From the Director: The Expanding Rhea Hirsch Faculty

Many of you remember studying in education courses in Rhea Hirsch School of Education taught by a small group of faculty members. For many years, Sara, Isa and I taught all the education courses. If you were to come back today, you might be surprised: The faculty of the school now numbers ELEVEN (!) including the core faculty and adjuncts. The Rigor, Respect, Reflection and Visionary leadership that have long characterized the school are now enacted by a larger group of talented teachers who have allowed us to expand the expertise we bring to students while keeping the core principles of the school intact.

And now that we have a larger faculty we have the opportunity to do what many of you do all the time in your jobs: have a faculty meeting. We gathered together at my home right before student orientation which takes place the night before classes begin. After we introduced ourselves, what we taught, and what we had been thinking about over the summer (ranging from Isa and the B’nei Mitzvah Revolution to Jeff Marx and his recently published article on the history of cream cheese), we studied a text from Maimonides on Tokhekha. (Two versions of the text study, the version we used with the faculty and the one we used later in the evening with the students are posted on the alumni Facebook page.)

The text led to a deep discussion about the nature of the feedback we give to students both in and out of class to help them grow as students and professionals. We juxtaposed the Maimonides text with a blog post on “Moving from Inner Ouch to Opportunity” written by Jennifer Abrams in “Voice Lessons” (also posted on the alumni Facebook page). Jennifer, a former DeLeT faculty member, talks about how she moved to a “learning edge” after receiving some painful feedback from a teacher who attended one of her workshops. The text study led students and faculty to consider what personal qualities we need to develop within ourselves so that we, too, can greet feedback with curiosity and openness.

So who are the 11 faculty members and what are they teaching?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Courses offered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isa Aron</td>
<td>Teaching Intensive, Organizational Systems, Ideologies of Jewish Education, Curriculum (content)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eve Fein</td>
<td>Curriculum (curriculum guides)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn Flanbaum</td>
<td>Tartak Learning Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Garf</td>
<td>Human Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil Liff-Grief</td>
<td>Experiential Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Marx</td>
<td>Liturgy Practicum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle Prince</td>
<td>Human Development: Family Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Scheindlin</td>
<td>Teaching, Professional Learning, Curriculum (curriculum guides)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Zeldin</td>
<td>Leadership and Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tali Zelkowicz</td>
<td>Sociology, Curriculum (design), Introductory course for rabbinical students (teaching)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josh Zweiback</td>
<td>Issues in Jewish Education (Introductory course for rabbinical students)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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continued on page 2
Two of these faculty members are just now joining the RHSOE faculty, and I singled them out for special introductions when the students arrived. First, I welcomed back Yoshi Zweiback ’96 who has returned to Los Angeles to assume the position of Senior Educator at Stephen S. Wise Temple after directing HUC-JIR’s Year in Israel Program. Before his stint in Jerusalem, Yoshi was Senior Educator at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills, CA.

I also welcomed Larry Scheindlin to his new position as Visiting Assistant Professor of Jewish Education. Larry comes to HUC-JIR immediately after retiring from a successful 35-year career as Head of School at Sinai Akiba Academy, one of the leading day schools in Southern California. He received the Milken Outstanding Educator Award and has published articles on education, emotions and spirituality in academic and general publications, and has conducted workshops and courses in school administration, the teaching of prayer, spirituality and curriculum. He has already added immeasurably to the deliberations of the faculty.

I also want to introduce you to the new DeLeT Leadership Team. Eileen Horowitz is the new DeLeT Education Director, and Dr. Roxie Esterle is the new DeLeT Academic Coordinator. Eileen was Head of School at Temple Israel of Hollywood Day School. She received the Milken Outstanding Educator Award and served as a mentor in three programs for Jewish educators: the Day School Leadership Training Institute at the Jewish Theological Seminary, the MAEd program at American Jewish University, and the day school residency program at HUC-JIR.

Roxie was a science teacher and middle school principal at Abraham Joshua Heschel Day School, and then went on to instruct teachers in science education at California State University Northridge and California State University Fullerton. She also received the Milken Outstanding Educator Award (do you see a pattern here?). She holds a PhD in Curriculum Studies from UCLA.

As you know, Sara Lee and Bill Cutter have both retired from HUC-JIR; although Sara continues to work on the Mandel Initiative she has led for the past five years, and Bill will continue to teach courses in his emeritus status. We wish them both all the best in their retirement. As you can see, we are bringing on talented faculty so we can carry on the legacy of excellence we received from them.

