Often a year in review focuses on dates and numbers, good MIT-like quantities that can be computed, analyzed, and assessed. Each year, my staff and I crunch the data. We know that, by the numbers, we are one of the most successful Hillels in the nation. We continue to surpass benchmarks set by International Hillel for depth, breadth and impact on our students, as reported here in recent years.

Beyond the numbers, Jewish life at MIT is a microcosm of life at MIT – it’s about personal growth and making connections with people and ideas. We draw students ever more deeply to their Jewish identity, through community, learning, and practice. Studies show that college students come to campus craving friendship and fellowship. Many feel lonely. Many are overwhelmed by workloads and expectations. We know that 2000+ years of Judaism has created supports for all of these: Shabbat provides a time for rest, gathering with others, and food; texts probe the questions of “who am I?” and “what’s my purpose?”; a diverse and global people talk, debate, and experiment.

Initiatives like our DIY-holiday meals programs allow students to own, create, and mold their Jewish observances, and to practice hosting for their peers, with Hillel footing the bill, and more importantly, coaching them on how to create a meaningful event. Dozens of Shabbat meals in dorms and living groups and over 17 Passover seders around campus is the product – pockets of community in which laughter, and conversation, and Jewish content are shared, and MIT pressures put aside for a short while. Our student board so appreciates the impact that they requested that the staff increase the resources we allocate to these opportunities in the coming year.

When I have 1:1 coffee conversations with students, undergraduate and graduate students, the ideas they are grappling with are not only about how to solve a technical problem, but how to give back and influence and change the greater world. In classes, over lunch, through leadership trainings, Hillel also shares tools and frameworks and questions that Jewish thought has put to our students’ searchings. Jewish language thereby becomes part of the lens through which they work and grow at MIT.

The support you give to MIT Hillel allows us to meet our students personally, where they are at, and to help them mature, as Jews and human beings. Thank you for allowing us to impact them so deeply.
Builders of Jewish Life at MIT 2019 / 5779

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Donations

INCOME

71%

12%

3%

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Salaries and Benefits

Direct Program Expenses

Indirect Program Expenses

INCOME

72%

19%

9%

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MIT Hillel relies on our generous alumni, faculty, parents, and friends. Thank you for $627,000 that made our work possible.

Your gift matters... Income covered 99.6% of expenses in FY19, leaving a shortfall of $3,200, the first deficit in a decade. Every gift builds toward fiscal strength and responsibility.

The reliability of a gift is a gift in itself. Please plan on renewing your support in the new year.

“"The budget is not just a collection of numbers, but an expression of our values and aspirations."”

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The first thing you learn when you touch down in Tel Aviv: there is no one way to be Jewish. Your new American and Israeli friends alike all have a story to tell, sounding foreign yet so similar. Bottom line, willful ignorance is the worst reason to pass up the exhausting adventure of a lifetime.

JOSHUA RAPOPORT ’22
Birthright Participant
Part of the shtick of the Hadar Singing Intensive is that leaders gave “behind the curtain” insight into what they were doing, into what it means to be a song leader. I reflected a lot that week on my own journey as a leader, and how it has played out across the different facets of my life. Hearing Joey Wiesenberg talk about leading communities in song, I saw that what he was talking about was facilitating a collective experience, which in this case is a musical experience, but requires many of the same skills, intention, and attention as any other type of facilitative leadership.

CARRIE WATKINS MCP ’19
Conference Attendee, funded by MIT Hillel
You know it’s a successful Student Board meeting when laughter, snacks, and productivity are all in abundance.

MARISSA FREED, Assistant Director, MIT Hillel

Vision for Community: MIT Hillel fosters an inclusive and welcoming environment where individuals feel desire for, capacity within, and a responsibility toward Jewish community. We encourage the development of friendships, and empower students to participate in and lead shared experiences and to build a lasting sense of responsibility to the Jewish people.

Sample of Student Leadership at MIT Hillel

The Hillel President is elected annually. Other board slots are determined by application, and a committee comprised of the incoming President, outgoing board members, and other active students review the submissions and choose the board members. Currently there are eight student board members. The term runs Jan-Dec, a calendar year.

The board meets weekly. The President meets with Marissa to write the agenda and be coached on how to effectively lead a productive meeting. A typical board meeting might include these discussion questions around building community through events:

- What are our goals for this event? How will we define success based on number of people and time well spent?
- What advice / input do we need for the event?
- If this is a recurring event, what notes have previous planners provided?
- How should this event be publicized?
- Debrief – lessons learned, notes for future planners, feedback from participants

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Our students, as usual, biting off more than they can chew.

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Allan Tobin
Robert Tove
Arnold Tubis
Michael Tuchman and Margaret

Stuart Zakon
In memory of Moshe ben Yehudah
Joshua Zeidman
Gerald Zuriff and Elizabeth Van Ranst
In honor of Rabbi Gavriel Goldfeder
Klaus Zwilsky

Highlights of MIT Hillel Programming

“...”
Charity, since the dawn of time memoriam, has been meant to be done together.

MOSHE HECHT, entrepreneur whose passion lies at the intersection of technology and charitable giving, as published in eJewishPhilanthropy.com on January 28, 2019.
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By the time this goes to print, MIT Hillel’s new full-time Director of Graduate Student Engagement will have started.
From attending AIPAC, I gained new perspectives about how to embrace bipartisanship and encourage dialogue about Israel at MIT. From attending breakout sessions on topics such as the American-Israeli cybersecurity partnership and Israeli perspectives on the future of the West Bank, I was able to better appreciate how debate, dialogue, and innovative solutions — activities integral to the MIT culture — can help bring real understanding about why Israel can and should fit into the lives of my MIT peers. Moreover, AIPAC provided a great atmosphere conducive to networking with Israeli tech start-ups and companies, some of which have dual offices in Boston and Tel Aviv, through which MIT students can gain important lifelong skills and help make an positive impact.

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Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who has given humans some of God's own knowledge.

Said upon encountering a renowned scholar of a secular discipline