Campus Fellows Report: December 2017

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Rabbi Hayyim Angel

To our members and friends,

As National Scholar of the Institute, I now manage the University Network and Campus Fellowship as well. Since my October report, we have picked up two new Campus Fellows, so that we now have 25 Campus Fellows at 22 schools across the United States and Canada.

Campus Fellows run at least two programs per semester on their campuses, with the goal of promoting our Institute's vision and enlisting participants in their programs in our University Network.

As you will see below, our Fellows have initiated a wide range of programs and events on their campuses. Here are some of their latest.

Thank you for your support,

Rabbi Hayyim Angel

National Scholar

Sarah Pincus, Binghamton

I lead a shiur/discussion after davening on Shabbat about when bad people do good things and have positive contributions. The discussion was inspired by the

recent accusations of sexual harassment and discussions about how that may taint other positive things that the person did. People told me that they learned a lot and had a lot to think about. It was really successful and I hope to follow up with some of the people who came.

Rebecca Jackson, Cornell

On campus I have started a Levinas philosophy Seudah Shelishit shiur series. This is a three-part series and we are currently studying Levinas' Damages of Fire. I am also involved in promoting female leadership on campus through women's only learning events throughout the semester in which students give small shiurim and lead discussions. These programs' goals are to engage students deeply in text and contemporary conversations around tradition, philosophy and modernity.

Corey Gold, Harvard

We've been hosting weekly Sunday lunch and learns in which students and visiting scholars have taught classes on a variety of topics. This year, we've also rolled out a new weekly learning program: "Lunch with Rav Moshe."
Every Tuesday, Rabbi Dani Passow (one of the rabbis at Harvard Hillel) gives a shiur exploring one of Rav Moshe Feinstein's responsa (over lunch, of course). Finally, this Shabbat, Rabbi Saul Berman is coming to Harvard Hillel as a scholar-in-residence. He will be hosting an after-dinner discussion, giving the sermon and a lunch and learn, and hosting a seudah shilishit with Q&A.

Ezra Newman, Harvard Law School

We had four more programs this semester, bringing our total number of classes to six for the semester, or one basically every other week. We had one on the Ten Commandments, one on ze neheneh vizeh lo chaser, one on R' Moshe Feinstein's approach to agunah situations and one on dinah d'malchuta dinah. We had between 10-15 people at every event, and hope to do another six in the next semester.

Zachary Tankel, McGill

Our “Thursday Night Torah” class has a Torah-based discussion on a unique topic every week. The program attracts a consistent group of students living in the university community downtown, as well as students living in the local Montreal Jewish communities. I led a session based on a chapter from one of Rabbi Hayyim Angel’s books. I also used that as an opportunity to put out the word on the University Network.

Ross Beroff, Northeastern

Round robin peer led shiurim

Mishmar: Thursday night learning with Cholent

Passover Escape the Room text study

Sigal Spitzer, University of Pennsylvania

We started a lunch series called "Why We Do What We Do" about the reasons behind the commandments. It is a cohort of about 15 students who met during lunch on two Thursdays with a local Rabbi to discuss the relevant issues. It was a huge success and I am looking into other mini-series’ in this style for the future.

Raffi Levi and Benjamin Nechmad, Rutgers

For our last Open Beit Midrash Chabura, I prepared a discussion on Chassidut and Individuality. We went through some of the concepts expressed by Rav Simcha Bunim and the Kotzker Rebbe on authenticity and read a current article on the nature of individuality. In doing so we discussed the existential meaning of individualism and the ability to integrate our modern values with our religious sensibilities.

On December 6th, we ran Thursday night Mishmar, where we hosted Rabbi Aryeh Klapper who spoke on the topic, "Why is Rabbinic Law Possible?" concerning the way in which rabbinic authority functions today. We had nearly thirty students at

the event, and signed many people up for the University Network. It was highly enjoyable, and we learned a lot.

For next semester we are working on an event, to have Professor Yehoshua November - a Rutgers professor and famous Jewish Poet - come speak at Hillel and share his poetry with us, as well as speak about his experience as a Jew. Alongside this, we are considering running a Jewish Philosophy book club.

Kalila Courban, Umass

I will be having a showing of the film *The Women's Balcony*. It is an Israeli film in which after a bar mitzvah mishap the women's balcony in the synagogue collapses and the women fall into the men's section. This movie is very relevant when in the discussion about the modern Orthodox perspective on gender roles, feminism and other relevant topics. Following the movie will be a discussion focused around several questions regarding womens' roles in Orthodoxy.

Ari Barbalat, University of Toronto

I gave my first presentation last week. The topic was: "Stories of the Prophets: Islamic and Midrashic Perspectives in a Dialogue of Perspectives."

Synopsis: What similarities and differences exist between the depictions of Biblical heroes in the Jewish and Islamic traditions? I selected themes that underscore both parallels and differences between the sources. What are the differences in ethical perspectives presented in the different religions' literary sources? Where do they agree and disagree in their understandings of virtue and morality?

Devora Chait, Queens College

For our first event, we ran a "Pop-Up Mishmar", where two students gave mini-shiurim followed by a discussion of Rabbi Marc D. Angel's article entitled, "The Problematic Practice of Kapparot." This event is part of an initiative to increase student involvement in their own Torah learning, and "Pop-Up Mishmar" will now be occurring twice each semester.

For our second event, Rabbi Chaim Ozer Chait, Rosh Yeshiva of Migdal HaTorah in Israel, led a lecture and discussion regarding the modern Jewish obligations

surrounding Har HaBayit (Temple Mount). He spoke about the history of Har HaBayit from the times of Tanach through the contemporary era, and we examined the possibilities of Jewish access to Har HaBayit today.