Dear Friends:

During difficult times, it is hard to imagine that one individual's capacity to take action can make a difference. But the Rabbis understood that even the smallest act of hessed, social responsibility, can change the world. After the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E., the Rabbis who succeeded the prophets and priests as the leaders of the Jewish community were able to bring comfort and vision. They pointed to Torah as the core of Jewish experience and the source of values with which to address and surmount the challenges of a destabilized community.

Their teachings, compiled in the Pirke Avot, inspired textile artist Peachy Levy’s “One Mitzvah Draws Another Mitzvah” on the cover of this Annual Report. Levy chose the pomegranate to illustrate Rabbi Ben Azzai’s words – “Run to fulfill a slight mitzvah as if it were a weighty one...for one good deed brings forth another” – because the biblical fruit is said to contain 613 seeds, the number of mitzvot in the Torah, and expresses the infinite possibility of individual acts of goodness that can transform our world.

Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkai’s response to the crisis of 1st-century Judaism was to create the yeshiva of Yavneh, recognizing that the study of Torah would ensure Jewish survival. His response to the Temple's destruction was the pragmatic agenda of developing the scholars and leaders who would sustain and transmit our ethics and tradition. His vision held true, for no Jewish community throughout history has thrived without a strong center of higher Jewish learning.

Ben Azzai’s optimism and Ben Zakkai’s pragmatic activism lie at the heart of our mission at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Our students and alumni are builders of a vibrant Judaism, imbued with the commitment to social justice, scholarship, pastoral care, inclusivity, innovation, creativity, and spiritual strength. They extend HUC-JIR’s mission in communities large and small throughout North America, Western Europe, the Former Soviet Union, Israel, and around the world.

Our mission has been fulfilled during the 2007-08 academic year through a myriad of academic programs, faculty initiatives, and research resources.

In February we celebrated the conclusion of the College-Institute’s first capital campaign; we raised close to $145 million and exceeded our goal by $10 million. The campaign enabled us to increase scholarship support by over $13 million for our students; to endow 9 new chairs for senior faculty and young emerging scholars; to enhance the academic, intellectual, cultural and religious life of the College-Institute through new programs and innovative centers and institutes; to employ cutting edge technologies for both the academic enterprise and the improvement of business, administrative, and student management functions; and to improve the quality of life on our campuses with building and renovation projects, including the new Edwin Malloy Education Building of the American Jewish Archives and a state-of-the-art renovation and expansion of the Klau Library. The funds raised in this historic campaign enabled HUC-JIR to further the goals of our strategic plan emphasizing academic excellence, financial sustainability, and the integration of our four campuses into one institution.

Through a generous gift from Burt and Gerry Belzer we now have electronic classrooms on each of our campuses. These classrooms, which are in constant demand, are facilitating faculty coordination, collaboration, and team-teaching, and are already expanding the student learning experience, enhancing faculty scholarship, and promoting excellence in all of our academic programs. Notably, Drs. Tamara Eskanazi and Andrea Weiss are teaching a class in Bible using the newly published Torah: A Woman’s Commentary for 4th- and 5th-year rabbinical students in New York and Los Angeles (see page 10).

We have welcomed new members of our administration: Deborah Abelson and Shena Potter Jaffee as Regional Directors of Admissions and Recruitment; J. Thomas Brown as National Registrar; Sheri Sable as Director of Development, Midwest Region; Adam Greenwald as Assistant Director of Development and Public Affairs, Western Region; Rivka Ben Daniel as Educational Director of DeLeT in Los Angeles; and Julie Pelc as Assistant Director of the Kalsman Institute in Los Angeles.

We have renewed our faculty with gifted emerging scholars who will strengthen the teaching and mentorship on all of our campuses: In Los Angeles, Rabbi Joshua Garroway, Ph.D. has been appointed Assistant Professor of Early Christianity and Second Commonwealth and Dr. Leah Hochman is the newly named Assistant Professor of Jewish Thought. They are joined by Dr. Meir Seidler, HUC-JIR’s first Visiting Professor of Israel Studies through a generous gift from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, Lief Rosenblatt, and Robin and Elliott Broidy (see page 22).

Supported by a challenge gift from Joseph Neubauer, Chairman of Aramark, we raised $1.5 million and named a chair in Jewish Communal Service in honor of our rabbi and teacher and former President of HUC-JIR, Chancellor Emeritus Alfred Gottschalk.
President’s Message (continued from page 1)

We have broken ground in Cincinnati for the $12 million Klau Library Renovation and Expansion Project and will construct a new "Library Pavilion" to house library collections, administrative offices, and exhibition space for treasures from the rare book collection.

We have admitted 95 students (30 stateside rabbinical, 10 Israeli rabbinical, 10 cantorial, 10 education, 6 communal service, 10 Doctor of Ministry, 5 Ph.D., 3 Doctor of Hebrew Letters, and 11 DeLeT certificate program participants), and we are proud to have 41 first-year students at our Jerusalem campus, where they are studying side-by-side with 24 Israeli rabbinical students.

We have ordained 55 new stateside rabbis and 6 Israeli rabbis, invested 6 cantors, graduated 10 communal service professionals and 26 Jewish educators and bestowed 105 Master’s and Doctoral degrees on students in our graduate and professional programs. At Ordination in Jerusalem, we presented certificates to the first class of Mezorim, a program of the Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Center for Pastoral Counseling. Eleven pioneers, including rabbis, medical and mental health professionals, and educators, are helping to define Jewish religious outreach, grounded in the values of the Reform Movement (see page 18).

