Campus Fellows Report: March 2019

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Rabbi Hayyim Angel
To our members and friends,

Our University Network continues to grow and thrive on campuses throughout North America, and we recently signed up a new member in Bangladesh!

We thank our Campus Fellows, who take leadership roles in developing programming on their campuses to promote the ideas and ideals of our Institute. Here is the latest round of reports from the field.

Thank you to our members and supporters for making this religious and intellectual programming possible during an all-important stage in our students' development!

Rabbi Hayyim Angel
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Yona Benjamin, Columbia

Thus far I have been promoting the Institute and sharing the articles that the Institute produces. Reception has been positive. I hope to have my events after the midterm break. There is the possibility that I will be planning a supplementary event that will take place before a Purim seudah at Columbia (a sort of pre-seudah non-Purim-Torah learning session). I hope to have two events after spring break which focus on creating a reading group for Institute articles which will have discussions over Shabbat meals.

Corey Gold, Harvard
We learned from Sarah Cheses. Sarah will be teaching on “Assisted Reproduction and Gender Selection: Playing G-d?” over lunch Sunday, February 3rd for both our undergraduate community as well as the broader Orthodox community in Cambridge.

Zac Tankel, McGill University

Our first program in the Fall 2018 semester was a discussion group on the topic of morality, ideals, and commandments in Judaism, based on an article in Issue #31 of *Conversations.* The main questions of our discussion concerned G-d as the source of moral knowledge and the reasons for the mitzvot. For our second program, Rabbi Moshe Farkas drove in from Ottawa to lead a discussion on the topic of Jewish business ethics, which included questions related to issues such as interest, loans, and rentals. At both events, the attendees were highly engaged, which made for a deeply interesting and thought-provoking conversation.

I have organized two institute programs so far this semester, and both have gone really well.

The first took place on February 5th, and it was a small discussion group I ran on the topic of the suffering of the righteous, based on a sugya in Brachot 5a. It was a small event, with only six people, but everyone was very engaged, and it made for a wonderful discussion. This is the Facebook event page: https://www.facebook.com/events/377506952810444/

The second event took place on February 26th, and for this one, I partnered with two Jewish groups on campus, Hillel Montreal and the McGill Jewish Studies Students' Association. The event was a shiur by a chazzan from the Chassidic community of Montreal, Baruch Kish, on the Chassidic approach to *gilgul.* We had about fourteen or fifteen people attend. It was very different from most of the Institute programs I've run, but people enjoyed the uniqueness of Baruch's shiur. This is the link to the Facebook event: https://www.facebook.com/events/2215285482044677/

I've been stretching out my budget this semester to try to allow for as many events as possible. My plan for the rest of the semester is to do more discussion groups (like the ones I led on November 1st and February 5th), and possibly another speaker. Two other students have confirmed that they would like to lead discussion groups, so one will be on March 12th (on the topic of financial ethics in Judaism) and the second on March 19th. Another two people have also expressed deep interest in doing so, so they will hopefully be leading sessions on March 26th and April 2nd. I will keep you updated with regards to the upcoming events.

Thank you so much for your support! Options for learning and discussion for Orthodox students are very limited at McGill, so the support from the Institute provides an incredible opportunity for that!

Raphael Levi and Benjamin Nechmad, Rutgers
IJII at Rutgers ran an event co-hosted by the Drisha Institute for Jewish Education which brought in Rabbi Daniel Reifman who spoke about the topic of “When Text and Tradition Collide.”

Ora Friedman, Stern College for Women, Yeshiva University
On December 17, we held an event entitled “The Hows, Whats, and Whys: Conversion to Judaism.” Zahava Schwartz, a GPATs intern for Route 613, which is a comprehensive conversion preparation program geared for students interested in halakhic conversion to Judaism, spoke about her experiences interacting with converts, as well as what the conversion process entails.
Ora Friedman, Stern College for Women, and Yonatan Abrams, Yeshiva College
The event was very successful on Stern campus. Rabbi Hajioff spoke about some issues concerning the end of time. He discussed Rambam's qualifications for who Melech HaMashiach will be, and he spoke about what to expect in a Messianic era. 20 students came, and we pitched the University Network (and I just sent a follow up email with the University Network registration page), we gave out more than 20 journals, and all the pizza was eaten!

Steven Gotlib, Rabbi Isaac Elhanan Theological Seminary, Yeshiva University
On March 5, we hosted a discussion on the topic of “shiurim on buses” which touched on the halachic and interpersonal concerns of the recent Israeli news reports. We bought snacks and had 10 semicha students and members of the young professional community.