



# Evaluation of the **Jim Joseph Foundation Education Initiative**

## Year 3 Report

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Submitted to the Jim Joseph Foundation

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# Executive Summary

## INTRODUCTION

Launched in 2010, the Jim Joseph Foundation Education Initiative supports programs at three flagship Jewish institutions of higher education: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR), Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), and Yeshiva University (YU). As part of this initiative, HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU designed and piloted new programs, enhanced existing programs, and provided financial assistance to additional programs.

American Institutes for Research (AIR) is conducting an independent evaluation of the Jim Joseph Foundation Education Initiative. This report is the third in a series of five annual reports that describe progress toward accomplishing the goals of the Education Initiative.

## FINDINGS FROM THE FIRST 2 YEARS OF THE EVALUATION

### Highlights From Year 1

The Year 1 report provided first findings of participants' satisfaction with and perception of value of the new programs (Schneider, Kidron, Brown, & Abend, 2012). Analyses of surveys showed that program participants were satisfied with programs' practical focus on a set of pedagogical and management skills, including curriculum planning; aligning instructional practices in the classroom with the needs of students; revisiting school and organizational practices, leadership, staff supervision, and management work; and creating a positive learning environment at the school. Participants assigned high value to their programs.

### Highlights From Year 2

The Year 2 report provided first findings about how the first cohorts of students who completed the professional development programs applied their skills on the job (Schneider, Kidron, Abend, & Brawley, 2013). Employers reported in interviews that they observed substantial professional growth of their staff as a result of program participation. Consequently, they enabled greater professional growth opportunities for their employees. Participants in the certificate programs and leadership institutes reported that they have been inspired by their programs to articulate goals, create new programs or initiatives, and promote professional learning communities at their organizations. Initial data about the job placements of graduates of degree programs showed that most of their new positions were in leadership roles (e.g., directors, assistant directors, heads of schools, and program coordinators).

## FINDINGS FROM THE YEAR 3 EVALUATION

This report about Year 3 is organized by the five goals of the Education Initiative and examines 10 research questions that are aligned with these goals. These five goals are divided into two categories: (a) educator and education leader preparation and support and (b) capacity building. Exhibit A lists the research questions by goal within each category.

## Exhibit A. Research Questions for the Year 3 Evaluation

| Goal  | Research Questions   |
|---|--|
| <b>A. Educator and Education Leader Preparation and Support</b>   |  |
| Goal 1. Increase the number of highly qualified individuals who enroll in preservice and inservice Jewish education programs.                       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How many individuals have benefitted from the Education Initiative to date, and what are their characteristics?</li> <li>2. What attracts individuals to the degree, certificate, and leadership programs covered by the Education Initiative?</li> </ol>  |
| Goal 2. Provide programs that prepare educators and education leaders to teach, inspire, and enrich education experiences in a variety of settings. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. To what extent were participants satisfied with their master's degree or professional development programs?</li> <li>4. Do participants apply their new knowledge and skills in their work environment?</li> </ol>   |
| Goal 3. Increase the number of educators and education leaders placed, retained, and promoted in a variety of settings.                             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. What career guidance services do beneficiaries of the Education Initiative need?</li> </ol>  |
| <b>B. Capacity Building</b>   |  |
| Goal 4. Develop the infrastructure that will enable the programs supported by the Education Initiative to be sustained.                             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. What factors have facilitated or hindered progress toward the financial sustainability of new programs?</li> <li>7. How do grantees ensure resource allocation for investing in innovation?</li> <li>8. How have grantees built the human capital required for sustaining new and revised programs?</li> </ol> |
| Goal 5. Identify areas of programmatic and inter-institutional collaboration that can improve program quality and make improvements sustainable.    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. To what extent do the grantees engage in inter-institutional collaboration?</li> <li>10. How has the eLearning Faculty Fellowship addressed professional development needs and enhanced inter-institutional collaboration?</li> </ol>  |

The evaluation team collected data from online surveys, phone interviews, focus groups, and administrative records submitted by HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU. Selected findings are summarized below by research question.

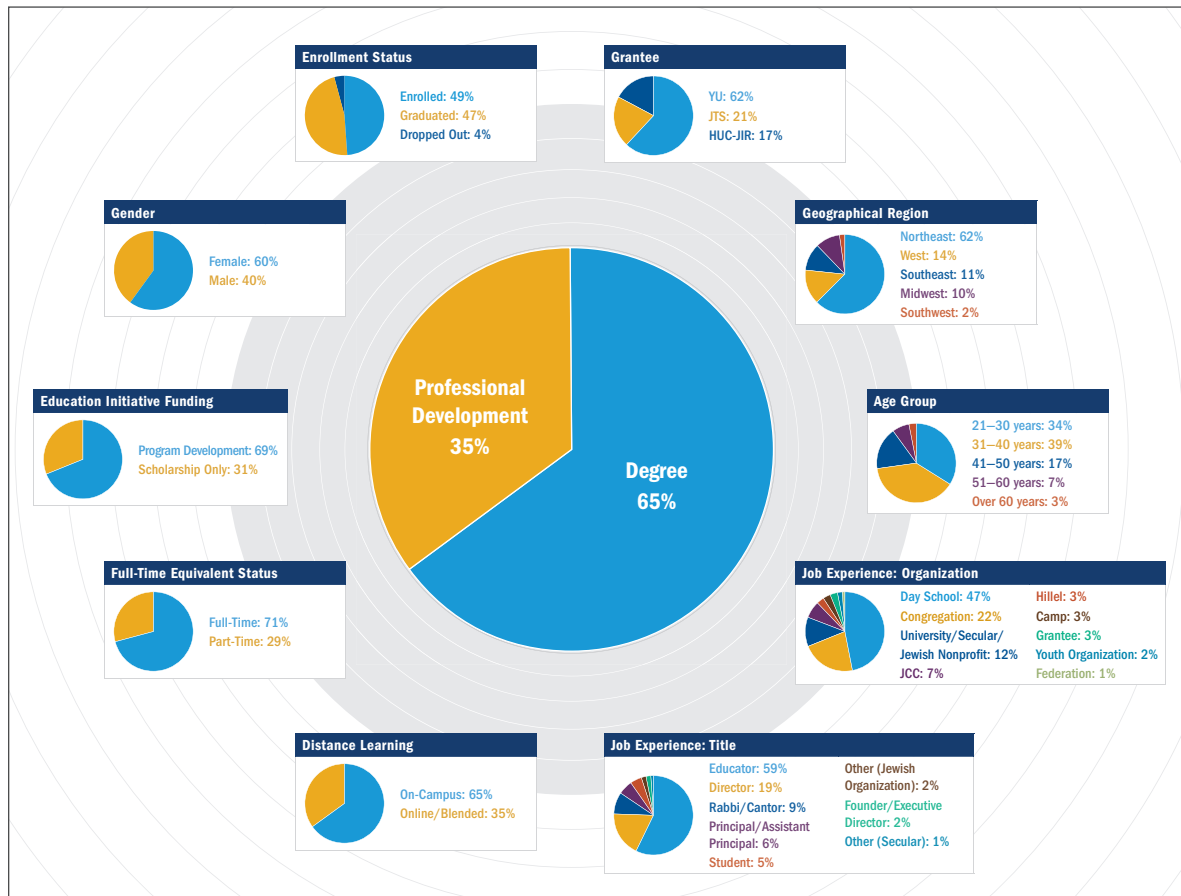
## Part A. Educator and Education Leader Preparation and Support

### Research Question 1

How many individuals have benefitted from the Education Initiative to date, and what are their characteristics?

Since its inception, the Education Initiative has supported 1,284 individuals.<sup>a</sup> The support enabled by the grant includes access to new degree and professional development programs; participation in revised and expanded programs; scholarships; and in some cases, career services. About 69% (892 individuals) of beneficiaries enrolled in “core” programs. Core programs are those that did not exist before the Education Initiative or those whose operation was substantially affected through program development and faculty hiring as part of the Education Initiative. The remaining beneficiaries (31% or 392 individuals) enrolled in programs that provide financial assistance using funding from the Education Initiative. Additional information about the beneficiaries of the Education Initiative is depicted in Exhibit B.

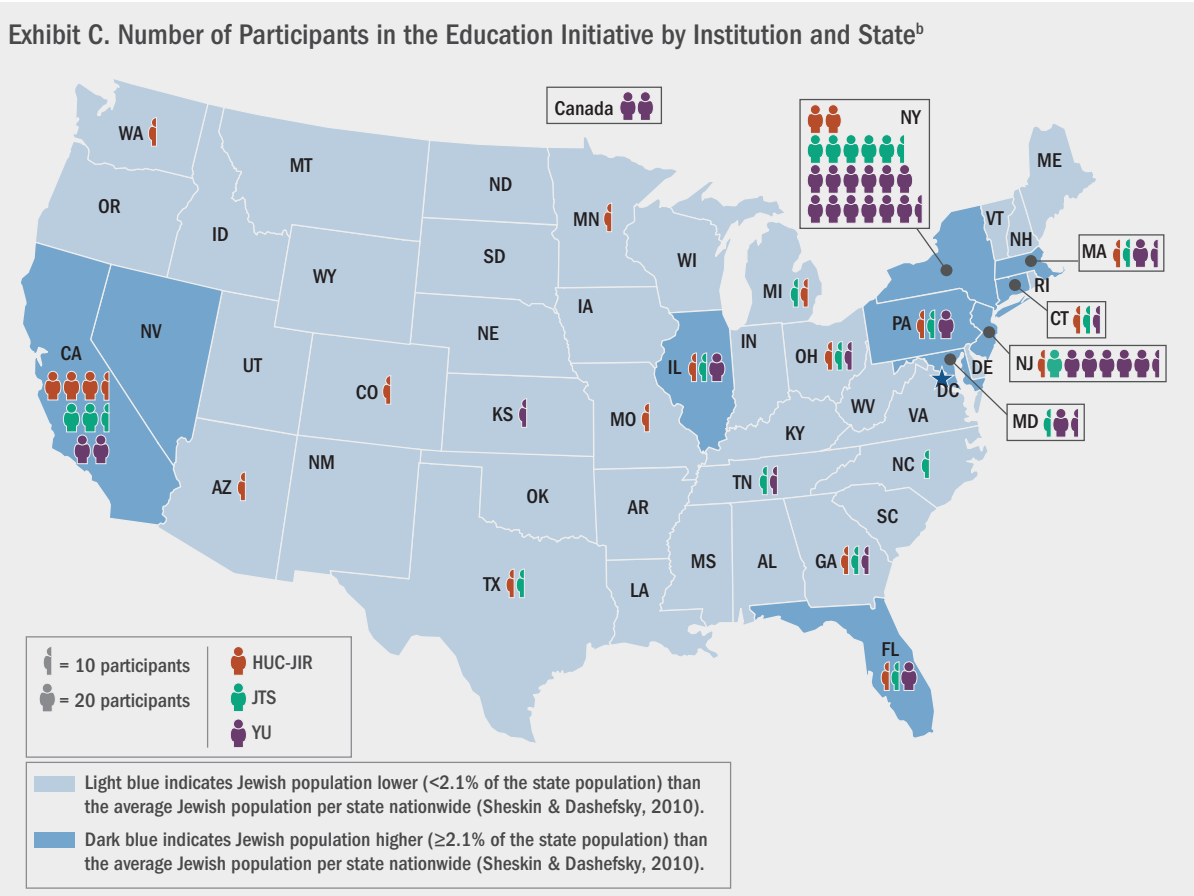
Exhibit B. The Education Initiative at a Glance



Source: Administrative records submitted by HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU; AIR surveys 2012, 2013, and 2014.