We have continued to raise funds for scholarships to attract the best and the brightest. Through the generosity of Ruth Ziegler’s $1 million endowment, we will create 4 new scholarships for communal service students (see page 13). Mrs. Harriet Stern of Memphis endowed a scholarship for a rabbinical student and named it in memory of her great-grandfather, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise.

We offered a rich and varied program in leadership for our Tisch and Mandel Fellows, and selected the second cohort of students to receive these prestigious fellowships. Tisch and Mandel Fellows were joined by the first cohort of Schusterman Rabbinical Fellows, a ground-breaking interdenominational five-year pilot program for rabbinical students at HUC-JIR and the Jewish Theological Seminary, sponsored by the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation. Faculty and students on the Los Angeles campus have benefited from study with four artists – Peachy Levy, Andrea Hodos, Judith Margolis, and Stacie Chaiken – in the Artist-in-Residence Program to Enhance Jewish Education, partially funded by the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Los Angeles.

In New York the HUC-JIR Museum presented a diverse array of exhibitions, covering a broad span of Jewish history and experience, including "Rosalyn Engelman: Dry Tears," “Peachy Levy: Threads of Judaism,” “Elements of Alchemy: Prints by Paul Weissman,” “10-6-73 – The Yom Kippur War: Photographs by Tom Heyman, and "Albanian Muslim Rescuers During the Holocaust: Photographs by Norman Gershman.” Faculty and students on the Los Angeles campus have benefited from study with four artists – Peachy Levy, Andrea Hodos, Judith Margolis, and Stacie Chaiken – in the Artist-in-Residence Program to Enhance Jewish Education, partially funded by the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Los Angeles.

In Israel we inaugurated a two-year Master’s Program in Pluralistic Jewish Education, HUC-JIR’s first partnership with Hebrew University, and recruited 17 women and men who are working in Israeli public schools and other educational venues. Initial funding for this groundbreaking program was provided by Richard Scheuer, z’l, his wife Joan, and their family, and the Chais Family Foundation.

We have accomplished all this through remarkable gains in our development effort. This year we raised over $25 million – $19 million in cash and an additional $6 million in pledges – to ensure the vibrancy of our programs and our ongoing commitment to excellence in educating Jewish leaders.

In conclusion, we at the College-Institute are the heirs of Ben Azzai’s optimism and Ben Zakkai’s pragmatism. Our goal is clear. The future of Jewish leadership in the United States, Israel, and throughout the world depends upon our ability to maintain our programs, faculty, and resources to produce the next generations of educated, dedicated, empathetic, and caring clergy, educators, and heads of Jewish communal institutions and organizations.

With your generous help, we can and will fulfill this mandate. Thank you for supporting the training of the kinds of Jewish leaders that are so sorely needed during challenging times, so that our children and grandchildren will be the beneficiaries of the wisdom, tradition, culture, and values that provide infinite moral, intellectual, and spiritual fortitude to tackle the real world.

Let us continue to work together, and strengthen each other, as partners in this sacred task.

Rabbi David Ellenson, President
February 2009 / Shevat 5769
Jewish survival is not an abstraction to Leona Aronoff-Sadacca. Her parents and 18-month-old brother fled Nazi Germany in 1933 when warned of impending arrest by the Nazis and settled in France, where she was born in Tours in 1937. When the Nazis invaded France, her father joined the French Resistance, and she and her mother and brother were rescued by a Catholic farmer, who hid them on his farm in the countryside near Bellac.

In her memoir, Leona Aronoff-Sadacca recalls the extraordinary effort her religiously observant parents made for her brother, Lou, to become a bar mitzvah. Her father smuggled a small Torah from Limoges back to Bellac, where a young, frightened rabbi tutored Lou. The service took place in a bombed-out bakery. “Although we could have been discovered and perhaps killed for being Jewish, the bar mitzvah was an important part of our heritage and one that we felt compelled to acknowledge.”

She considers her family “lucky and grateful” to have survived and to have been able to build a new life in the United States. They settled in Los Angeles where Leona met and married Jack Aronoff, with whom she spent forty blessed years. They raised two sons, Barry, who is now involved in the family business of philanthropy, and Randy, who died of a congenital heart condition as a teenager. After Jack died, Leona successfully took over the family business, Gate City Beverage, where her strategic vision and winning leadership style achieved record-high growth in revenues, facilities, and employees.

In 2002 Leona married Joe Sadacca, a business mentor who had been a prisoner of war in Germany during World War II. Today, she is the proud grandmother of three grandchildren and approaches life with energy and optimism. Her commitment to ensuring the Jewish future, shared by Joe, is a source of inspiration.

She was first introduced to HUC-JIR by Rabbi Hillel Cohn, her spiritual leader for over thirty years at Temple Emanu-El of San Bernardino. She honored Rabbi Cohn with an endowed rabbinical student scholarship at the College-Institute as part of a group gift of which she was the major donor. “As we raised our children, everything in our community revolved around the temple,” she recalls. “Today, I see Judaism at risk due to the things that are happening in the world. During difficult times, people gravitate back to their synagogues and rabbis. I want to make sure that rabbis are well prepared to further the Jewish religion. By supporting the teaching of Judaism’s values, traditions, and beliefs, I hope I can make a difference.”

To that end, she has donated $1 million to endow the Leona Aronoff Rabbinic Mentoring Program at HUC-JIR, where she is a member of the Los Angeles Board of Overseers. As a highly accomplished business woman in an industry historically dominated by men, she understands the challenges of entering a new professional field and pursuing excellence – as well as the need for expert guidance to attain success. The Leona Aronoff Rabbinic Mentoring Program will convene faculty and rabbinical mentors to develop an interactive training program for rabbis serving as mentors. This program will focus on mentoring skills, professional development, supervision of field placements, and coaching – all linked to the rabbinical core curriculum, and integrate the benefits of technology in providing video demonstrations, reporting and evaluation, and other
resources. The goal is a cadre of 100 mentors for all of HUC-JIR’s professional development activities, ranging from summer residencies, year-long internships, pastoral counseling, student pulpits, and post-ordination practice. Developed and tested initially in Los Angeles, the program will grow to encompass mentors serving all of HUC-JIR’s stateside campuses.