B’shalom, Michael

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The Executive Master’s: A Look Back After the First Year

By Lesley Litman, Coordinator of the Executive MA Program in Jewish Education

The first cohort of the Executive MA program in Jewish Education has just begun the final semester of course work before turning to their Capstone project and graduation! Following the progress of this group has been both deeply engaging and exciting! The Executive MA (EMA for short) is a 24-month program that includes many of the courses each of you took as students. What follows is a brief description of the EMA learning experience, most likely reminiscent of some of your experiences as a student.

A key element of the EMA program is the Capstone Project in which students focus on Enduring Dilemmas. The idea of connecting Enduring Dilemmas with the capstone project had its genesis in the Sara S. Lee Seminar led by Dr. Deborah Kerdeman on the same topic. An enduring dilemma is one in which two “rights” are in tension with one continued on page 3
another. Maggie Lampert ’85 suggests that these kinds of dilemmas are never resolved — they crop up again and again. Therefore we should think about “managing” them, each time they arise, instead of seeking to solve them once and for all. The EMA students have been asked to identify such a dilemma and engage in a written review of some of the literature on the topic. Examples of the dilemmas students are working on include “tradition and transformation” and “individual voices and communal norms”. The connecting word in the equation is “and” not “versus” because these elements live together in tension with one another. When their capstone projects are complete, just before graduation in May, students will present their dilemmas and potential ways to manage them to practitioners in the New York area for feedback and deliberation.

This past June, the first cohort studied with Dr. Tali Zelkowicz. Tali’s course, the Social Context of North American Education, included an introduction to the tools of social science as a way to help students make sense of the lived realities of Jewish education. Among other topics, students explored the complexity of negotiating the new boundaries in the 21st century as well as the changing master narrative of the North American Jewish community as we move away from the language of survivalism. This work required that students step away from their roles as practitioners and reflect on the larger context in which we all function as Jewish educators (as Heifetz and Linsky in their book Leadership on the Line would say, to ‘get up on the balcony’). This served as important preparation for work on their capstone project.

The course trajectory for the EMA as designed by the faculty is deliberate and methodical. In the first months of the program, after an initial two weeks of intensive grounding in Jewish learning with the study of Bible and Jewish history with Drs. Jonathan Krasner and Adriane Leveen (a grounding that is threaded throughout the program with Jewish studies courses and ongoing text study in each and every course), students turn to the end user, the learner, by engaging in the study of Teaching and Learning with Dr. Lisa Grant. Students reflect on the 21st century learner and the changing 21st century learning milieu. Dr. Evie Rotstein then moves students from teaching and learning to thinking about how to focus teachers on the student experience through professional learning. Evie brings a wide array of resources to bear on the subject including a plethora of protocols and resources from Learning Forward, a premier professional learning organization based in Dallas and from multiple websites such as <www.nsrhalmony.org/resources.html> from the National School Reform Faculty. Students were quick to note how powerful the use of these protocols was for their practice.

Dr. Isa Aron in her course on Jewish educational ideologies, asks students to stop and consider their own educational stances through an examination of Jewish and educational philosophers. John Dewey and Martin Buber are in dialogue with one another (among others) and with the students. Students examine real-life learning settings in which some of these philosophies come to life while grappling with the implications of all of this for their own sites and their own practice.

All of these courses are brought to bear in their curriculum course which I have the honor of teaching. Students delve into a particular subject area such as tefilla or bible trying to ascertain the deep structure and core questions of the discipline. These deep questions become the basis for their design of a piece of curriculum with an inquiry-based framework using Understanding by Design as a guide. Students draw on their learning from previous courses as they consider ways in which the learner, the teacher and the subject matter come together to be reflected in curriculum.

Finally, students have the opportunity to think about themselves as leaders as well as the organizations they serve in their learning with Drs. Michael Zeldin and Sam Joseph. Students dig deep into their own selves to understand who they are and who they want to be as leaders and how this then can impact their own educational settings. Leadership and change are complex, often difficult endeavors and these two courses challenge students to look at both the positive and the painful. As with the enduring dilemmas of their capstones, the leadership and change in Jewish education do not fall into neat categories with clear cut solutions.

While you will recognize many similarities between the SoE programs and the Executive MA, a (probably THE) core distinction between the programs is that EMA students serve as Jewish educational leaders concurrent with their learning, translating into rich and varied opportunities for application in their roles as leaders.