<sup>a</sup> This number does not include additional beneficiaries, such as participants of the Innovators’ Circle (YU), New Teacher Induction (YU), and Induction and Retention Initiative (HUC-JIR).

**Most of the individuals enrolled in programs at JTS and YU were from the Northeast.** In contrast, individuals enrolled in HUC-JIR were more diverse in their geographical locations, representing 17 states across the nation (Exhibit C). This is not surprising, given the location of HUC-JIR’s campuses in New York, Los Angeles, and Cincinnati. The distribution of participants across the nation suggests an opportunity to identify needs for education and education leader preparation in other locations where there are vibrant Jewish communities, such as Atlanta, Dallas, St. Paul, St. Louis, Denver, and Seattle.



**The majority participants in degree and professional development programs did not look into programs elsewhere at the time they decided to apply to HUC-JIR, JTS, or YU.** These participants generally had favorable attitudes toward lifelong learning. For example, one-half (50%) of survey respondents enrolled in master’s degree programs reported that they would have eventually sought other programs if they had not been accepted to their current institutions.

<sup>b</sup> Counts were rounded to the nearest ten. Participants of the Jewish Early Childhood Leadership Institute were counted twice for HUC-JIR and JTS. A total of 225 individuals are not represented in this map due to rounding and missing data about state of residence at the time of enrollment. Therefore, additional states may have been represented in the distribution of participants if data were available for all beneficiaries of the Education Initiative.



## Research Question 2

What attracts individuals to the degree, certificate, and leadership programs covered by the Education Initiative?

**Participants enrolled in master's degree programs because of the strong reputation of the institution, the unique quality of the program, the availability of financial assistance, and personal recommendations from people they knew and trusted.** Reputation of the institution influenced the decision of participants to enroll in master's degree programs. Participants believed that the names of HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU will open doors to job opportunities and connections in the field.<sup>c</sup> The availability of financial assistance served as a critical factor that made some individuals decide to enroll immediately rather than later. More than one-half of participants (55%) believed that they would not be able to afford a master's degree without financial assistance. But, on average, participants were willing to pay part of the tuition. Concerns about the commitment that a master's degree requires were part of the reason that personal consultation was an important part of the decision-making process. The majority of participants that earned master's degrees were influenced by conversations they had with either current students or alumni of the programs, whom participants reached through personal connections or arrangements made by HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU.

**Participants in master's degree programs commonly expressed the belief that most synagogues and organizations today require senior level staff to hold a master's degree, typically in Jewish education.** Similarly, participants indicated that a master's degree will have a positive impact on future earnings. Expectations about impact on future career and earnings varied by program and professional experience. Regardless of career aspirations, survey respondents commonly stated that they wanted to obtain a master's degree because of their commitment to be the best that they could be at their jobs.

## Research Question 3

To what extent were participants satisfied with their master's degree or professional development programs?

**Participants of master's degree programs recommended their program, while enrolled, to more than 600 individuals.** Reasons for recommendation were high satisfaction with the curriculum and instructors and with the overall value of the program. Most of the current cohort of participants in HUC-JIR's Executive Master's program felt that it had already influenced their leadership and management practices and contributions to professional development in their organizations. Alumni of YU's Accelerated Master's program reported that the program inspired them to innovate at their workplace. All participants in JTS' Davidson School Master's in Jewish Education who had spent a semester in Israel during the year expanded their knowledge of

<sup>c</sup> For three of the programs, participants reported that other master's degree programs could not provide the same kind of opportunities: HUC-JIR's Executive Master's Program is designed to meet the needs of experienced professionals who are already serving in leadership roles; YU's Accelerated Master's Program enables students to earn a master's degree in 1 year; and YU's Online Master's Program enables geographically remote individuals to earn a master's degree from Azrieli School.

multiple facets of Israel, as well as their knowledge about social differences in Israel and the complexities of contemporary Israeli society.

#### Research Question 4

Do participants apply their new knowledge and skills in their work environment?

**Participants of professional development programs reported immediate impact on their professional practice.** The experiential learning programs (HUC-JIR's Certificate in Jewish Education for Adolescents and Emerging Adults, JTS' Jewish Experiential Learning Institute, and YU's Certificate in Experiential Jewish Education) helped participants transform their practices and gain a sense of professional self-efficacy. The majority of participants in these programs reported that the programs had a positive impact on their leadership, management, and staff mentoring skills; improved their integration of Jewish learning; and improved youth engagement practices. Many program completers changed jobs or advanced in their workplace. They attributed this change to their programs. Advancement took the forms of new titles, greater program management responsibilities (including staff supervision), and creating new programs. Both cohorts of the JTS/HUC-JIR joint Jewish Early Childhood Education Leadership Institute noted that half-way into the program, they had already seen a significant change in their leadership and management skills.

#### Research Question 5

What career guidance services do beneficiaries of the Education Initiative need?

**The career service that master's degree students seek the most is access to alumni and other professionals for research career options.** Graduate students also seek counseling that links their skills and strengths to career paths. These types of counseling require personalized consultation and differ from the career services (e.g., job readiness workshops, online job banks, resume preparation, and job fairs) that are typically provided by institutions of higher education. A special case is HUC-JIR's Induction and Retention Initiative that aims to foster a smooth transition between the classroom and workplace. Although there was no consensus among interviewees regarding the type of support that would benefit them most, they shared a preference for customized consultation.

### Part B. Capacity Building

#### Research Question 6

What factors have facilitated or hindered progress toward the financial sustainability of new programs?

**HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU created draft versions of sustainability plans for programs covered by the Education Initiative.** In most cases, planning for financial sustainability reflected efforts to maintain the programs over time and expand programs' outreach and services to more Jewish communities across the United States. For all three institutions, the decision-making process for financial sustainability planning encouraged more meetings of representatives of different offices (e.g., development, admissions, financial aid, provost, etc.). The meetings served as an opportunity for different offices to state their positions and collaborate on creating scenarios for

financial sustainability. Linking financial sustainability to institutional goals was both a challenge and a facilitating factor. Financial sustainability planning benefitted from enrollment management consultation and developing alternative scenarios of program operation.

## Research Question 7

How do grantees ensure resource allocation for investing in innovation?

**Fundraising presents dilemma in terms of funding for the mission versus funding for innovation.** Although all grantees made major advancements toward meeting their institutional fundraising goals and allocating funds to newer programs, those developed as part of the Education Initiative were deprioritized. To increase the available funds, grantees expanded their fundraising efforts and revisited financial aid policies. New policies may widen the range of minimum and maximum scholarship dollars and differentiate tuition discounting based on demonstrated needs and desirability of prospective students.

## Research Question 8

How have grantees built the human capital required for sustaining new and revised programs?

**Human capital investments included new and existing faculty members.** During the Education Initiative, HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU together added about 15 full-time equivalent staff as program directors and assistant directors, 12 full-time equivalents as course instructors, and 5.5 full-time equivalents as information technology and distance learning technical support staff. These new hires are to be expected, given the number of new and expanded programs. However, the workload of administrators increased because of the number of concurrent new initiatives. Existing faculty members benefitted from professional development and opportunities to design and teach new courses. Several faculty members improved their abilities to use technology for in-class and online instruction. All grantees built a large network of mentors who work with participants in degree and professional development programs. To sustain the new programs developed as part of the Education Initiative, HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU have explored staffing combinations that are economically efficient and beneficial to the quality of programs. For example, some programs explored a combination of (a) talented adjuncts who can bring their experiences from the field into the class and (b) regular faculty members who are part of the reputation of the school and who can, in the long run, maintain connections with alumni, schools, and communities.

## Research Question 9

To what extent do the grantees engage in inter-institutional collaboration?

**A large number of faculty members in HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU believe that inter-institutional collaboration can help their school achieve its goals.** However, about one-third of the faculty members do not collaborate with professionals outside their institutions. The nature and frequency of the remainder of the sample showed some level of inter-institutional collaboration among grantees. Data show a strong connection between YU and JTS and between JTS and HUC-JIR. The relationships that JTS has built with the other two grantees may enable JTS to act as a bridge to future collaborations.

## Research Question 10

How has the eLearning Faculty Fellowship addressed professional development needs and enhanced inter-institutional collaboration?

**The inter-institutional technology collaboration that provided professional development to 18 faculty members resulted in a higher level of confidence using technology.** The professional development provided by Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning (or CCNMTL) was timely. The majority of faculty members at the Schools of Education at HUC-JIR, the William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education at JTS, and The Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration at YU believed in the importance and benefits of using technology for instruction. Faculty members were interested in using technology to achieve several goals, such as giving their students greater access to course materials, supporting more communication among students, and teaching in a more efficient and engaging manner. At the same time, most faculty members, including the 18 individuals who received eLearning Faculty Fellowships to attend the professional development, had low confidence in their abilities to use technology for instruction. After the one-year fellowship, fellows reported higher levels of confidence in their technology proficiency. They also became more intentional in selecting technology tools for their courses. Fellows saw the value of meeting faculty members from the other institutions and made suggestions for greater use of community-building practices.