“The Leona Aronoff Rabbinic Mentoring Program will enable us to transfer knowledge learned in the classroom to the very real issues that confront rabbis every day in their congregations, and will afford them the practical skills to address these issues with intelligence, sensitivity, and effectiveness,” said Rabbi David Ellenson. “I believe that the integration of HUC-JIR’s rabbinical curriculum with a serious and well-executed mentoring program provides a compelling resolution to the key contemporary concerns of widespread intermarriage, the growth of secularism, the loss of honesty and integrity in our society, and the threat of radical Islam. Rabbinical leadership must be capable of outreach to the intermarried and non-affiliated, well-versed in comparative religion, committed to social action and economic justice, and schooled in pastoral counseling and rabbinical practice.”

The Wall Street Journal recently reported that “the traditional mentoring arrangement just doesn’t work anymore.” Organizational behavior experts advocate for the need to go beyond one-on-one relationships, and point to the added value of creating and cultivating ever-changing and growing networks of senior as well as peer mentors, and of building relationships both within and outside of a single environment. Such mentoring relationships offer reciprocal benefits to all involved, and result in enhanced performance, learning, innovation, and leadership capacity. The Leona Aronoff Rabbinic Mentoring Program will transform and strengthen Reform rabbinical leadership and help ensure the continuity of the Jewish faith that Leona Aronoff-Sadacca holds so dear.
October 28, 1965 stands as a landmark date in the history of Jewish-Catholic relations. On that date, the Second Vatican Council, in response to a call put forth by Pope John Paul XXIII, issued a statement on Jews and Judaism, Nostra Aetate.

This document provided a positive assessment of the role played by the Jewish people throughout history and decisively repudiated anti-Semitism. The spirit of openness and dialogue found in its pages contained a promise of hope and reconciliation, as well as a recognition of the common heritage that forged both the Church and the Synagogue. This document marked the advent of a new era in Catholic-Jewish relations, and the spirit of ecumenism, religious tolerance, and appreciation that marked its pages opened new avenues for Jewish-Catholic dialogue and cooperation.

In the years that have passed since Nostra Aetate was written, both HUC-JIR and Xavier University (XU) have attempted to build on the promise and possibility that the document provided. Xavier and HUC-JIR have on occasion exchanged faculty, allowed and encouraged students at one institution to study at the other in fields as disparate as education and business administration, and worked together on exhibitions and common projects that testify to the presence of God's grace in our midst. It is with the conviction that both the Catholic and Jewish traditions require that we do the work of the Divine in this world that an exciting and unprecedented partnership between this great Catholic university and this venerable Jewish seminary has been created.

XU and HUC-JIR have embarked upon a groundbreaking collaboration – the first of its kind between a Jewish seminary and a Jesuit university – to create a Jewish and Interfaith Studies Program that will be offered to undergraduates at Xavier and to rabbinical and graduate students at HUC-JIR. The creation of this joint program in Jewish and Interfaith Studies will allow for the rich human and intellectual treasures and programs that exist at each of these schools of higher education to enrich the lives of both. This unique collaboration symbolizes the transformational visions and shared values of the institutions’ two presidents, Father Michael Graham and Rabbi David Ellenson.

“This partnership can serve as a beacon to all persons in Cincinnati and beyond as to how these religious traditions can and do promote the life-affirming qualities inherent in each,” said Rabbi Ellenson. “It will provide a potent assertion that what unites Catholics and Jews as persons of faith is far more significant than those issues that differentiate us, for each tradition and its adherents seek to worship and serve God.”

The lead gift for this initiative is an inaugural gift of $750,000 from the Macy’s Foundation, which was announced on September 4, 2008, when Tom Cody, Macy’s Divisional Vice Chairman, met with Father Graham and Rabbi David Ellenson. Don Stone, Governor Emeritus, has also supported this groundbreaking project.

A Steering Committee consisting of HUC-JIR and XU faculty and administration will determine annual course offerings at both institutions and oversee assessment of courses and instructors, consistent with the two institutions’ policies and procedures. The first phase of the program, which began during the 2008-09 academic year, has
HUC-JIR faculty teaching undergraduate courses in Jewish Studies, thus enabling XU to establish a minor in Jewish Studies. Many courses to be offered during the next years – including Jewish theology, Jewish Biblical interpretation, literary theory and criticism, Rabbinic literature, Jewish history, Jewish belief, practice, worship and ritual, ethics, Biblical archaeology, and Biblical Hebrew – are interdisciplinary and some will be team-taught by XU and HUC-JIR faculty. XU students will have full access to the extensive holdings of HUC-JIR’s Klau Library and American Jewish Archives.

The second phase of the program will begin in the 2009-2010 academic year, when XU faculty will teach or participate in a number of courses in HUC-JIR’s School of Graduate Studies. XU faculty will be invited to assist with the guidance of doctoral dissertations and comprehensive exams.

Through this program, HUC-JIR’s and XU’s faculty will develop dynamic and collegial partnerships as teachers and mentors who will nurture ecumenical understanding among their students and impart the wisdom of both faiths. In doing so, the promise inherent in Nostra Aetate will find concrete expression, and the messianic promise that lies at the heart of both traditions will find fuller realization.