If reading this article makes you nostalgic for the days when you were a learner, consider encouraging colleagues who do not yet have an MA in Jewish Education to consider the Executive MA. Your partnership in recruitment for the EMA is key. Potential applicants can learn more about the program by contacting me, Lesley Litman, Coordinator of the Executive MA Program in Jewish Education at <llitman@huc.edu>.
Save the Date Now! 5773 RHSOE Alumni Day of Learning
Monday, November 12, 2012 on the NYC Campus with Scholars Professor Sara Lee and Dr. Lisa Grant
Register at http://rhsoealumni.wufoo.com/forms/rhsoe-alumni-day-of-learning-5773/

Introducing the RHSOE Alumni Association Leadership Team for 5773

Celebrating Continuing Education: Julia Phillips Berger ’00 and Laura Novak Winer ’94
Communication: Tamara Lawson Schuster ’92
Day of Learning: Mara Braunfeld ’06 and Marci Dickman ’82
Development: Laura Bramson Hyman ’98 and Shaina Wasserman ’06

Educator and Alumni in Residence: Debra Sagan Massey ’99 and Rebecca Goodman ’00
Honorary Doctorates: Stephanie Eshel ’04 and Melanie Cole-Goldberg ’87
Kallah: Olga Bluman ’08 Jonathan Kupetz ’97, and Tami Weisman ’10
Outreach to Students: Sharon Amster-Brown ’00 and Julia Levine ’07
Professional Learning Groups: Brad Cohen ’10 and Kathy Schwartz ’94
Recruitment: Lori Sagarin ’84 and Debra Cotzin Kellner ’04

We welcome our newest fellow alumni, the graduating class of 5772

Lisa Berney continuing rabbinical student
Allie Fischman continuing rabbinical student
Jaclyn Fromer continuing rabbinical student
Dan Geffen continuing rabbinical student in New York
Amanda Greene continuing rabbinical student
Josh Knobel continuing rabbinical student
Sarah Lauing NAD IV Educator at Crane Lake Camp and Shaarey Tefila, New York City

Jessica Lebovits West Coast Area Director of Israel Advocacy and Education at Jewish National Fund
Rachel Levin Goldman Camping Initiative at the iCenter
Carmela Rotter Judaic Studies Specialist at the Weizmann Day School in Pasadena
Hannah Rubin-Schlansky Director of Informal Education at Temple Isaiah in Los Angeles
Ellie Steinman Executive Director of California Faith for Equality
Deana Sussman continuing rabbinical student
LuAnne Tzyzzer Religious School Educator at Central Synagogue, New York City
Adam Wright continuing rabbinical student

Celebrating our Colleagues… So many of our alumni serve the College-Institute in a variety of ways. Throughout the year, we will try to recognize them all!

With gratitude and thanks to all our alumni who serve as clinical faculty members:

Josh Mason-Barkin ’07 of Temple Isaiah mentoring Daniel Alter and Molly Plotnik
Carrie Vogel ’07 of Kehillat Israel mentoring Becka Ross and Kyna Mednick
Jeff Marx ’81 of The Santa Monica Synagogue mentoring Rae Antonoff

Avram Mandell ’01 of Leo Baeck Temple mentoring Brian Avner
April Akiva ’06 of Temple Beth Sholom mentoring Natalie Davidowitz
Debbie Rowe ’80 of Temple Beth El mentoring Mindy Sherry
Paul Kipnes ’91 of Congregation Or Ami mentoring Rachel Kaplan Marks
Andrea Gardenhour ’95 of Stephen W. Wise Temple mentoring Lara Pullan Regev
Sara Mason-Barkin ’08 of Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills mentoring Todd Silverman
Tami Weisman ’10 of University Synagogue mentoring Bess Wohliner
Focus on Excellence…
Meet Our Fellow Alumni:
Jouli Hessel ’99

I have a secret to tell: throughout my time at HUC-JIR I never thought I would wind up in a congregation. Instead, I envisioned my life within a day school setting. I never imagined a life like the one I’ve led.

I have remained in the same congregation since graduating from HUC-JIR. Over these past 11 years at Washington Hebrew Congregation, there have been many moments of glory — the times I can share unique and awesome moments in Washington, standing on the floor of the House offering a prayer; participating in the White House Day of Prayer; leading a funeral procession through the footpaths of the Annapolis Naval Academy or standing with a soldier on the grounds of Arlington National Cemetery. There have also been shared intense moments of loss with loved ones at hospice bedsides; shared moments beneath the chuppah with loving couples; shared moments before the Torah with families, and chances to hold beautiful babies during a naming or bris. I’ve been humbled when congregants who are several decades older than I, have approached me for counseling. I have adored my time in the classroom setting, grappling over ancient texts as students (young and old) have made the words relevant to of any medical diagnosis though, the story lets us into the mind of this special young man, his thought processes, challenges, fears and successes as he discovers a secret his single-father kept from him.