## CONCLUSIONS

**The information included in this report suggests that all grantees dramatically expanded their capacities to design and offer an array of degree and professional development programs in Jewish education.** The presidents of the three institutions expressed a focus on continued advancement—that is, to preserve institutional leadership in terms of program quality and support of the field, the institutions must evolve and innovate. The presidents believed that their institutions are now better equipped to manage financial and human resources more effectively and to strategically recruit the next cohorts of participants into their programs. More data collection activities are currently underway regarding capacity-building accomplishments and the impact on program participants. Results from these efforts will be summarized in the Year 4 report about the Education Initiative.



# Year 3 Report: Overview

## INTRODUCTION

Launched in 2010, the Jim Joseph Foundation Education Initiative supports programs at three flagship Jewish institutions of higher education: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR), Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), and Yeshiva University (YU). As part of this initiative, HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU designed and are piloting 18 new programs, including seven new degree programs/concentrations;<sup>1</sup> nine new certificate, leadership, and professional development programs;<sup>2</sup> and two new induction programs.<sup>3</sup> Appendix A provides a list of programs under the Education Initiative. The Education Initiative also supports the enhancement, refinement, and financial assistance for students in seven other degree programs.<sup>4</sup> To enable such efforts, funding from the Education Initiative helps to strengthen the infrastructure by, for example, hiring new instructors and administrators and implementing new enrollment management practices.

This unprecedented scope of program development comes at a time when practitioners and policymakers are increasingly calling for innovation and change in Jewish education. For example, one type of innovation is redesigning instruction to better engage learners in active learning, reflections, and self-assessment (Chazan, 2003; Woocher, 2012). Experts and educators are seeking important advancements in many different aspects of Jewish education, including Bible studies, Jewish identity classes, Israeli studies, Holocaust studies, and the integration of Jewish and general studies (Conway, 2011; Levisohn, 2008; Sinclair, Backenroth, & Bell-Kligler, 2010).

The need for well-prepared educators is increasing in both Jewish day schools and informal education settings, including camps, Jewish community centers, and congregational schools. In informal Jewish education settings, few professional development supports enable educators to move from activities that focus on socialization to programs that deliver high-quality Jewish content (Winer, 2007). Research suggests that professional development to educators in informal education settings benefits their self-esteem and the quality of educational programs (Evans, Sicafuse, Killian, Davidson, & Loesch-Griffin, 2009).

But not all educational institutions are ready for a change, because they may not have buy-in from staff or the tools for implementation. Other institutions may be motivated to transform their activities but may fail to do so because they do not understand the resources required to adequately implement and sustain the new activities. Trying out a new practice may feel like risk-taking, and it can take a lot of time and effort to learn and effectively implement a new strategy, lesson, or activity plan (Davids, 2012). Education leaders and educators should have specific sets of knowledge and skills to successfully enhance Jewish education (Zeldin & Aron,

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<sup>1</sup> Executive Master's (HUC-JIR), Accelerated Master's (YU), School Partnerships Master's (YU), Online Master's (YU), Revised Master's in Jewish Education that includes Experiential Learning Initiative (ELI) courses and the Keshet Hadash semester in Israel program (JTS), and Executive Ed.D. (JTS).

<sup>2</sup> Certificate in Jewish Education for Adolescents and Emerging Adults (HUC-JIR), Jewish Early Childhood Education Leadership Institute (HUC-JIR and JTS), Jewish Experiential Leadership Institute (JTS), Certificate in Differentiated Instruction (YU), Certificate in Educational Technology (YU), Certificate in Online/Blended Instruction and Design (YU), Certificate in Experiential Jewish Education (YU), Online Professional Development Modules (YU), and Innovators' Circle (YU).

<sup>3</sup> Induction and Retention Initiative (HUC-JIR) and New Teacher Induction (YU).

<sup>4</sup> Master's of Arts in Jewish Education (HUC-JIR); Master's of Arts in Religious Education (HUC-JIR); Joint Master's: Jewish Education & Jewish Nonprofit Management program (HUC-JIR); Master's of Arts in Jewish Education for Rabbinical/Cantorial Students (HUC-JIR); Ed.D. in Jewish Education (JTS); B.A./M.A. program (YU); and Traditional Part-Time Azrieli Master's (YU).

1998). Making such knowledge accessible through degree programs and professional development is crucial to bringing this knowledge to the diverse field of Jewish education. For these reasons, the programs covered by the Education Initiative combine theory and practice to ensure that educators are well-equipped to handle innovation and change and that their education leaders (e.g., school principals, directors of congregational schools) are prepared to support them.

## **A LONGITUDINAL, INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE EDUCATION INITIATIVE**

American Institutes for Research (AIR) is conducting an independent evaluation of the Jim Joseph Foundation Education Initiative. This report is the third in a series of five annual reports that describe progress toward accomplishing the goals of the Education Initiative.

### **Highlights From Year 1**

The Year 1 report provided first findings of participants' satisfaction with and perception of value of the new programs (Schneider, Kidron, Brown, & Abend, 2012). Analyses of surveys showed that program participants were satisfied with programs' practical focus on a set of pedagogical and management skills, including curriculum planning; aligning instructional practices in the classroom with the needs of students; revisiting school and organizational practices, leadership, staff supervision, and management work; and creating a positive learning environment at the school. Participants assigned high value to their programs. Data from the AIR surveys suggested that approximately one-third of the students across programs and institutions were willing to pay most of the tuition and one-third were willing to pay some of the tuition.

### **Highlights From Year 2**

The Year 2 report provided first findings about how the first cohorts of students who completed the professional development programs applied their skills on the job (Schneider, Kidron, Abend, & Brawley, 2013). Employers reported in interviews that they observed substantial professional growth of their staff as a result of program participation. Consequently, they enabled greater professional growth opportunities for their employees. Participants in the certificate programs and leadership institutes reported that they have been inspired by their programs to articulate goals, create new programs or initiatives, and promote professional learning communities at their organizations. Initial data about the job placements of graduates of degree programs showed that most of their new positions were in leadership roles (e.g., directors, assistant directors, heads of schools, and program coordinators).

## **PURPOSE OF THE YEAR 3 EVALUATION**

This report about Year 3 is organized by the five goals of the Education Initiative and examines 10 research questions that are aligned with these goals. Exhibit 1 lists the research questions by goal. The following section summarizes the methodology used to collect data for this report.

## Exhibit 1. Research Questions for the Year 3 Evaluation

| Goal  | Research Questions   |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Goal 1.</b> Increase the number of highly qualified individuals who enroll in preservice and inservice Jewish education programs.</p>                       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How many individuals have benefitted from the Education Initiative to date, and what are their characteristics?</li> <li>2. What attracts individuals to the degree, certificate, and leadership programs covered by the Education Initiative?</li> </ol>  |
| <p><b>Goal 2.</b> Provide programs that prepare educators and education leaders to teach, inspire, and enrich education experiences in a variety of settings.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. To what extent were participants satisfied with their master's degree or professional development programs?</li> <li>4. Do participants apply their new knowledge and skills in their work environment?</li> </ol>   |
| <p><b>Goal 3.</b> Increase the number of educators and education leaders placed, retained, and promoted in a variety of settings.</p>                             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. What career guidance services do beneficiaries of the Education Initiative need?</li> </ol>  |
| <p><b>Goal 4.</b> Develop the infrastructure that will enable the programs supported by the Education Initiative to be sustained.</p>                             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. What factors have facilitated or hindered progress toward the financial sustainability of new programs?</li> <li>7. How do grantees ensure resource allocation for investing in innovation?</li> <li>8. How have grantees built the human capital required for sustaining new and revised programs?</li> </ol> |
| <p><b>Goal 5.</b> Identify areas of programmatic and inter-institutional collaboration that can improve program quality and make improvements sustainable.</p>    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. To what extent do the grantees engage in inter-institutional collaboration?</li> <li>10. How has the eLearning Faculty Fellowship addressed professional development needs and enhanced inter-institutional collaboration?</li> </ol>  |

## DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS IN YEAR 3 OF THE EVALUATION

### Surveys

**Current Participant Online Survey.** This online survey included 47 questions about factors that affect enrollment, the impact of the program on professional growth, and the characteristics of respondents. All participants who were enrolled in the program were invited by e-mail to complete the survey. As an incentive to participate, respondents who completed the survey were entered into a lottery to receive an iPad. Of the 239 individuals contacted, 167 completed the survey (70% response rate).

**Alumni Online Survey.** This online survey included 22 questions about program satisfaction, impact of the program on career and professional growth, and demographic characteristics of respondents. The survey was administered to alumni who graduated from YU's Accelerated Master's Program in fall 2012 and fall 2013. As an incentive to participate, respondents who completed the survey were entered into a lottery to receive an iPad. Of the 20 alumni contacted, 14 completed the survey (70% response rate).



**Faculty Survey.** This survey included 17 questions about faculty members' interest in the eLearning Faculty Fellowship (eLFF) and Open Collaborative professional development sessions, which are learning opportunities open to all faculty members; perceived knowledge of technology and related skills; attitudes toward collaboration; and the current level of collaboration with faculty members of other institutions of higher education. Of 152 faculty members contacted, 74 completed the survey (27 from HUC-JIR, 23 from JTS, and 24 from YU; 49% response rate).

## Interviews

**Participants of Three Professional Development Programs.** Thirty-minute phone interviews were conducted with members of the first cohorts from three professional development programs: YU's Certificate in Experiential Jewish Education (EJE), HUC-JIR's Certificate in Jewish Education for Adolescents and Emerging Adults (CAEA), and JTS' Jewish Experiential Leadership Institute (JELI). These semistructured interviews were conducted 6–18 months after program completion. The interviews included 10 questions about reasons for enrolling in the programs; other professional development opportunities; application of knowledge acquired through the program; relationships with other members of the cohort; and impact of the programs on compensation, job performance, and career. As an incentive to participate, interviewees received gift cards. Of the 81 individuals invited, 74 completed the interview (91% response rate).

**Participants of the Jewish Early Childhood Leadership Institute (JECALI).** Thirty-minute phone interviews were conducted with members of the first cohort of HUC-JIR/JTS' JECALI. These semistructured interviews included 10 questions about the early childhood education programs at which participants worked, including policies and structures, and the impact of the program on leadership practices, vision, engagement of families, professional development interests and other professional development opportunities, and long-term career aspirations. As an incentive to participate, interviewees received gift cards. Of the 16 members of the cohort, 12 completed the interview (75% response rate).