Additionally, HUC-JIR is in the nascent stages of creating yet another scholarly collaboration with the University of Cincinnati (UC). When completed, this joint venture, linking HUC-JIR’s faculty, the Klau Library, and the American Jewish Archives with Xavier and UC, will position the Cincinnati campus as one of the most prestigious centers of Jewish and Interfaith Studies worldwide, offering an unparalleled scope, depth, and breadth of academic excellence. Furthermore, the enhancement of the campus’s technological infrastructure of eLearning-classrooms and online resources will extend the courses and curriculum created through these partnerships throughout the College-Institute’s centers of learning in Los Angeles, New York, and Jerusalem.
It is 9:20 a.m. and 13 students in Room 013 in Los Angeles are facing their six classmates in Room 507, three hours later in New York, courtesy of the video conferencing technology in the brand new eLearning-classrooms on these two campuses made possible by the generous support of Gerry and Burt Belzer. These 4th- and 5th-year rabbinical students are inaugurating the first ever Bible cross-campus course at HUC-JIR and advancing the College-Institute’s entry into the 21st century.

Team-taught by Dr. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Dr. Andrea Weiss, co-editors of the groundbreaking publication *The Torah: A Women’s Commentary*, “Introduction to Modern Torah Commentaries in Context” examines the *Women’s Commentary* in light of ten other modern Torah commentaries, including Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox ones. “As students analyze a range of Torah texts and Torah commentaries, with attention to historical context, hermeneutics, goals, audience, and reception of each commentary, they are strengthening skills and further developing their own approach to, and interpretation of, the Torah,” explains Dr. Weiss.

*Dr. Andrea Weiss, Assistant Professor of Bible, and students at HUC-JIR/New York and (on the screen) Dr. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, Professor of Bible, and students at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles, participating in the first ever cross-campus Bible course at HUC-JIR utilizing eLearning classrooms.*
Each student has been designated to present, and be the ongoing representative of, a specific commentary – Hirsch, Hertz, Plaut, *Etz Chayim*, Stone, Friedman, Alter, Fox, and others – in addition to using *The Torah: A Women’s Commentary* as an ongoing commentary. Today it is Rachael Bregman’s and Joshua Samuels’s turn to teach their classmates about the early twentieth century Hertz *Pentateuch*, offering an overview of Hertz’s biography, the history and context of his commentary, and his goals as an interpreter of Biblical text.

As Barbara Lehman of the eLearning Department manipulates documents on the Smartboard (an electronic “blackboard” shared by both campuses), the two students – 3,000 miles apart – take turns sharing their research. Bregman describes Hertz’s goal of bridging an emotional connection to Judaism with the discoveries of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (the scientific study of Judaism). She tells how Hertz’s commentary reflects the influence of contemporaneous archaeological excavations, how it was assembled from the work of a small number of pulpit rabbi contributors who were skilled in teaching, and how the multi-volume set only became popular when Soncino published it as a single volume. Samuels talks about how Hertz wanted to defend traditional Judaism at a time of growing self-hatred and assimilation by appealing to the teachings of ethical values and *halakhah* (Jewish law) and encouraging Jews to take back the study of the Bible and to use his commentary in the pews. Together, they discuss Hertz’s interpretation of Genesis 32:23-33, and 34:1-4 – when Jacob wrestles with the angel and changes his name – and explain how Hertz characterizes both events as victorious.

Then the class shifts gears as Professor Weiss in New York asks the class to break down into small *chevruta* (study partner) groups to analyze the text of parashat Yitro in the context of an article by Harvey Meirovich. Once the groups have completed their work sheets, they share their answers. The class discussion encompasses a wide range of issues: the threat within posed by liberal Judaism, the threat without posed by biblical criticism, the defense of divine authorship and the historicity of revelation, the focus on Bible study for the spiritual lives of Jews, and the notion of accepting truth from whatever source it comes, noting that Hertz used both Jewish and non-Jewish sources in his commentary.

Professors Eskenazi and Weiss call upon each student by name, and the high definition cameras and ceiling microphones allow everyone to be easily seen and heard. When the class takes a short break, 4th-year rabbinical student Noam Katz shows everyone a photo of his newborn baby. These classmates may be separated by space and time, but are linked in a shared spirit of kinship and friendship.

When the class resumes, Dr. Eskenazi in Los Angeles engages the class in a discussion of the story of Dinah, comparing the translations of Genesis 34:2 in the diverse commentaries. There is an animated discussion of the words used in the translations, and as Dr. Eskenazi circles these words on the Smartboard in Los Angeles, the circles appear on the Smartboard in New York. Melissa Zalkin Stollman comments on the political implications of language; Emma Gottlieb points out the commentator’s euphemistic concern for the reader’s sensibilities; and Reuben Zellman reflects on the use of language to describe Dinah’s role in the event. Dr. Eskenazi asks the students to read aloud from *The Torah: A Women’s Commentary* on this text, which points out that Dinah never speaks and offers different ways to understand what happens to her.

Each student brings his/her own perspective to the discussion, sharing the insights of the commentary that she/he has selected to focus on throughout the semester. The students pull up their notes on their laptops and log onto Sakai (HUC-JIR’s collaborative learning environment) to access reference materials. The classroom interaction is the continuation of online conversations, or cyber *sichot*, that take place before the class as small

*The Smartboard (electronic ‘blackboard’) brings Dr. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi (on left screen, at right) and the Los Angeles students into the New York classroom, together with one of the texts that is the subject for discussion in this cross-campus Bible class.*
groups of three students across the campuses post answers to a fixed set of questions and discuss with each other that week's assignment. At the end of the class, Dr. Eskenazi “sits down” with the New York students for an informal conversation and feedback.