We all know that “relationships” and “engagement” are big buzzwords in the Jewish world right now. How do we build relationships? What does a community founded on deep relationships look like? What does engagement mean? I’ve tried to broaden my own understanding and thinking by exploring these questions from a variety of disciplines:

**Community: The Structure of Belonging** by Peter Block (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008) A look at what it takes to build a community in which people feel a sense of ownership and investment in its well-being.

**MWF Seeking BFF: My Yearlong Search for a New Best Friend** by Rachel Bertsche (Ballantine Books, 2011) Thank you Lori Sagarin for encouraging me to read this humorous look at what it means to be a “best friend” and how we build friendships.

**Never Eat Alone — And Other Secrets to Success, One Relationship at a Time** by Keith Ferrazzi (Doubleday, 2005) From the ultimate business schmoozer-networker-connector perspective, this book provides insight into how we can use relationships to create win-win situations for everyone.

**The Courage to Teach** by Parker Palmer (Jossey-Bass, 1998) A classic that we should all (re)read as we think about strengthening our own relationships with our students and constituents in our educational institutions.

**Relationships Unfiltered** by Andrew Root (Zondervan, 2009) A Christian youth ministry book about how we create authentic relationships with our youth in a religious/spiritual context.

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Keeping Current…
Reading Recommendations From Fellow Alumni: Laura Novak Winer ’94

With my family’s recent move to Fresno, CA, at the top of my to-do list was finding a way to connect and make new friends outside of our new congregational community. So, here is a list of books related to relationships and connections that I consulted.

**Women Don’t Ask: Negotiation and the Gender Divide** by Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever (Princeton University Press, 2003) is a fascinating analysis of how women approach — or don’t approach — the process of negotiation in both the workplace and in their daily lives. They look at the causes of this difference in men and women, suggest successful techniques for negotiation that utilize women’s natural strengths and ultimately look for ways in which our organizations and society should change in order to become more innately equitable. As Jewish educators, far too often we fall into the trap of thinking that because we are working “on behalf of the Jewish people” and in institutions that struggle financially, we must make sacrifices. We feel guilty advocating for our own needs. All educators would benefit from the guidance Babcock and Laschever provide.

**The Curious Incident of the God in the Night-Time** by Mark Haddon (Vintage Books, 2003) is a story written from the first person perspective of a 15-year-old boy. While never stated directly, it is very possible that the boy is autistic. The author has stated that he regrets that the publisher put the term “Asperger’s syndrome” on the book cover and he denies any expertise on the subject of autism. Regardless of any medical diagnosis though, the story lets us into the mind of this special young man, his thought processes, challenges, fears and successes as he discovers a secret his single-father kept from him.

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**Relationships Unfiltered** by Andrew Root (Zondervan, 2009) A Christian youth ministry book about how we create authentic relationships with our youth in a religious/spiritual context.
their lives today. I have been in awe of the teenagers who have called, texted, Facebooked and sat with me to discuss the angst that dwelled within them. After 10 years, I am now standing underneath the chuppah with some of my past students!

When my portfolio changed a few years ago, and I began taking a slightly different rabbinic path, I found utter happiness. Through my focus on our religious education, I strive to deliver a meaningful and quality Jewish educational experience to our students and their families, creating opportunities for our families to share in sacred moments together. I often think about Sara Lee trying to push me to reflect more often, to evaluate programs and lesson plans and to encourage more “process” in addition to “product.” Although I admittedly remain more committed to product, it never allows for process to suffer. To truly remain innovative, one must retain a sense of evaluation — to understand what works and WHY. In order to be effective educators, we must strive to massage both at once; the process of reflective and evaluative thinking as well as the focus on putting forth a product that is compelling and innovative for its constituents (students). For some of us with high levels of executive functioning skills, this is easy. For others, Michael Zeldin’s love of Covey comes to mind. Working in the right “quadrant” is most effective and most significant when juggling various processes within the job. Indeed, it’s what can, in an ideal setting, keep us fresh and motivated for increased challenges in our work.

I remain in awe of those who allow me into their lives, those who become emotionally vulnerable with me, and permit me to share in their life’s tender and sweet moments. Nathaniel Hawthorne once wrote, “Happiness in this world, when it comes, comes incidentally. Make it the object of pursuit, and it leads us a wild-goose chase, and is never attained. Follow some other object, and very possibly we may find that we have caught happiness without dreaming of it.” Never could I have imagined a life so rewarding and so richly fulfilling both personally and professionally. I am blessed to serve God, the Jewish People and the greater community.