**Participants of the Induction and Retention Initiative.** Twenty-minute phone interviews were conducted with members of Cohorts 1 and 2 (current participants) of HUC-JIR's Induction and Retention Initiative. These semistructured interviews included eight questions about the challenges of transitioning to a new job and the value and impact of the Induction and Retention Initiative on their ability to navigate their new workplace, overcome challenges, and consider their vision for the workplace. No incentives were provided for participation. Of the 13 participants contacted, six completed the interview (46% response rate).

**Heads of Schools.** Fifteen-minute phone interviews were conducted with heads of schools and school principals whose staff participated in YU's Certificate in Educational Technology or Certificate in Online/Blended Instruction. These semistructured interviews included 10 questions about current use and vision for future use of educational technology for instruction in the classroom and for engaging students online, how educational technology affects instructional quality and student outcomes, and interest in additional professional development for teachers. No incentives were provided for participation. Of the 31 staff members invited to take an online survey, 19 completed the survey. Of them, only 11 teachers granted permission to contact their school principals. Of the 11 school principals contacted, five completed the interview (45% response rate).



**Administrators.** From January 2014 to March 2014, 1-hour interviews were conducted with presidents, deans, project directors of Education Initiative-funded programs, and additional program staff members from HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU. These semistructured interviews focused on the impact that the Education Initiative has on institutional capacity building, progress to date with developing financial sustainability plans, and challenges and accomplishments with current programs.

**eLearning Faculty Fellowship Fellows.** Twenty-minute interviews were conducted via phone with members of the first cohort of the Inter-Institutional Collaboration Initiative, which provides joint professional development about educational technology. These semistructured interviews included nine questions about expectations, previous experience with educational technology, impact of the collaboration on practice and interest in educational technology, and connections developed with fellows from other institutions. Of the 18 faculty fellows invited, 11 completed the interview (three from HUC-JIR, three from JTS, and five from YU; 61% response rate).

## Focus Groups

**Current Participants of the JTS' Keshet Hadash Semester in Israel Program.** Two focus groups were conducted with current participants in JTS' Keshet Hadash (New Connections) semester in Israel program. The focus groups were held during the participants' stay in Jerusalem. Questions focused on three main topics: meaningful experiences that participants had had so far (two-thirds of the way into the program), aspirations to become professionals who integrate Israel studies into their work, and the perceived importance and goals of an Israel education. All participants were included in the focus groups (100% response rate).

## Administrative Records and Reports by Grantees

**Student Data.** HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU provided administrative records for program participants who received financial assistance through the Education Initiative. These records included 42 data fields, such as gender, preprogram state of residence, enrollment status, reasons for leaving the program (if applicable), program start date, expected and actual date of graduation, preprogram and current employment, practicum placement information (if applicable), and postgraduation employment.

**Reports by Grantees.** Annual reports submitted by the grantees to the Jim Joseph Foundation and other reports (e.g., program summaries) were reviewed for this evaluation.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR 3 EVALUATION FINDINGS

The first part of this report, "Part A. Educator and Education Leader Preparation and Support," summarizes findings pertaining to the first three goals of the Education Initiative. By achieving the first three goals of the initiative, combined, the Education Initiative will affect a significant number of education leaders and educators by attracting them to high-quality programs, providing them with learning supports, and equipping them with tools for career growth and for becoming change agents in the field of Jewish education. The second part, "Part B. Capacity Building," reports on progress to date with regard to accomplishing the fourth and fifth goals of the Education Initiative. By accomplishing these two goals, combined, the Education Initiative will promote long-term continuation of the programs developed and lay the foundation for further developments.



# Part A. Educator and Education Leader Preparation and Support

## GOAL 1: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS WHO ENROLL IN PRESERVICE AND INSERVICE JEWISH EDUCATION PROGRAMS

### Introduction

Understanding the makeup of the student body and factors influencing participation can inform student recruitment practices and tracking of goals met with regard to reaching prospective students. Substantial investments in student recruitment were made during Year 3 of the initiative. Following consultation with Noel Levitz (an organization specializing in enrollment management), HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU revised their websites and created entry forms to enable further communications with prospective students. For example, HUC-JIR created a new website that contains informational media about its programs and intake forms for collecting contact information from prospective students. HUC-JIR also launched an extensive online advertising initiative that attracted a significant number of visitors to its website.

Additionally, HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU created or expanded on each of their comprehensive databases of prospective students to systematically plan and track recruitment activities. For example, YU's Center for the Jewish Future constructed a database that contained nearly 5,000 leads to prospective students. This database is used to launch large scale communications about the Certificate in Experiential Jewish Education program.

Servicing the field is a strategy to create interest in degree and professional development programs. For example, JTS's William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education launched an eJournal (Gleanings) that is distributed by email to subscribers. This eJournal provides a service to the field and also attracts attention to the school and its programming. Faculty members at Davidson also offer workshops to Jewish day schools. This type of professional development supports capacity building at schools and reminds teachers about opportunities for continued education.

Aside from large-scale outreach efforts, HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU continue to maintain "high-touch" recruitment efforts to personally converse with prospective students and potential influencers (e.g., Jewish studies faculty, community educators, rabbis) and enable conversations about the options (part-time vs. full-time; distance learning vs. on-campus) that the schools offer. Through high-touch recruitment activities, customized messages can be tailored to a range of individuals, from career changers to experienced educators. For example, JTS' Davidson School added career nights and open house events that can be tailored to individuals from different professions and courses of study.

A final type of strategy to attract talented individuals to opportunities for continued education is consideration of the format, schedule, and breadth of programs offered. For example, schools are considering compressed schedules, distance learning options, and a richer menu of courses from which to choose. YU's University-School Partnership Institute transformed its year-long online certificate programs into 2-week and 4-week online professional development

modules. While meeting enrollment goals and retaining participants in the year-long certificate programs was a challenge, the new format is a success. Within a few months of launch, YU enrolled more than 100 individuals. Some of these individuals enrolled in more than one professional development module. In total, 229 spots were filled in courses. YU's Azrieli School and the Office of General Counsel are currently working to obtain states' authorizations to offer an online master's degree program to residents in states across the nation. The program has already begun its international outreach. So far, 40% of the individuals admitted to the Online Master's Program are from other countries (e.g., Canada, Chile, and Israel).

To capture the outcomes of recruitment efforts during the past 3 years, this section provides information about the population reached by the Education Initiative to date and factors that have influenced enrollment.

This section addresses the first and second research questions of the Year 3 evaluation:

1. How many individuals have benefitted from the Education Initiative to date, and what are their characteristics?
2. What attracts individuals to the degree, certificate, and leadership programs covered by the Education Initiative?

## Research Question 1

How many individuals have benefitted from the Education Initiative to date, and what are their characteristics?

### Findings: Goal 1

*Finding 1: Since its inception, the Jim Joseph Foundation's Education Initiative has supported 1,284 individuals.<sup>5</sup>*

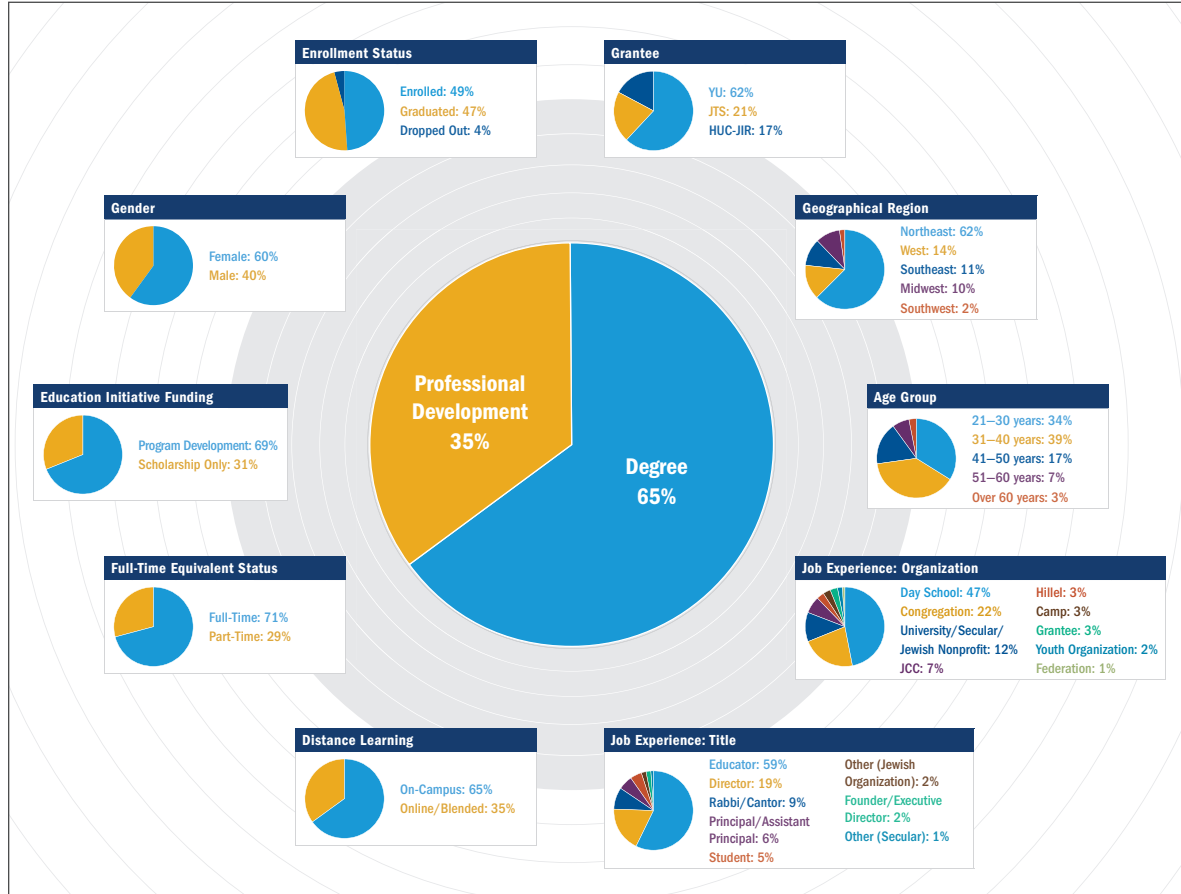
The types of support enabled by the Education Initiative include access to new degree and professional development programs (i.e., certificate programs and leadership institutes); revised and expanded programs; scholarships; and in some cases, career services. The Education Initiative has enrolled a significant number of students in degree and professional development programs. About 69% (892 individuals) of beneficiaries enrolled in "core" programs. Core programs are those that did not exist before the Education Initiative or those whose operation was substantially affected through program development and faculty hiring as part of the Education Initiative. The remaining beneficiaries (31% or 392 individuals) enrolled in programs that provide financial assistance using funding from the Education Initiative. Most of the beneficiaries (62%) enrolled at YU. However, nearly one-half of them were not part of the core programs. The majority of beneficiaries (65%) enrolled in degree programs. Nearly one-half (47%) of the beneficiaries of the Education Initiative have graduated. Nearly three-fourths of the beneficiaries (73%) were younger than 40 years of age.

