

Hillel Names Six New Senior Jewish Educators

Hillel has named six individuals to the position of Senior Jewish Educator for campuses across North America. In this position they will work in collaboration with the Campus Entrepreneur Interns to build relationships with students on the periphery of Jewish life through meaningful Jewish conversations and experiences, including that may include Taglit-Birthright Israel trips, social justice Alternative Breaks, and on-campus learning sessions focused around students' passions and their "big life questions."

With these appointments, Hillel expands the programs from four to ten campuses: UCLA, Berkeley, University of Texas, New York University, University of Kansas, the University of Delaware, University of Pennsylvania, University of Maryland and The Ohio State University, and Tufts University.

The new senior Jewish educators are:



Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg, Tufts University Hillel

Danya, a former atheist who has a unique path to Jewish life and is the author of several books – one chronicling her own Jewish journey and another about to be published called *The Passionate Torah*, was ordained at American Jewish University in California. Ruttenberg also draws from several years building communities and engaging young people in Jewish life through alternative paths when she worked with Kol Zimrah in Jerusalem, Israel, a musically innovative minyan, and the Makor Or Center for Jewish Meditation in San Francisco, Calif.



Rabbi Benjamin Berger, Ohio State University Hillel

Benjamin, who graduated from University of California Santa Cruz and completed his rabbinical studies at Yeshiva at Chovevei Torah in New York, N.Y., is no stranger to Hillel. After graduating from U.C. Santa Cruz, Berger was a former Steinhardt Jewish Campus Service Corps Fellow at Cornell University Hillel and later received the prestigious Berman Fellowship at University of Michigan Hillel, where he worked for two years.



Rabbi James Kahn, University of Maryland Hillel

James, who graduated from University of Florida and completed his rabbinical studies at Hebrew College Rabbinical School in Boston, Mass., is known for his musicality, drumming and interest in Jewish spirituality and mysticism. He has worked for several years developing and implementing curricula in synagogues and Jewish high schools in the Boston area.



Rabbi Jeremy Winaker, University of Delaware Hillel

Jeremy, who was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York, N.Y., has been a congregational rabbi at Bet Torah Synagogue in Mount Kisco, N.Y., for the past five years. He is known for his work engaging congregants and has been dreaming of working in an informal educational setting. A conservative rabbi, Winaker demonstrates vast experience working across denominations of Judaism, a valuable asset for a senior Jewish educator tasked with engaging students with diverse Jewish upbringings.



Rabbi Joel Nickerson, University of Pennsylvania Hillel

Joel, who was ordained at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles, Calif., began his professional career with Hillel at Stanford University, serving as a Steinhardt Jewish Campus Service Corps Fellow working to engage uninvolved Jewish students with the Hillel. After his two year fellowship at Stanford, he decided to attend rabbinical school and continued to work with Jewish youth during rabbinic internships at several synagogues in California. Nickerson has a magnetic personality and love of learning, a valuable asset for a senior Jewish educator.



Rabbi Neal Schuster, University of Kansas Hillel

Neal, a congregational rabbi at B'nai Jehudah in Overland Park, Kan., for the past five years, was ordained at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles, Calif. Schuster is known for building meaningful relationships with congregants, and breaking the usual rabbi stereotypes. He is also a favorite Florence Melton Adult Mini-School educator in the Kansas City Jewish community.

The following four educators are returning for a second year:



Rabbi Daniel Smokler, Bronfman Center for Jewish Life/Hillel at New York University

The initial educator who piloted the SJE concept at UCLA, Dan, is a talented and charismatic Jewish educator, whose background in community organizing gives him the ability to relate to a wide variety of people, and to be strategic and deliberate in his relationship building. Intellectually, his interest in art history, philosophy and Jewish text gives him a deep Jewish knowledge and intellectual curiosity that has allowed him to create accessible and relevant educational sessions for students who are not already part of the Jewish community. Dan has orthodox rabbinic ordination and is able to relate to students who range from orthodox to unaffiliated backgrounds.



Rabbi David Kasher, Hillel at the University of California, Berkeley

David graduated with rabbinical ordination from the orthodox Yeshivat Chovevei Torah in 2007 and worked initially at a school in the San Francisco Bay area. His internship at the Hillel of the University of Chicago, while he was in rabbinical school, whetted his appetite for work with college students and he is interested in investing his professional energies in this age group. David's own Jewish background is diverse and fascinating (half of his family are Satmar Chasidim and the other half are secular liberal Jews) and allows him to relate to Jews of all backgrounds in order to be an authentic role model for students. He brings a deep knowledge of Torah and a questioning intellectual approach to all he does.



Devora Yellin Brustin, Hillel at the University of Texas in Austin

Devora is an accomplished informal and family Jewish education specialist, with a particular interest in theater arts and creative Jewish experiences. Most recently Devora and her family have been based in Tucson, AZ, where she worked as a family educator and informal education specialist in a wide variety of Jewish frameworks, including Camp Ramah, where she provided teacher training, family education and thematic activities for all ages.



Rabbi Brett Krichiver – University of California, Los Angeles Hillel

Brett brings both his love of theatre and Talmud study to life for students. Raised with exposure to a diverse array of Jewish perspectives including an orthodox day school education, Reform camp and the Reconstructionist *havurah* movement, Brett appreciates the diversity of Jewish life and also relates to those questioning their identity. During college, Brett turned away from Jewish life entirely to immerse himself in theatre and explore other interests. Returning to his Jewish roots after college, he worked for Hillel in Colorado before entering rabbinical school. Brett comes to his role after serving the past three years as a congregational rabbi.

These positions are made possible through a generous grant from the Jim Joseph Foundation and additional support from the David and Inez Meyers Foundation. Hillel, serving more than 500 campuses and communities, is the world's largest Jewish campus organization. Its mission is to enrich the lives of Jewish undergraduate and graduate students so that they may enrich the Jewish people and the world.