Professors Weiss and Eskenazi worked from April through August to develop the syllabus for this groundbreaking course, while collaborating with the National Director of eLearning, Gregg Alpert, to develop and incorporate a range of appropriate and meaningful educational technologies into the course’s structure. Throughout the semester, they “meet” twice a week to go over the next class, prepare the class assignments on the Smartboard, and choreograph their team-teaching. While it takes some time to adapt to the technology, both Dr. Eskenazi and Dr. Weiss are enthusiastic about the many new opportunities the e-classroom offers in transforming the learning experience and integrating students across the campuses.

As Dr. Eskenazi points out, “This course is not only an opportunity for students to learn how best to benefit from *The Torah: A Women’s Commentary* and other major modern Torah commentaries. Students are learning also how to teach Bible to a community of learners, and are experiencing and practicing how to teach in front of the camera, how to use the Smartboard and other electronic media, and how to facilitate conversation with classmates on the other coast. In this way, the course is empowering the next generation of Jewish professionals to embrace technology in creative and effective ways.”

The potential for video-conference teaching in Smartclassrooms is enormous. When Professors Eskenazi and Weiss presented a demonstration of this class for the HUC-JIR Board of Governors, Rosanne M. Selfon, President of the Women of Reform Judaism, publisher of the *Commentary* with the URJ Press, noted “The WRJ would love to have this capacity to teach about the *Women’s Torah Commentary* to our Sisterhood groups throughout North America!”
Supporting Professional Leaders for the Community

The community relies on exceptional professional leaders to head the institutions, agencies, and organizations of Jewish life – from the local Federations and their networks of social service agencies supporting the needs of Jews of all generations and economic strata to the communal, cultural, and educational centers enriching and sustaining Jewish identity. These leaders – schooled in social work, synagogue management, public and arts administration, gerontology, communications management and business administration – are the products of HUC-JIR’s School of Jewish Communal Service (SJCS).

“Ruth Ziegler is a visionary philanthropist who understands and appreciates the critical role that Jewish professional leaders play in advancing the agenda of the American Jewish community,” says Richard A. Siegel, Interim Director of the SJCS.

“The complexity of Jewish organizational management requires professional leaders with increasing levels of business skills and sophisticated understanding of Judaism and the Jewish community. Ruth Ziegler’s generous contribution to the School of Jewish Communal Service provides critical support and encouragement for the next generation’s Jewish professional leaders.”

Mrs. Ziegler, along with the Ziegler Family Trust, has committed to a gift of $1 million to provide full tuition scholarships for up to four students, to be known as Ziegler Scholars. This follows a gift of $500,000, which endowed the SJCS’s Scholar-in-Residence program in memory of her beloved father and esteemed HUC-JIR alumnus Rabbi Louis Bernstein, z”l, who was ordained in Cincinnati in 1906. Mrs. Ziegler’s newest gift establishes a “virtu-al endowment,” which commits 6% or $60,000 annually from a $1 million fund that she set aside for the benefit of HUC-JIR. The full $1 million will come to HUC-JIR as a bequest to permanently endow these scholarships. The College-Institute is deeply grateful to Mrs. Ziegler, not only for her generosity, but also for introducing a new model of giving.

Mrs. Ziegler is helping to offset the high cost of tuition for future communal service professionals. Most students at the SJCS enroll in dual degree programs with the University of Southern California, in a unique academic partnership with HUC-JIR’s Los Angeles campus – a partnership that makes the SJCS program highly desirable in the field of professional training. These students make the commitment to register in both schools and enroll in expanded coursework, and pay tuition and fees to both institutions. SJCS students emerge from their studies with an average debt of $50,000. For those Ziegler Scholars, this scholarship support allows them to begin their careers more focused on their work than their debt.

“I am deeply committed to the School of Jewish Communal Service and to the leadership of Rabbi David Ellenson. I am pleased to enable future generations of communal service professionals to pursue their transformational work,” said Mrs. Ziegler.

The SJCS, founded in 1968 by Professor Gerald Bubis, is the oldest and most diverse professional school of its kind. The School’s emphasis on providing students with insights into management and business skills as well as organizational theory and practice has placed this program in a leadership role. Its outstanding reputation is based on an interdisciplinary approach that combines study of Jewish tradition and text with pragmatic, effective tools from the fields of the social sciences and business.

Mrs. Ziegler and her inspirational gift ensure that the Jewish community will continue to thrive with the leadership of communal professionals deeply steeped in Jewish knowledge and values and proficient in best practices.
Six Israeli Progressive rabbis were ordained at the Academic Convocation held on the HUC-JIR/Jerusalem campus on November 14, 2008. These new rabbis strengthen the cadre of 59 rabbinical pioneers working to create a contemporary Judaism that speaks to the values and lifestyle of modern Israelis. Through their efforts, the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) is gaining ground and furthering religious pluralism in the Jewish state.

The first son of a Reform woman rabbi ever to be ordained, Daniel Alexander Meyer took his first steps toward ordination in Jerusalem at the age of eight, while his father, Dr. Michael Meyer, Ochs Professor of Jewish History, was teaching at HUC-JIR/Jerusalem and his mother, Margaret Meyer, was studying in the Year-In-Israel Program. At his bar mitzvah service at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati, he announced his intention to make aliyah and at the age of sixteen, Daniel represented the American Jewish community in the World Bible Quiz for Jewish youth on Israel’s thirtieth independence day, winning eighth place. He was active in the Reform youth movement in the U.S. and in the Zionist movement Habonim throughout his teens. At the age of nineteen, after completing a year’s studies at Columbia University, Daniel moved to Israel, and worked as a youth leader. After serving in a command position in Nahal (Israel Defense Forces infantry brigade), Daniel made his home on Kibbutz Lotan, where he coordinated date-growing activities, developed the progressive Jewish education system, supervised Noar Telem (the youth movement of the IMPJ), organized Jewish studies for the adult members of the kibbutz, and helped to lead Jewish lifecycle ceremonies. He studied Jewish history in the Open University, completing a B.A. degree cum laude, and earned his M.A. in Jewish history in the Mishnaic and Talmudic period at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Daniel began his rabbinical studies in 2002 with the encouragement of Rabbi Meir Azari and Rabbi Yehoram Mazor. He worked for over three years as a student rabbi in Achvat Israel Congregation in Rishon Lezion and wrote his rabbinical thesis on “Each Generation and Its Exegesists.” He is currently beginning to work in Ra’anana Congregation as a member of the team led by Rabbi Tamar Kohlberg.