Salary data were obtained for participants of the first cohorts of YU's Certificate in EJE, HUC-JIR's CAEA, and JTS' JELI. The average salary of participants was \$66,227 (standard deviation = \$35,221). This finding matches the average salary of \$66,044 reported by

<sup>5</sup> This number does not include additional beneficiaries, such as participants of the Innovators' Circle (YU), New Teacher Induction (YU), and Induction and Retention Initiative (HUC-JIR).

Walfish et al. (2013) for Jewish education professionals in similar professional roles. Data are insufficient about salaries of graduates from master’s degree programs. Future reports will include information about salaries of new alumni from degree programs. Exhibit 2 provides an overview of the characteristics of the beneficiaries of the Education Initiative.

**Exhibit 2. The Education Initiative at a Glance**

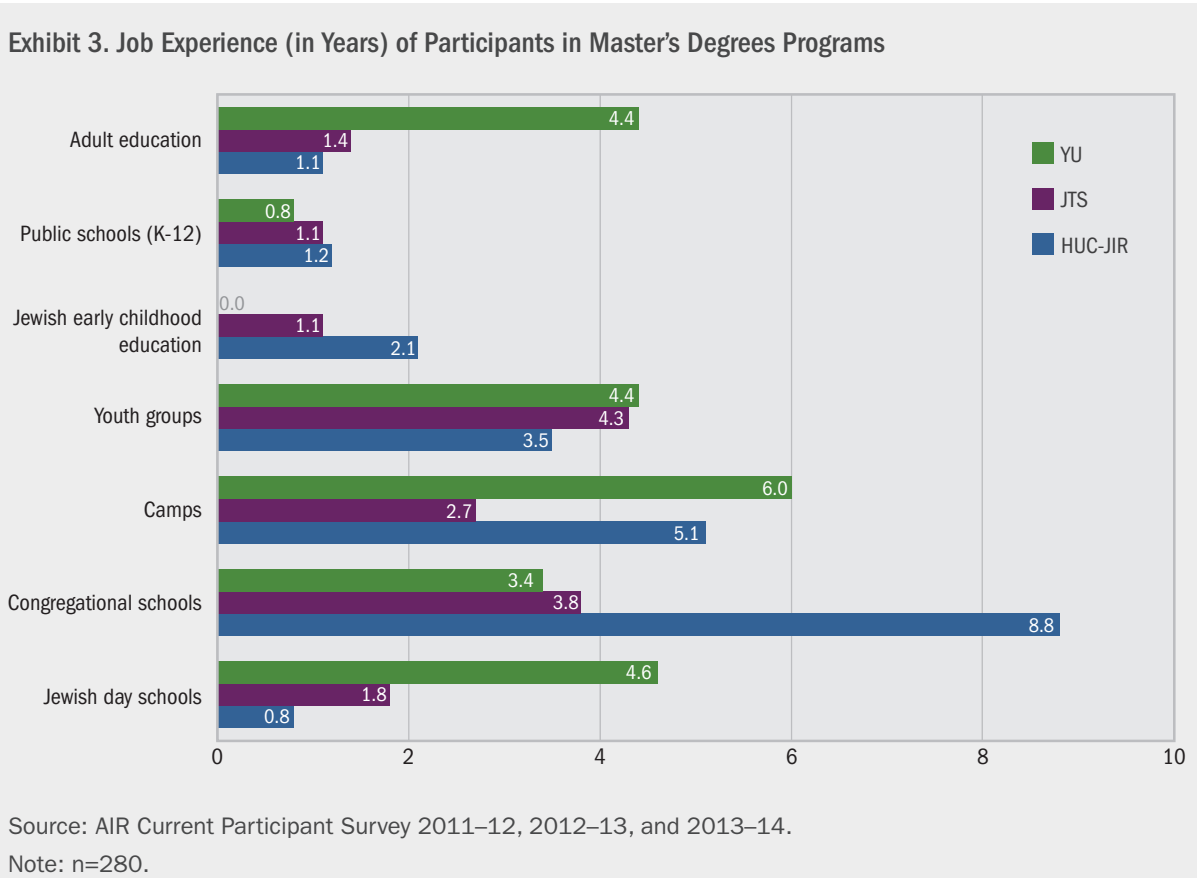


Source: Administrative records submitted by HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU; AIR surveys 2012, 2013, and 2014.

**Finding 2: At least 92% of the beneficiaries of the Education Initiative had job experiences in Jewish education.**

The programs covered by the Education Initiative primarily attracted individuals who were already working in Jewish education. About 2% of the participants worked previously for Jewish organizations in positions not related to education, and 1% could be considered “career changers,” as they worked previously in non-education positions for non-Jewish organizations. Five percent of the participants were undergraduate students in the same or other institutions of higher education before enrolling in their master’s degree programs. Exhibit 3 presents the number of years of professional experience that participants in five master’s degree programs (YU’s Accelerated Master’s, YU’s Online Master’s, JTS’ Davidson School M.A., HUC-JIR’s Residential M.A., and HUC-JIR’s Executive Master’s) had when they took the survey during their first or second year in their master’s degree program. Data show that participants from HUC-JIR and JTS tended to have primary work experience in supplementary school settings (e.g., congregational schools and Jewish community centers [JCCs]), camps, and youth groups. Participants from YU tended to have worked in Jewish day schools, camps, youth groups, and

adult education settings (e.g., Hillel). Participants across all grantees had some work experience (average 1 year) in the public school system.<sup>6</sup>

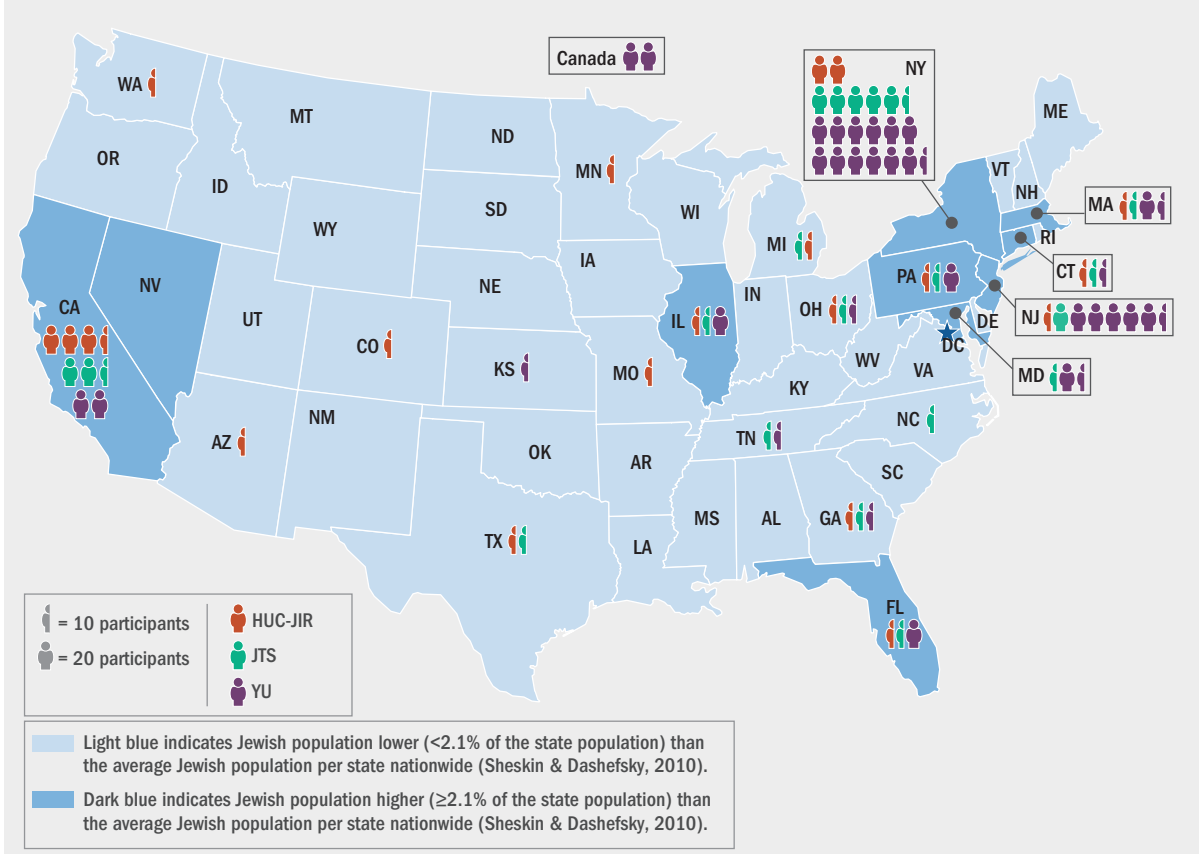


**Finding 3: The Education Initiative benefitted primarily professionals from the Northeast.**

Most individuals enrolled in JTS and YU were from the Northeast. In contrast, individuals enrolled in HUC-JIR were more diverse in their geographical locations, representing 17 states across the nation (Exhibit 4). The spread of participants across the nation suggests a need to identify opportunities for education and education leader preparation in other locations with vibrant Jewish communities, such as Atlanta, GA; Dallas, TX; St. Louis, MO; Denver, CO; and Seattle, WA.

<sup>6</sup> This finding focuses on the types of work experiences rather than the number of years of work experience because of differences in the nature of grantees' master's degree programs and prospective students targeted by each program. For example, HUC-JIR's Executive Master's program targets professional leaders with at least 5 years of experience in a leadership role.

Exhibit 4. Number of Participants in the Education Initiative by Institution and State<sup>7</sup>



**Finding 4:** Expanded recruitment efforts reached individuals who did not actively seek opportunities for continued education.