We read in Pirke Avot (4:1), “Ben Zoma said: Who is wise? He who learns from all people.” At its simplest level, the message is that one who seeks wisdom wherever it may be found is the one most likely to acquire it. The commentator Rabbi Yonah writes that when a person inquires wisdom of everyone, it indicates that he or she has a love of knowledge. It is undeniable that our children, our students and their families, teach wisdom to each of us. They are Torah — their lives, their little hearts and souls — they share life’s lessons with us as we strive to connect them to Judaism’s values and ethics.

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**Celebrating Our Colleagues, Sharing a Legacy**

With over 300 alumni spanning over four decades, we now have a growing number of alumni who are retired. This year we will celebrate those colleagues and share a piece of their legacy to the field of Jewish education. We begin with **Nancy Levin ’81**.

**Nancy Levin**: Looking back over more than 30 years in Jewish education, what I miss most as a synagogue educator are the children, teens and families. It has been the personal relationships, the opportunities to make a difference in the Jewish lives of others, being present to offer encouragement and support when needed and to celebrate the simchas — I believe these have been the foundation stones of my career.

I have valued my teachers and their journeys and spent a great deal of time on professional and personal development. I was blessed to mentor HUC-JIR graduate students as interns. I learned so much from each one of them and I hope they learned from me as well. It was a privilege to be a member of the Clinical Faculty at HUC-JIR.

Following my retirement as a synagogue educator, I continued to work at HUC-JIR as the coordinator of “Creating Teaching Excellence in Congregational Education” with my mentor, Sara Lee. We created a multi-level mentoring program for teachers that enriched their opportunities for professional growth and development in congregational schools.

I can summarize what I hope my legacy has been in these three words: **Modeling, Mentoring, Menschlehkeit**.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to reflect on my rewarding career — I have no regrets...and I am enjoying a fulfilling retirement!

**We are eager to hear the stories of all our retired alumni. Please share your legacy by connecting with Debbie Niederman.**<dniederman@huc.edu>
From the Chair

By Ellen Lefkowitz ’99

As we enter a new Jewish year and for many of us a new school year, I am very much looking forward to reconnecting with my fellow RH SOE graduates and want to extend a warm welcome to the newest members of our alumni association. We are jumping back into our work together and quickly getting ready for our upcoming leadership team meeting and day of learning in New York this November.

We are grateful for the volunteer efforts of all the members of our Leadership Team (on page 4) and welcome the following new members: Melanie Cole-Goldberg as co-chair of our Honorary Doctorates working group; Shaina Wasserman and Laura Bramson Hyman and co-chairs of our Development working group; Olga Bluman and Jonathan Kupetz as co-chairs of our Kallah working group; Kathy Schwartz as co-chair of our Professional Learning Groups working group, and Laura Novak Winer as co-chair of our Celebrating Continuing Education working group. There are many ways to get involved in the work of our Alumni Association, if you are interested in any of our working groups or have a new idea for our association, please don’t wait to be asked! Let us know where you would like to help and we will gladly get you involved!

Our focus for our annual leadership team meeting on November 13th will be to continue to support the institutional advancement of the College-Institute, examine the expanding nature of HUC-JIR’s Schools of Education and its many offerings, and recruiting new students to these various programs. We are eager to develop new leaders from the ranks of our alumni to join us in this sacred work to support the College-Institute at large and RH SOE.

As you enter this period of reflection and renewal, consider these words that I recently came upon from The Curious Case of Benjamin Button by Eric Roth:

“For what it’s worth: it’s never too late or, in my case, too early to be whoever you want to be. There’s no time limit, stop whenever you want. You can change or stay the same, there are no rules to this thing. We can make the best or the worst of it. I hope you make the best of it. And I hope you see things that startle you. I hope you feel things you never felt before. I hope you meet people with a different point of view. I hope you live a life you’re proud of. If you find that you’re not, I hope you have the courage to start all over again.”

May this new year be a year that you are proud of both personally and professionally. We hope that you’ll join us whether it is in person at our upcoming day of learning or sharing your work with us through our Facebook group.

To join our closed Facebook Group simply go to: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/174910382564657/>.

L’Shanah Tovah u’metukah. Happy 5773!

A moment from our past — RH SOE Alumni and friends gather at NATE in 1985


Do you have pictures of RH SOE events or your time in school? We would love to share them, please send them to Debbie with a brief description and try to identify everyone in the picture. <dniederman@huc.edu>
For details on how to register for our upcoming Alumni Day of Learning on November 12th, see page 4.

RHSOE Opening Dinner — 2012-2013 MAJE students


Have you moved?

We want to make sure you are still receiving our publications; if you have moved, please send Debbie <dniederman@huc.edu> or Joy <jwasserman@huc.edu> your updated information and we will make sure you don’t miss a thing!

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