Talia Avnon-Benvenisti was born in Kibbutz Hemdya in the Beit Shean Valley, completed her military service in the Air Force, and served as an educational emissary in summer camps in North America under the auspices of the Education Department of the Jewish Agency for Israel. After receiving her B.A. in Education and Social Sciences at Beit Berl College, she joined the Ya’adim Institute for the Management of Knowledge in Education, where she helped write several curricula and books. In 2003 Talia joined the educational staff at the Jewish Agency’s Institute for Youth Leaders from Abroad, counseling groups and promoting the professional development of diaspora Jewish youth leaders. She completed her M.A. in the fields of Bible and Midrash, cum laude, at the Shechter Institute last year. During her rabbinical studies, Talia established the field of school programs for the Education Department of Beit Daniel, which today provides Jewish enrichment for thirty schools in the Tel Aviv region, and was appointed director of that Department. Talia’s rabbinical thesis discusses the development of new prayers intended for modern, secular Jews, and for believers who seek to enrich the language of prayer.

(continued on page 18)
While studying at Ben Shemen Youth Village in 1985, Nir Cohen began to attend the Reform youth movement Tsofei Telem, where he encountered a religious experience very different from the ancient traditions of the Iraqi, Persian, and Jerusalemite communities he had inherited from his parents and family. After completing his military service in the Intelligence Corps, his enchantment with the desert landscapes of the northern Negev mountains led him to continue to live in this area, working as a desert tourism guide, a jeep driver, and occasionally as a shepherd. Nir studied at the School of Social Sciences at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, completing B.A. and M.A. degrees in the fields of sociology, education, social anthropology, and international relations. He served as a student fellow in the Minerva Center for Human Rights, alongside students from other countries around the Mediterranean who were seeking sustainable solutions to sea pollution. After joining the Israeli Rabbinical Program, Nir became a member of Har-El Congregation, where he performed much of his professional development work. He also served as a rabbinical counselor for Noar Telem and as the rabbi of Kibbutz Yahel. While working for many years as an educator and administrator in the Joint Institute for Jewish Studies, he became convinced of the vital need for dialogue between the different streams in

Reform rabbis, social workers, educators, and nurses are among the first generation of Israeli pastoral caregivers – Mezorim – to be trained at HUC-JIR’s innovative Blaustein Center for Pastoral Care in Jerusalem. The first cohort of Mezorim received their certificates at the Academic Convocation in Jerusalem on November 14, 2008. These eleven pioneers are helping to redefine Jewish religious outreach, grounded in the values and mission of the Reform Movement, and will have an impact on the lives of many, through their capacity to comfort, counsel, and care. A brief survey of their placements offers an insight into their role as innovators who are introducing the role of chaplain to Israeli society and as catalysts for pastoral care in Israel (from left to right):

1. Miriam Gues Taoub, a registered nurse, works in orthopedic rehabilitation at the Sheba Hospital in a position funded by UJA-Federation of New York;
2. Saralee Kasel, a registered nurse, offers pastoral care in the oncology department at Soroko Hospital in Beersheva;
3. Debi Pinto-Cohen provides home care through the General Ill Fund and works with the support group at Congregation Kol Haneshama;
4. Iris Solomon offers solace and care through the Tishkofet Organization for cancer patients and their families, and provides staff support and enrichment for its volunteers at its Zichron Yaakov branch;
5. Ariella Vogel works in the head injury rehabilitation department at Sheba Hospital in a position funded by UJA-Federation of New York as well as with the Chaverut Project and Hadassah Hospital;
6. Gila Cohen works in the Beit Levenstin Rehabilitation Hospital, the Beit Hashemesh Senior Home, and in the Special Needs Bar/Bat Mitzvah project of the Masorti Movement;
7. Gidi Sand is an educator, able to lead support groups in community settings through Beit Midrash study, in which Biblical texts, coupled with creative writing and group dynamic techniques, offer opportunities for spiritual and personal encounter.
8. Rabbi Miri Gold is a chaplain in the oncology department at Kaplan Hospital and its home support for patients as well as for her Congregation Birkat Shalom;
9. Rabbi Stacey Blank is serving her new congregation Darchai Noam in Ramat Hasharon;
10. Avigail Eitam, a psychologist, is still a full-time rabbinical student;
11. Rabbi Kinneret Shiryon (not pictured) has worked in home hospice care and is now concentrating on the needs of her growing Congregation Yozma.
Judaism. In recent years, Nir has been active in frameworks promoting intercultural and interfaith dialogue, particularly in the context of the Jewish-Palestinian conflict. He works as a teaching fellow in Prime, a research institute, and is beginning his tenure as the rabbi at the Neve Hannah institution in Kiryat Gat.