According to data from surveys of the three cohorts (2011–12, 2012–13, and 2013–14), the majority (82%) of participants who were enrolled in master’s programs at the time of the survey did not look into programs at the time they decided to apply to HUC-JIR, JTS, or YU (Exhibit 5). Of those who applied to other institutions, 73% were accepted to these institutions. The other institutions offered scholarships to 72% of those who applied and were accepted elsewhere.

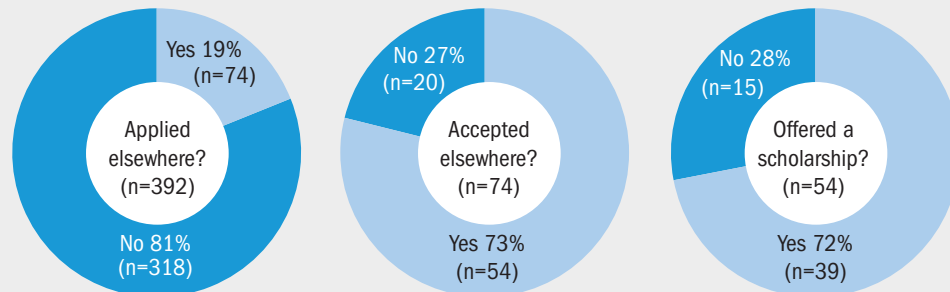
Phone interviews present similar findings. Phone interviews with the first cohorts of the experiential education certificate and leadership programs (HUC-JIR’s CAEA program, YU’s EJE program, and JTS’ JELI) revealed that most participants did not look for professional development programs elsewhere at the time they heard about and decided to apply to CAEA, EJE, or JELI. These participants generally had favorable attitudes toward lifelong learning.

One-half (50%) of survey respondents enrolled in master’s degree programs reported that they would have eventually sought other programs if they had not been accepted into the programs of the Education Initiative. This survey response may seem contradictory to the fact that most of these respondents did not actively seek a master’s degree. We offer here two possible explanations to reconcile this difference. First, interviews with administrators of admissions offices indicated that the recruitment efforts triggered interest in master’s in Jewish education

<sup>7</sup> Counts were rounded to the nearest ten. Participants in JECALI were counted twice for HUC-JIR and JTS. A total of 225 individuals are not represented in this map because of rounding and missing data about state of residence at the time of enrollment. Therefore, additional states may be represented in the distribution of participants, but data are not available for all beneficiaries of the Education Initiative.

programs. These recruitment efforts included discussions with recruiters and alumni about the professional and personal benefits of enrolling in the programs supported by the Education Initiative. Therefore, if these individuals had not been accepted, they may have continued to submit applications to master's programs because of the persuasive power of the recruitment activities. Secondly, because the respondents completed this survey while at the program, they may have approached the survey question from the point of view of individuals who had already bought into the importance of a master's degree.

**Exhibit 5. Percentage of Participant's With Master's Degrees Who Applied to Other Schools, Were Accepted, and Were Offered Scholarships**



Source: AIR Current Participant Survey 2011–12, 2012–13, and 2013–14.

Note: The programs represented in this chart include Executive Master's (HUC-JIR), Master's in Jewish Education (MAJE), Master's in Religious Education (MARE), MAJE and MARE for rabbinical and cantorial students, Joint Master of Arts Program in Jewish or Religious Education and Jewish Nonprofit Management Programs (HUC-JIR), Azrieli Graduate Schools' Traditional Part-Time Master's Program (YU), Accelerated Master's (YU), School Partnerships Master's (YU), and the Davidson School's Master of Arts in Jewish Education (JTS).

## Research Question 2

What attracts individuals to the degree, certificate, and leadership programs covered by the Education Initiative?

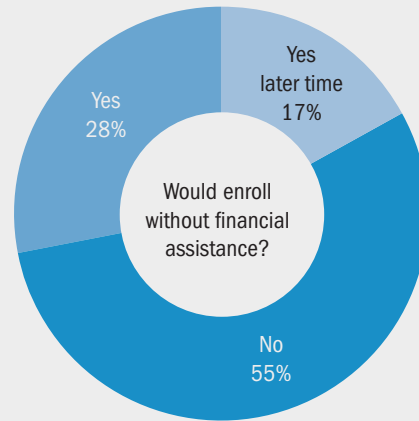
**Finding 5:** *Participants who earned master's degrees enrolled because of the strong reputation of the institution, the unique quality of the program, the availability of financial assistance, and personal recommendations from people they knew and trusted.*

Reputation of the institution influenced the decision of participants to enroll in a master's degree program. Participants believed that the names of HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU will open doors to job opportunities and connections in the field.<sup>8</sup> The availability of financial assistance served as a critical factor that made some individuals decide to enroll immediately rather than later. More than one-half of participants (55%) believed that they would not be able to afford a master's degree without financial assistance (Exhibit 6). But, on average, participants were willing to pay part of the tuition. More information about willingness to pay is presented in the discussion about Goal 4.

<sup>8</sup> For three of the programs, participants reported that other master's degree programs could not provide the same kind of opportunities: HUC-JIR's Executive Master's Program is designed to meet the needs of experienced professionals who are already serving in leadership roles; YU's Accelerated Master's Program enables students to earn a master's degree in 1 year; and YU's Online Master's Program enables geographically remote individuals to earn a master's degree from Azrieli School.

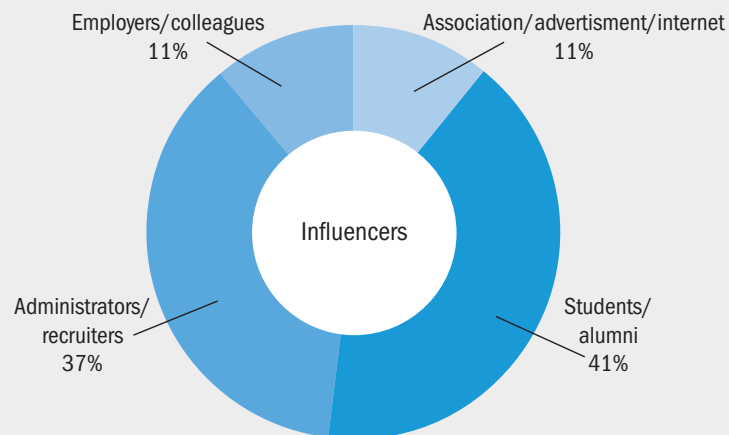


**Exhibit 6. Willingness of Participants in Master's Degree Programs to Enroll Without Financial Assistance**



Concerns about the commitment that a master's degree requires were part of the reason that personal consultation was an important part of the decision-making process. The majority of participants in the master's programs supported by the Education Initiative were influenced by conversations they had had with either current students or alumni of the programs, whom participants reached through personal connections or arrangements made by HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU or representatives of the schools (i.e., admissions office staff and program administrators) (Exhibit 7).

**Exhibit 7. Sources of Influence on the Decision to Enroll in a Master's Degree Program**



Among the professional development programs, the nature of influencers varied by program. YU's online certificate programs on online/blended learning and educational technology target primarily teachers at Jewish day schools. The main influencers for these programs are the school principals and school heads. The majority (89%) respondents to the current participant survey reported that their school principals encouraged them to enroll in the course. YU's certificate program in EJE targets professionals from a variety of settings, including Hillels, JCCs, Jewish federations, and nonprofit organizations. About two-thirds (65%) of the participants reported that their employers or supervisors recommended the program to them. JTS' JELI builds on internal recruitment within the JCCs for the program, and therefore, supervisors' recommendations have had a key role in every participant that enrolls. In contrast, less than one-third of participants in HUC-JIR's CAEA (27%) and JECALI (29%) were influenced by



recommendations from supervisors. Gathering information about potential influencers for each program can inform recruitment efforts and expectations about supervisors' support. Participants who reported enrolling in the program because of strong encouragement from their supervisors were also (a) likely to receive support for their studies (e.g., not having to charge to personal time when traveling) and more opportunities to apply their knowledge and (b) more likely to gain higher level professional responsibilities at their workplace.

***Finding 6: Participants who earned master's degrees expected salary increases after graduation.***

Participants in master's degree programs commonly expressed the belief that most synagogues and organizations today require senior level staff to hold a master's degree, typically in Jewish education. Similarly, participants indicated a belief that a master's degree would have a positive impact on future earnings. On average, participants of HUC-JIR's Master's in Jewish Education and Master's in Religious Education (excluding rabbis and cantors) programs estimated that the annual salary in their first job after graduation would be \$23,000 higher than their annual salary in their previous job. Participants in JTS' Master's Track had a more modest estimate, because several of them were part-time students and wanted to keep their current jobs after graduation. On average, these participants (excluding rabbis and cantors) expected that their annual salary would be \$11,000 higher after graduation. Similarly, participants of YU's Online Master's in Jewish Education estimated a modest annual salary increase after graduation (around \$4,750), but this may be because they did not anticipate leaving their current jobs in the immediate future. Expectations for salary increase are common motivators of enrollment in master's of education programs, with average salary increases ranging from 10% to 17% of educators' salaries (Hill, 2007; Troop, 2013).

