumni programs						√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Share signature programs				√	√		√	√		√	√		√	√		
Reunion program						√			√			√			√	
New forums						√	√		√	√		√	√		√	
On-line Trek community	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Consider alumni/supporter Trek program									√			√			√	
Hire additional staff									√							
Goal 4: Facilities and Branding																
Facilities																
Capital fundraising for building	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Design process	√	√	√	√	√											
Construction						√	√	√	√							Dependent on fundraising for start date
Re-branding																
Survey students, alumni, etc.				√	√											In first post-pandemic year
Study other Hillels	√	√	√													
Determine rebranding						√										