**Orna Piltz** was raised and educated in the Neve Magen neighborhood of Ramat Hasharon, which at the time was populated by families serving in the Army. The Yom Kippur War and War of Attrition were formative influences. After a year of study at Bruria College in Jerusalem, she served as a teacher-soldier in Moshav Sde Trumot in the Beit Shean Valley and as a brigade education officer in the north. Upon completing her military service, Orna returned to Jerusalem, received her B.A. in English Literature at the Hebrew University, and worked as a teacher, journalist covering women’s issues, and award-winning writer of essays and stories for adults and children. In 2000 she moved to Beit Daniel and took on the position of program director. During her rabbinical studies, Orna taught in Beit Midrash programs in IMPJ congregations, at community centers, and at Alma College, where she previously had taught lifecycle ceremonies and edited the book *Toward Marriage*. She was awarded her M.A. in Comparative Literature at Tel Aviv University in 2004. Over the past two years, she has concentrated mainly on leading groups for mothers and daughters about to become *b’not mitzvah* – a program for the IMPJ’s Education Department that she has been introducing to teachers and implementing at schools, and which provided the subject for her rabbinical thesis. During her final year of rabbinical studies, she joined the staff of the HUC-JIR Education Department and taught in the Israeli Rabbinical Program. As a rabbi, she seeks to continue to develop study groups relating to women’s lifecycle.

**Oshrat Morag** was exposed to a pluralistic Jewish heritage combined with profound Zionist commitment through the diverse background of her Orthodox maternal grandparents and her father’s upbringing at Kibbutz Kfar Hamaccabi. Oshrat studied at the Reali High School in Haifa and was a counselor and leader in the Scouts. Upon completing her military service as an officer in the Air Force, she received a B.A. in political science from the Hebrew University and worked in the Jewish Agency for Israel as a counselor for groups from North America visiting Israel. This work exposed her to egalitarian and liberal Judaism, inspired her to adopt a Progressive Jewish lifestyle, and led her to study for an M.A. degree in the field of women’s studies in Judaism and Bible, *cum laude*, at the Schechter Institute. During her rabbinical studies, Oshrat worked with empowerment groups for women and *b’not mitzvah*, taught youngsters in pre-Army preparatory programs, led a parents’ group in the pre-school at Kol Haneshama, volunteered in an organization that helps children from disadvantaged neighborhoods, and established a group that visits children in the hospital on Rosh Chodesh. She wrote her rabbinical thesis on “Poetry as Midrash” and has just begun her Ph.D. studies at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati under the supervision of Professor Rachel Adler in the field of feminism and Judaism while also serving as a Hillel rabbi in Indiana.

**Gili Zidkiyahu** comes from a family rooted in Iraq, Riga, Hebron, Jerusalem, and Netanya, and her mother’s side of the family is raising the eighth generation in Israel. Gili’s exposure to issues of faith and tradition began in the fifth grade, when she was a student in the first year of the new Tali School in Hod Hasharon and adopted feminism in defining her beliefs and views. During her military service she was an education NCO and later an officer. Her post-IDF trip as an emissary of the Scouts to the U.S., where she worked in a Reform summer camp, rekindled dormant religious feelings. Gili studied for her B.A. degree in Jerusalem and Haifa and received her M.A. in the Gender Program at Bar Ilan University. She provided a decade of volunteer service at Haifa’s Woman to Woman feminist center and rape crisis center, and coordinated an educational program for youngsters to prevent sexual violence. She found a home in Ohel Avraham Congregation, and was among the founders of the seminar center, which later became the Lokey International Academy of Jewish Studies at the Leo Baeck Education Center. Together with Ofek Meir she led the Beit Midrash for Educational Leadership, a position that enabled her to learn as she taught. With the encouragement of Rabbi Dan Pratt, Gili joined the Israeli Rabbinical Program and began to combine her feminist activities with Progressive Judaism by initiating and leading a Rosh Chodesh group for women at Ohel Avraham Congregation, an experience that provided the inspiration for her rabbinical thesis. Gili spent two years as an educational and community emissary to the Liberal movement in England, during which time she attended courses in the rabbinical program at Leo Baeck College. Upon her return to Israel, Gili served in a rabbinical position in the Open House for Pride and Tolerance in Jerusalem. She is currently serving a rabbinical position at Ra’anana Congregation.
New Faculty Enrich Teaching

Scholar, teacher, mentor… the faculty at HUC-JIR fulfill multi-dimensional roles, as they instruct their students, forge innovative research in the vanguard of Jewish studies, and serve as role models for spiritual, professional, and intellectual development. Three new members of the faculty have joined the HUC-JIR community this year. Their diverse areas of expertise are enriching the fabric of learning, while their commitment to teaching within our Reform seminary environment strengthens the College-Institute’s mission.

An expert in Jewish identity in the ancient world, the origins of Christianity, Jewish-Christian relations in late antiquity, and postmodern historiography, Rabbi Joshua Garroway, Ph.D., is the newly appointed Assistant Professor of Early Christianity and Second Commonwealth at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles. He was ordained at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati in 2003 and received his doctorate in New Testament Studies at Yale in 2008. His doctoral dissertation, “Neither Jew nor Gentile, but Both: Paul’s ‘Christians’ as ‘Gentile-Jews,’” explores the ways in which Paul’s epistle to the Romans constructs Jewish identity, and the role this played in the ensuing emergence of Christianity.

“In returning to HUC-JIR as a faculty member, Dr. Garroway brings a solid grounding in the Reform rabbinate as well as in academic life,” says Rabbi David Ellenson. “We take pride in his intellectual achievement as one of our alumni, and look forward to his contributions to our community.”

Dr. Garroway relates to the HUC-JIR community with a profound appreciation for the vitality of faculty-student interchange. “The commitment and enthusiasm of the students at the Los Angeles campus have made teaching them, learning from them, and praying alongside them an immensely rewarding experience,” says Garroway. “Already I have become acutely aware of the reciprocity inherent in the teaching process. In my interactions with the students, I am often the one who is enlightened, challenged, or inspired.”

