View PDF



Rabbi Hayyim Angel

To our members and friends,

We are thrilled to report the ongoing programming of our Campus Fellows throughout the United States and Canada, as we promote our values and content through an inclusive, thoughtful Orthodoxy. Here are the latest reports of our fellows and their programming. We also welcome Eli Hyman of Yeshiva College of Yeshiva University as our latest fellow to join our circle.

Wishing you a wonderful Hanukkah

Rabbi Hayyim Angel

National Scholar

Aryeh Roberts and Mikey Pollack, University of Maryland
We helped coordinate Sermon Slam—UMD's annual Jewish Poetry Slam—and heard a lot of different stories. One person shared their struggles with depression, another on life in Pittsburgh after this year's tragedy, another on their religious struggles—it was a really powerful event.

Zachary Tankel, McGill University
We had a total of five terrific events with the Institute this semester. One was a speech on the Chassidic approach to the concept of gilgul, and the other four were student-led discussion groups, on the topics of the suffering of the righteous, financial ethics, hilchot shemittah, and kavana in mitzvot. In all four discussion groups, everyone attending was very engaged and contributed to a highly interesting conversation and wonderful learning.

The first two events, which I described in my previous email, was a discussion on the topic of the suffering of the righteous, which I led, and a speech on gilgul.

The three events I organized since were discussion groups led by other students. (While someone else prepared the discussions, I organized all the other aspects, including scheduling venues, obtaining food and other necessary items, setting up and cleaning up, and advertising, which I do through Facebook.)

The first of these discussion groups was on March 12th, on the topic of financial ethics in Judaism. We talked about the halachot of selling goods below market price and heter iska, among other things. You can see the event page on Facebook here: https://www.facebook.com/events/1143497409157684/.

The second discussion group was on March 19th. We had an overview of the laws of shemittah, including shvitat haaretz, heter mechira, and kedushat shvi'it. You can see the Facebook event page here: https://www.facebook.com/events/604682016672760/.

The third discussion group was on April 2nd, on the topic of mitzvot and kavana. We discussed the general principle of kavana in mitzvot, mitzvot committed by force or otherwise without intent, and melacha done on Shabbat without the intent of doing the melacha (davar she'eino mitkaven). This is the link to the Facebook event: https://www.facebook.com/events/330596857805341/.

Thank you so much for making possible these events. Ever since OU-JLIC was discontinued in Montreal last year, the programs I organize on behalf of the Institute are, unfortunately, the only learning opportunities in downtown Montreal specifically for Orthodox students. (We do have some knowledgeable non-Orthodox students attend, but the discussions or speeches are always at a level appropriate for Orthodox students, in oppose to learning events hosted by other organizations, which generally have to accommodate less knowledgeable students). Everyone who comes is always engaged and interested in the topic makes for wonderful learning opportunities. Thank you so much for your support!

Ayelet Rubenstein (University of Pennsylvania)
This past semester, I co-hosted a meal for Orthodox students oriented around the topic of Israel. We discussed topics such as our personal connections to Israel, Israel advocacy on college campuses, and what our obligation is to Israel as Modern Orthodox Jews. The dinner led to a thought-provoking discussion about what our relationship with Israel should be on both the individual and communal levels within Modern Orthodoxy.

I also worked with two other students to bring in Rabbi Ethan Tucker, the Rosh Yeshiva and co-founder of Yeshivat Hadar. Rabbi Tucker led a Shiur entitled "Sacred Choices- Pluralism, Integrity, and Community: You Can't Have Them All." Following this event, I engaged my peers in a discussion about the values of these three ideals, and we analyzed which of them we prioritize in Modern Orthodoxy. This dialogue led us to consider how our own personal and communal values manifest in our religious choices.

Sara Evans (Queens)
I just ran an oneg for Queens college students that went to the Hamptons. At the oneg I spoke about the Institute. I gave a short D’var Torah about the parsha (Chayei Sara). In it I brought up the idea of loss and how to cope with it, also we bought up how Hahshem wants us to look forward and seek him out not only looking at the past. We also discussed the idea of how Judaism requires a lot fo faith in the future and in Hashem.
I had my second event on December 2. Rabbi Aryeh Klapper came to speak and his topic was about speaking ill of the dead. The students who came really enjoyed it and found that they were able to be part of the process because Rabbi Klapper went through how this works from the start allowing students to ask questions and make their own revelations regarding the topic. The students requested if Rabbi Klapper could come back and speak again since they enjoyed it immensely.

Raffi Levi and Benjamin Nechmad, Rutgers

We hosted a lunch and learn event based off of Rabbi Marc Angel's recent article on not having an alarmist attitude when confronting the recent antisemitism. It was a very productive discussion and we had 10 people total.

A couple of people brought their own sources that illustrated the main point further.

It is always good to remind people to think rationally and calmly during times of struggle and many of my peers appreciated the lunch.

Marta Dubov (Ryerson)
I am happy to report that a monthly woman's Rosh Chodesh book club has been established, and we have thoroughly enjoyed reading and discussing Conversations, and working to apply the principles to our day-to day lives. Next semester they will resume, hopefully with some new members.

All 18 copies were successfully distributed. 10 to individual students and 5 donated to the Hillel of Ryerson for incoming students to pick up. I have been told there is great interest in them.

Ora Friedman, Stern College for Women, Yeshiva University

The event at Stern College on "The Impact of Jewish Education on Moral Character and Development" was a huge success! I introduced the event by speaking about how my own Jewish Education had a positive impact on my moral character and development, and I encouraged participants of the event to reflect on how their own Jewish Education impacts their moral character and development. Rabbi Chaim Hagler, Head of School of Yeshivat Noam, spoke about how morality is defined based on the ideals of the Torah, and as a result, Jewish Education is the only means to acquiring morality. He spoke about how part of an educator's role is to model moral character and development for his or her students. There were nine students who attended the event, including Yeshivat Noam alumni, students from the Education club at Stern College, and other Stern College students. I received a lot of positive feedback about the event!