Participants in HUC-JIR's Executive Master's program represent a different group. The program has included directors of education, youth programming, and religious schools in congregations; Hillel directors; rabbis; and cantors. Participants expected some impact on their annual salary after graduation (an average increase of \$6,300). Most of the survey respondents did not expect to change workplace or position. These participants joined the program because of the opportunity to study at HUC-JIR and because of their commitment to be the best that they could be at their jobs. This finding also confirms previous research findings suggesting a positive but small association between executive's compensation and education attainment (Banghøj, Gabrielsen, Petersen, & Plenborg, 2010). Similarly, participants in HUC-JIR's Master's of Arts in Jewish Education for Rabbinical/Cantorial Students thought that the program would have a minimal impact (if any) on their salaries. However, they felt that the degree would enable them to be professionals, as two participants noted:

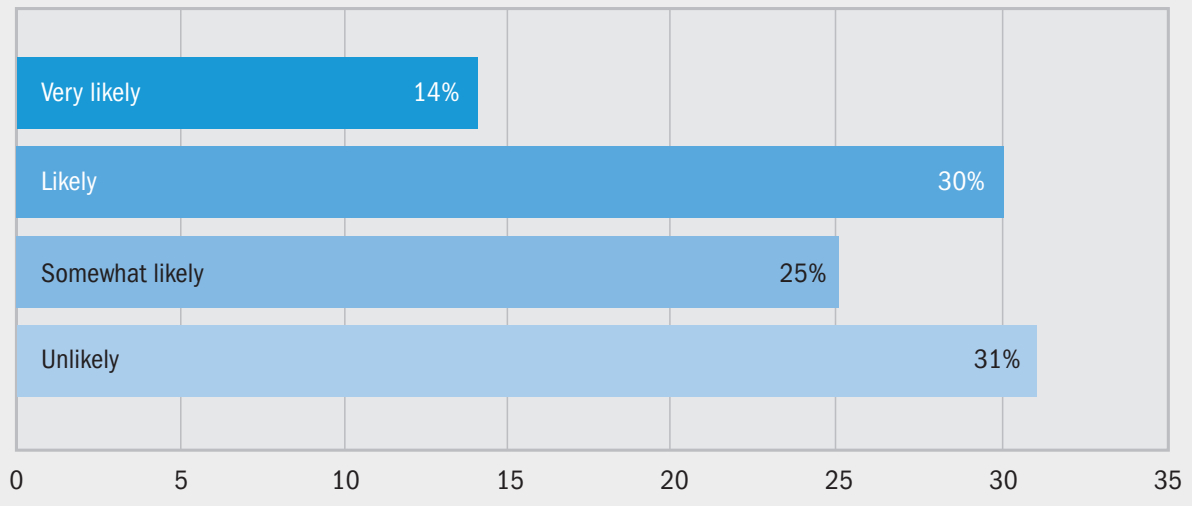
*I have always had a passion for education. This degree will help me shape my vision and help me guide the educational development of a future organization that will employ me.*

*[The program gave me] personal and professional development that really helped me explore my own and others' views on Jewish education, which is central to what it means to be a Jewish professional in many capacities.*

**Finding 7:** Three key motivations for enrolling in certificate and leadership programs were career advancement, lifelong learning, and desire to innovate Jewish education.

**Career Advancement.** Most participants (76%) in the certificate and leadership programs believed that the programs would make them more marketable, particularly because the programs are formal, branded, and provided by institutions of higher education with strong reputations. For example, after completing YU's Certificate in EJE, 12 of 37 interviewees changed jobs. They attributed the change in part to EJE. Other interviewees noted that at the time of enrollment they thought that getting this kind of training would help them think about the future of their career and give them more professional opportunities going forward. Nearly one-half (44%) of the participants in the certificate and leadership programs who responded to the current participant survey thought that it was likely or very likely that they would receive greater job responsibilities, which would eventually lead to a promotion at their workplace (Exhibit 8).

**Exhibit 8. Percentage of Participants in the Certificate and Leadership Programs Who Felt That Program Completion Would Lead to Greater Job Responsibilities and Promotion**



**Lifelong Learning.** Data collected through interviews suggest that participants see themselves as above average in terms of their passion for lifelong learning. As one participant noted, “I always believe in trying to get as much education and learning as possible.” These individuals expressed that they thrive on keeping abreast of the most current knowledge and practice. They did not necessarily see at the time of enrollment how the program would directly support their day-to-day activities. However, they believed that by expanding their horizons, they would generally become better professionals, and through that, would improve the quality of their program. But even those passionate about continued education were concerned about their abilities to manage a degree program while maintaining a job and family responsibilities. Therefore, for them, the professional development programs were a good opportunity to receive education without the full commitment of a 2-year master's degree program. As one interviewee noted:

*I was very interested in furthering this career path, but I wasn't entirely sure if I [could] commit to a full 2-year education program, while I wasn't entirely positive that it was the path I wanted to take. This level [of commitment] was a little*

*intimidating. And so, since this [certificate program] was only a year long and fit within my schedule, I didn't really have to worry about taking too much time off from work and other responsibilities. That's what appealed to me—the fact that I was able to take these master's level courses within the timeframe that allowed me to.*

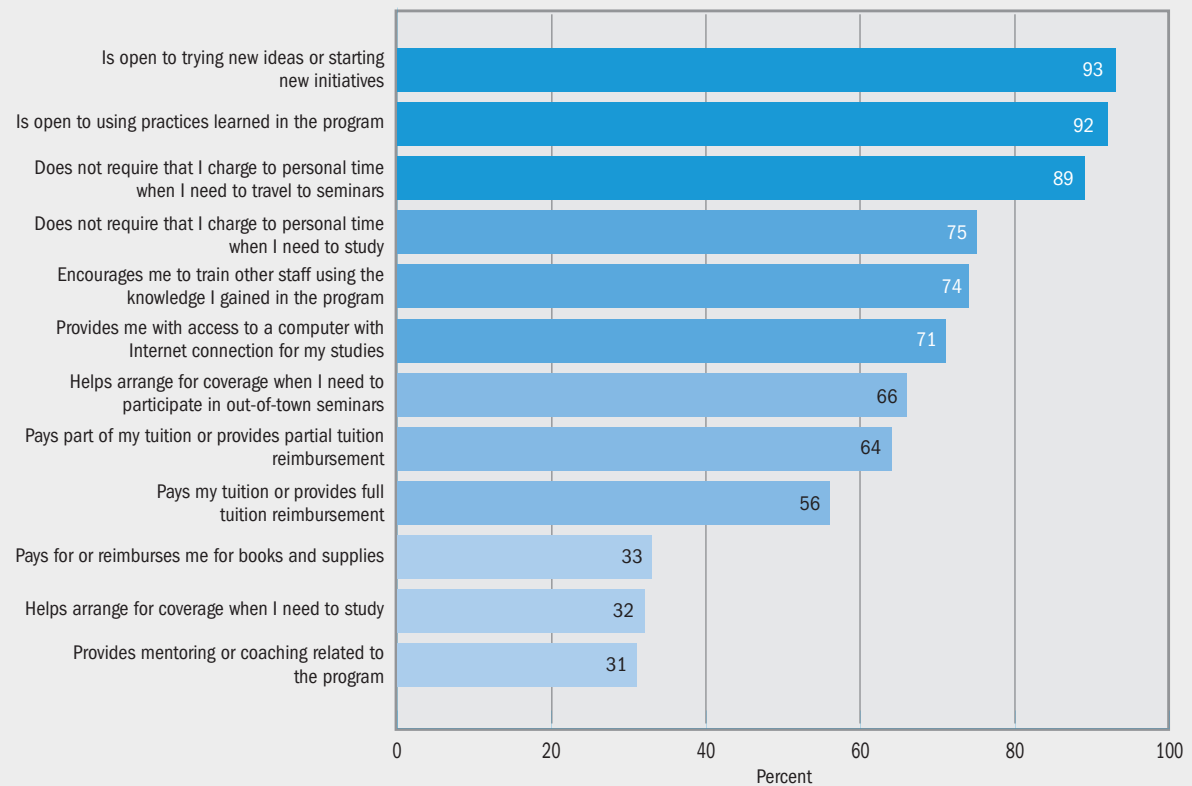
Participants in the experiential learning programs (CAEA, EJE, and JELI) believed that professional development opportunities were generally available elsewhere, although not at the same level of rigor, scope, and depth. For example, about 85% of these interviewees responded in the affirmative—that other accessible professional development opportunities are available. Similarly, interviews with the first cohort of JECALI revealed that 50% of the participants had access to other professional development opportunities. The most common opportunities listed were professional conferences organized locally through Jewish federations and nationally through professional associations (e.g., Early Childhood Educators of Reform Judaism) and higher education institutions (e.g., Hebrew College).

However, interviewees and survey respondents perceived that professional development opportunities from the Education Initiative were distinctively different from other opportunities. Participants felt like they gained cutting edge knowledge in areas of expertise that were underdeveloped in other professional development programs and seminars. Additionally, several participants felt that other accessible professional development programs did not offer sufficient integration with Jewish learning and that this need was met by the programs covered by the Education Initiative.

***Finding 8: Enrollment in professional development programs benefitted from employer encouragement and support.***

In some cases, school principals convinced teachers to enroll in professional development programs, such as YU's online certificate programs. In other instances, participants applied for enrollment because they perceived that their employer would provide recognition and opportunities to implement new knowledge. Additional types of employer support included tuition assistance (paying either some or all of tuition) and not requiring participants to use personal time to travel to seminars (Exhibit 9).

### Exhibit 9. Percentage of Respondents Who Agreed With Specific Statements About Receiving Employer Support as a Result of Participating in the Program



Source: AIR Current Participant Survey 2013–14.

Note: n=172.

### Summary: Goal 1

The reasons that current students choose to participate in the Education Initiative’s programs are similar to those that drive students to enroll in many other programs. For example, McNeese, Roberson, and Haines (2008) conducted a study with participants that earned master’s degrees in education across three universities. The study identified the top three reasons for pursuing a master’s degree: (a) a desire to make an impact on children and youth and provide better education; (b) facilitate systemic change and education reform; and (c) become education leaders to improve schools, raise standards of education, and unify school–home–community connections. In studies that explored motivations specific to enrollment in Jewish education leadership programs, strong commitment to the field and desire to follow one’s passion and inspire others were also expressed (e.g., Tobias, Chertok, & Rosin, 2011). Similarly, Stiber (2001) reported that common motivators to pursue a master’s degree were personal satisfaction, advanced knowledge for entrepreneurship, and aspirations for advancement within the current organization.

The challenge for recruiters, then, is to identify individuals who are interested in professional growth and inform them about accessible learning opportunities. These individuals may already be engaged in other learning opportunities (e.g., conferences and regional workshops) or may

have already discussed with their employer aspirations for career advancement. The following section describes how those who are enrolled in degree and professional development programs see their studies as valuable for their work and career. Goal 2 of the Education Initiative is closely linked to Goal 1, as the development of high-quality programs should lead to high retention rates of participants in their programs and referrals by satisfied students and alumni.

