The end of the academic and fiscal year is a unique time of reflection and assessment. As a Hillel Director, over the summer I look at our program and ask: **In what ways was this year successful? What are measurable successes, and what may be beyond the numbers?** I look at both objective and subjective measures when I assess MIT Hillel's outcomes. I am pleased to report that by any measure we delivered a strong year, as evidenced by:

- **Being recognized as one of the top Hillels in the nation!**
  Only MIT and UVA were honored for exceeding Hillel International's Measuring Excellence benchmarks. National surveys show we have strongly impacted students’ commitment to Jewish life, to learning, and to Israel. A second highlight was having each staffer who attended the conference exhibit leadership in the Hillel movement. Marissa, Gavriel, Shoshana, and I were each called upon to teach a group, lecture a crowd, speak on a panel, or mentor a peer one-on-one.

- **Striving, beyond the undergraduate population that International Hillel measures, to meet excellence goals with our graduate student population, as well.**
  As we enter the third and final year of a pilot program, focusing on graduate students with their own part-time staffer, the trend is clear: this demographic merits investment. We now are taking steps to fund and hire a permanent staffer dedicated to graduate student programming. We are redefining what it means to be a Hillel that serves its entire student population.

- **So many moments of individual growth, such as:**
  When a sophomore voiced frustration that many Jewish texts about sex are irrelevant to some Jews today, Rabbi Gavriel heard a real desire to find relevance and resonance, and a place for expression of both her Jewish and LGBTQ identities. He encouraged her to catalyze this sub-community of the larger Hillel tent. Our success in engaging “core Jews” is expanded when we also help potentially marginalized students find a voice, leadership, and place in the Jewish community.

- **Creating strong ties.**
  At a time when the Jewish world is wondering how the American and the Israeli Jewish communities can better understand each other, the personal connection students make in our annual ConneCtech fellowship with Technion Hillel seeds hope for our shared future. Together they learn about the academic, religious, and social cultures that affect Jewish identity and being a Jewish young adult and scientist in the US or Israel. As we completed our closing activity this year, one student reflected “I’ve been to Israel multiple times. This is the first time that I can see Israel through the eyes of a friend my age.”

The end of one year is the same moment as the beginning of the next. The first set of questions is immediately followed by tougher ones: How can we do better next year? What have we learned from our shortfalls and mistakes? By the time this goes to print we will have already welcomed students to, or back to, campus. We are strategically building on last year’s successes and thoughtfully seeking to improve. We are tracking our broad metrics as well as investing in individual students. Our success is yours as well. None of what we do is possible without the generous support of our community. You are a vital part of the more than 800 alumni, parents, faculty, and friends who provide an annual gift to ensure that we continue to serve the MIT Jewish community in a meaningful way. Thank you!
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“In business, we say that people overestimate what you can do in a year and underestimate what you can do in a decade. This is true in philanthropy as well.”
— Marc Benioff, internet entrepreneur, Salesforce

Financial Overview

MIT Hillel relies on our generous alumni, faculty, parents, and friends. Thank you for $667,000 that made our work possible.

Did you know… MIT provides our space, utilities, office equipment, computer support, and administrative services. They also handle our mail appeals, invite us to have a page on the Giving Day platform, and process your gift. Not all Hillels enjoy this level of support from their academic host institution. As a result, your gift directly supports our program.
Highlights of MIT Hillel Programming

Vision for Learning: MIT Hillel enhances Jewish knowledge. We spark a lifelong desire to be Jewishly literate, to have informed opinions on topics that affect Jews and the Jewish people, and to effectively communicate their knowledge and opinions. We help students integrate Jewish ideas with personal choices and academic interests.

Sample of Programming at MIT Hillel

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Israel Curriculum

• Should Israel absorb refugees from Africa?
• Should Israel have raided Entebbe, or negotiated?
• Should Ethiopian Jews have been given Right of Return?
• Should secular Israelis learn Torah?
• Should people have to serve in the Israeli army despite their objections?
• Should the US embassy have been moved to Jerusalem?
• Should Hatikva be the Israeli national anthem?
• Should secular Israelis be getting married outside of Israel?

RABBI GAVRIEL GOLDFEDER, SENIOR JEWISH EDUCATOR, MIT HILLEL, REFLECTING ON THIS YEAR’S YOM HASHOAH PROGRAM.

You know it’s a successful program when not a single student turns on their phone.

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• Should the US embassy have been moved to Jerusalem?
• Should Hatikva be the Israeli national anthem?
• Should secular Israelis be getting married outside of Israel?
I have been fortunate to be on a campus where defining your connection to Judaism on your own terms is not only accepted, it’s encouraged. In my case, the parts with which I resonate most deeply are the community, heritage, values, and intellectual vitality.

DREW BENT ’18
I did not grow up in a family that maintained Jewish traditions or celebrated many Jewish holidays, so it was with nervousness and excitement that I went into this trip to Israel. In preparation for the trip, I read a book on Israeli history and I was struck with the meticulous intention with which the founders approached planning a nation. In thinking about the values its citizens should hold, they prioritized working with one’s hands and emphasized the value of education—a true embodiment of the *mens et manus* ethos. The *mens et manus* mentality is clearly still prevalent in Israel, based on the entrepreneurial and innovative nature of enterprises, which we were able to witness ourselves during the MIT Extension.  

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Infinite Corridor about Israel and her
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In memory of Rabbi Herman Pollack
MIT Maker Space vs. MIT Hillel Macher Space

We didn’t have candlestick holders, and the process of making them out of aluminum foil became a bit of a competition while people were waiting for us to finish cooking. That was an unexpected and amusing way for people to be able to help and be involved.

SHERRI GREEN ’18
I was surprised—in the best way possible—at how meaningful [the Birthright trip] had been… Learning about the roles Judaism has—or doesn’t have—in my peers’ lives was powerful, and it really prompted me to reflect on my own beliefs. The people I met were undoubtedly the most important part of my experience.

TALIA BLUM ’21
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It only adds up... if you add it up.

COMEDIAN GARY GULMAN

Cover photo: Tashlich on the Charles River
Design: Robin Friedman

All errors and omissions are the responsibility of MIT Hillel. Please contact us directly if your name or gift is in error in this report. We appreciate when you take the time to help us do better.
"You who are on the road
Must have a code that you can live by
And so become yourself
Because the past is just a good-bye."

— Graham Nash (Crosby, Stills & Nash)