As the newly appointed Assistant Professor of Jewish Thought at HUC-JIR/LA, Dr. Leah Hochman brings her scholarly interests to the intersections of thought, philosophy and religion, the relationships between religion and literature in fiction, memoir, and autobiography, Judaism in the Americas, and Jewish life and culture in contemporary Germany. Her doctoral work at Boston University, where she earned her Ph.D. in 2000, focused on the aesthetic theory of Moses Mendelsohn. Her current research deals with the concepts of the Ugly and Ugliness in 18th century European thought. Before coming to HUC-JIR, Dr. Hochman taught at the University of Florida and Boston University.

“Dr. Hochman’s intellectual rigor and interdisciplinary approach will be a source of enrichment for our students, and we welcome her to the HUC-JIR family,” said Rabbi Ellenson.

Dr. Hochman values the special qualities of the HUC-JIR community. “The close-knit connections of the HUC-JIR faculty, students, and staff have made my move to Los Angeles – and to the small, intense seminary environment – an easy and pleasant transition,” says Dr. Hochman. “Welcoming new additions to campus brings out the best in everyone.”

Dr. Meir Seidler is HUC-JIR’s first Visiting Professor of Israel Studies, a joint appointment by HUC-JIR/LA with the University of Southern California (USC), for the 2008-2009 academic year, to be followed in 2009-2010 with an additional joint appointment by HUC-JIR/NY with the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS) in New York. These visiting faculty positions have been made possible by a grant from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation in conjunction with the American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprises’ Scholar Development Fund. HUC-JIR’s matching grant for this project has been generously funded by Lief Rosenblatt and Elliott and Robin Broidy.
“Israel Studies lies at the heart of our mission, as we seek to train Jewish leaders who are steeped in the concept of Jewish peoplehood and nurtured by the enduring ties linking the State of Israel and Diaspora Jewry,” says Rabbi Ellenson. “As a leading Israeli scholar, Dr. Meir Seidler will further reinforce our students’ relationship with the people and land of Israel, building upon their required first year of study of the history, politics, and culture of Israel and intensive Hebrew language studies at our Jerusalem campus.”

Dr. Seidler’s area of academic specialization is Jewish Thought in the Modern Era. He received the M.A. in Comparative Religion from Philipps University in Marburg, Germany, and a Ph.D. in Jewish Philosophy from Bar-Ilan University in Israel, where his doctoral dissertation was titled “The Concept of Judaism as a ‘Religion of Law’: Spinoza, Mendelssohn, Samson Raphael Hirsch and Isaac Breur.” Dr. Seidler has taught at Ariel University Center in Samaria in the Department of Israel Heritage and at Bar-Ilan University’s Centre of Jewish Studies. His extensive publications include numerous articles and two books: *Shma Yisrael - Oneness. The Jewish Perspective*, and *A Controversy that Endures. The Secession Controversy (1877) - The Open Letters Correspondence between the Rabbis Samson Raphael Hirsch and Seligmann Baer Bamberger*. He served as Co-Editor of *Moreshet Israel - Journal of Judaism and Zionism* (2004-2007).

Dr. Seidler appreciates HUC-JIR as a special destination in his life’s journey. “Having spent my childhood and youth in Europe with only few Jews around, and now living and teaching in Israel, teaching in the U.S. in general and at HUC-JIR in particular provides me with an excellent opportunity to learn something about a substantial part of the Jewish people with whom I was not acquainted,” says Dr. Seidler. “I am grateful for the warm welcome I received here and I am impressed by the quality of the faculty and the students, by the vitality of the community, as well as by its thirst for learning and its commitment to the Jewish State.”
### Summary Financial Figures

**Condensed Statement of Financial Position**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td>$245,182,237</td>
<td>$250,466,694</td>
<td>$214,776,593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
<td>42,616,954</td>
<td>31,617,606</td>
<td>18,196,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>202,565,283</td>
<td>218,849,088</td>
<td>196,579,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>$245,182,237</td>
<td>$250,466,694</td>
<td>$214,776,593</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Condensed Statement of Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>July 1, 2007-June 30, 2008</th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Temporarily Restricted</th>
<th>Permanently Restricted</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Operating Revenue, Gains and Other Support</td>
<td>$38,535,309</td>
<td>$5,531,483</td>
<td>$3,270,842</td>
<td>$47,337,634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Operating Expenses</td>
<td>42,497,036</td>
<td>42,497,036</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonoperating Revenue (Expense)</td>
<td>(10,949,686)</td>
<td>(10,174,717)</td>
<td>(21,124,403)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Net Assets</td>
<td>(14,911,413)</td>
<td>(4,643,234)</td>
<td>3,270,842</td>
<td>(16,283,805)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</td>
<td>74,545,147</td>
<td>53,118,123</td>
<td>91,185,818</td>
<td>218,849,088</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HUC-JIR Revenue 2007-2008**

- **MUM** 29.5%
- Fund Raising 42.3%
- Investment 7.4%
- Tuition (Gross) 10.9%
- Contracted Services 3.7%
- Other 6.2%

*Reform congregations, through the Union for Reform Judaism’s proportional dues program (MUM), provide critically needed support each year. HUC-JIR receives 44 percent of the MUM dues; the remaining 56 percent goes to the URJ.

**HUC-JIR Expenses 2007-2008**

- Instruction 36.1%
- Academic Support 11.4%
- Maintenance 9.8%
- Development 3.5%
- Institutional Support 18.2%
- Student Stipends & Scholarships 8.8%
- Depreciation 5.4%
- Other 6.8%