## **GOAL 2: PROVIDE PROGRAMS THAT PREPARE EDUCATORS AND EDUCATION LEADERS TO TEACH, INSPIRE, AND ENRICH EDUCATION EXPERIENCES IN A VARIETY OF SETTINGS**

### **Introduction**

All programs covered by the Education Initiative share a common goal: Equip educators and education leaders with the knowledge and skills so they can design or reshape the education programs in their educational settings. The degree and professional development programs provided by HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU certainly aim to instill knowledge and skills in participants. But the programs also strive to build confidence in participants and inspire them to apply what they have learned to improve the field of Jewish education. Anecdotal evidence reported by the Jewish Education Service of North America (2009) suggests that participants in a wide variety of professional development programs may feel more confident in their roles as Jewish educators and acquire a greater sense of vision, goals, and understanding of how to meet these goals. But not all professional programs are the same (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). The certificate programs and leadership institutes developed as part of the Education Initiative are designed as rigorous programs based on high standards of content and participant support. Accordingly, this section focuses on the satisfaction that participants get from their programs and how these programs influence their day-to-day practices and long-term professional aspirations.

This section addresses the third and fourth research questions of the Year 3 evaluation:

3. To what extent were participants satisfied with their master's degree or professional development programs?
4. Do participants apply their new knowledge and skills in their work environment?

### **Research Question 3**

To what extent were participants satisfied with their master's degree or professional development programs?

### **Findings: Goal 2**

*Finding 1: The majority of participants were highly satisfied with their degree and professional development programs.*

Participants in master's degree programs recommended their program, while enrolled, to more than 600 individuals. Reasons for recommendation were high satisfaction with the curriculum

and instructors and with the overall value of the program. About one-fourth (24%) of the participants in the master's degree programs had not yet recommended their programs at the time of the survey.

Another indicator of satisfaction is retention. Of 280 survey respondents, 55 individuals (20%) considered leaving their programs. Of them, 15 individuals were generally disappointed with the program, and the remaining 40 individuals expressed other difficulties related to work, family, and health reasons. Of 244 survey respondents, 40 individuals (16%) considered leaving their programs. Of them, six individuals expressed uncertainty about the applicability of the program's content to their work, and the remaining 34 respondents expressed difficulties balancing work with study, personal, and health reasons.

Finally, perception of program quality relative to other programs can also indicate level of satisfaction. This comparative question was presented to the 2013–14 cohort of YU's Certificate in Educational Technology and Certificate in Online/Blended Instruction and Design. About one-half (53%) of the participants in these certificate programs rated these programs as higher quality and more useful than other professional development programs that they had attended in the previous 3 years. About one-third (32%) of the respondents reported that they did not have a point of comparison because they did not attend professional development programs in the previous 3 years. Of the remaining respondents, 5% rated their programs as having the same quality as other professional development programs and 11% rated their programs as being less useful than other professional development programs.

The following sections provide additional findings about participants' satisfaction with their degree and professional development programs. These findings serve as examples and are not intended to be a comprehensive review of all programs supported by the Education Initiative.

***Finding 2: Participants of HUC-JIR's Executive Master's program reported that the program was directly relevant to their work.***

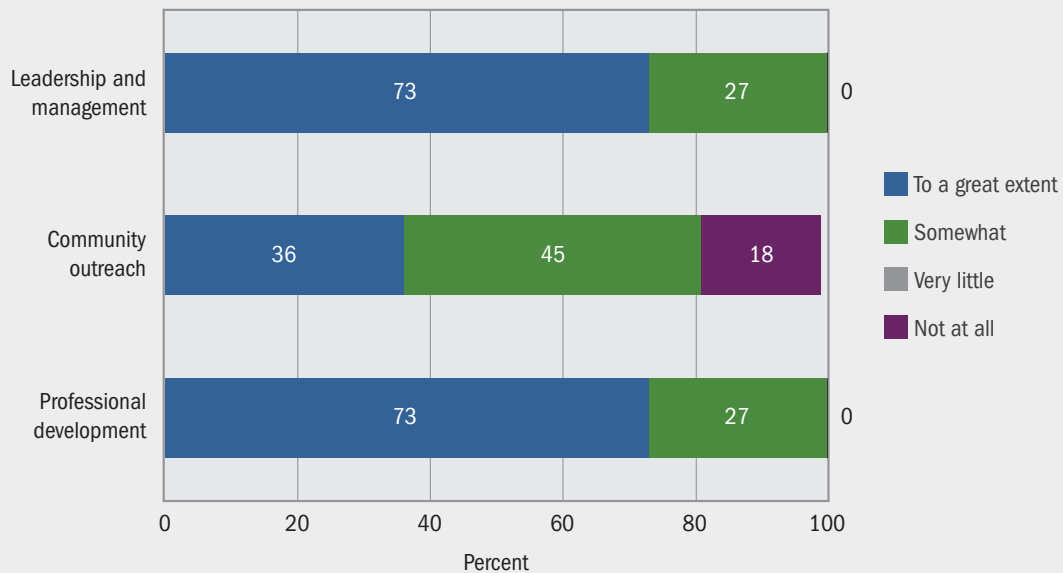
The AIR Current Participant Survey was administered to the current cohort of the Executive Master's program halfway into the program. Therefore, data are not available for areas not yet covered by the curriculum (e.g., instructional improvement). The timing of the survey offered a glimpse into the professional growth of participants so far. The Executive Master's program was designed as an inservice program for working professionals. Respondents to the survey worked in organizations that served, on average, more than 200 school-age children and youth or several hundred young adults, and supervised, on average, 10 employees. About 40% of respondents characterized their communities as "small but stable," 10% as "large and vibrant," and 10% as "declining." The remaining 40% were not sure how to characterize their communities.

One participant noted:

*I like the fact that what we are learning is usually immediately applicable. I have made changes in our Professional Learning philosophy and am more confident in broadening the dialogue about issues of philosophy and vision.*

As shown in Exhibit 10, most participants felt that the program had already influenced their activities "to a great extent" or "somewhat," especially regarding leadership and management practices and contributions to professional development in their organizations.

**Exhibit 10. Degree to Which Programs Influenced Three Areas of Work**



Source: AIR Current Participant Survey 2013–14.

Note: n=12.

**Finding 3:** Alumni of YU’s Accelerated Master’s Program reported that the program provided them with the knowledge that they needed for curriculum development and teaching.

In early 2013 and 2014, data were gathered from surveys of 14 of the 20 individuals who had completed their master’s degree requirements. All respondents (100%) to the survey were employed at the time of the survey. Alumni worked in Jewish day schools and small businesses that provided Jewish education services. About 42% of the respondents rated the Accelerated Master’s Program as “exceeded expectations” and 58% rated the program as “met expectations.” Overall, alumni felt that the program was a positive experience that enabled them to develop the skills they were looking for within 1 year. Day school teachers were more satisfied with the applicability of the program to their job than professionals working in informal education and adult education settings, conveying the challenge of finding a sufficient variety of course electives to meet the needs of individuals who aspire to work in diverse educational settings.

Respondents had this to say about the program:

*The discussions in my graduate courses with the teachers and fellow cohort members were rich and stimulating, allowing me to explore and create my own personal approach to teaching. For example, the way I structure a series of lectures (or shiurim) is often done using curriculum-building skills from my graduate studies.*

*Mastering all of the skills and content that I learned in Azrieli has freed up much of [my preparation] and professional development time to develop richer initiatives, such as project-based learning, programs for my school, and community outreach. As a result, I am taking on a greater leadership role within my school.*



*[The Accelerated Master's Program] has given me the tools to get involved in curriculum development, and in particular has given me an edge in bringing formal education skills to informal Jewish education and kiruv [the practice of bringing Jews closer to Judaism], leading to a job offer in developing a curriculum for an experiential kiruv program.*

*Lively discussions in our Azrieli classes helped me personally develop a teaching philosophy based on pedagogical foundations and Jewish values. I was challenged by both professors and fellow cohort members to articulate my educational philosophy, upon which I now firmly ground my teaching. The pedagogical skills I have learned in Azrieli have been instrumental in my current position.*

**Finding 4:** *Kesher Hadash (the optional semester in Israel program that is a part of JTS' Davidson School's Master's Program) received high ratings.*

Students in JTS' William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education have the option of spending a 5-month semester in Israel to take academic courses delivered at JTS' Schocken Institute and David Yellin Teachers College in Jerusalem. Participants also enroll in an ulpan whereby participants improve their modern Hebrew language skills; engage in experiential modules, such as museum tours and day trips; and participate in extended dialogue groups (mifgashim) with Jewish and non-Jewish Israelis, as well as Palestinians. Each participant is assigned a tutor who helps the student navigate the new content and his/her previous and current attitudes toward Israel. A complete description of the Kesher Hadash semester in Israel program is available in Backenroth and Sinclair (manuscript submitted for publication).

The Kesher Hadash program addresses a need in the field, recognizing that Israeli education is under-developed and under-researched (Sinclair, Solmsen, & Goldwater, 2013). Copeland (2011)—drawing on accumulating evidence from such Israel travel programs as MASA, Taglit-Birthright Israel, and Lapid—indicated that the physical journey to Israel is a transformative experience by itself. For example, a large-scale study showed that participants of Taglit-Birthright Israel were 22% more likely to be confident in their abilities to explain the current political situation in Israel (Saxe et al., 2012). Integrating the in-depth experiential learning in a comprehensive curriculum, the Kesher Hadash program can equip future leaders of Jewish education with ideas and knowledge for creating Israel education or Israel engagement programs and for infusing knowledge about Israel (past and present) into a variety of educational programs.

Results from the online survey showed that all participants in the Kesher Hadash program expanded their knowledge of multiple facets of Israel, as well as their knowledge about social differences in Israel and complexities of contemporary Israeli society. More than 75% of respondents to the survey reported increased knowledge of the following topics: conversational Hebrew, religious and nonreligious Israeli celebrations, history of Israel, culture and art in Israel, and Israeli politics and political issues. Each of these topics represents a program component with specified educational goals and outcomes.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> These survey findings are based on responses from 11 participants (five in Cohort 2 and six in Cohort 3) in the Kesher Hadash program, which comprise about one-half of the total number of participants in these two cohorts. Because of the low sample size and response rate, these findings should be interpreted with caution.



Comments to the open-ended survey speak to the positive experiences of participants:

*Kesher Hadash is the best part of the [master's] program so far. I learned an immense amount, and it was presented in a serious and professional manner. I was very impressed with the curriculum, although it was very intense and overwhelming at times. I feel much more prepared as an Israel educator.*

*Kesher Hadash was the most academically fulfilling part of my degree thus far. I feel I have learned a great deal of Israel history from our courses in the classroom and have learned about Israeli society from the many out-of-class opportunities we had, such as watching Israeli movies, seeing parts of the country, and having guided tours. I am so very appreciative for having had Kesher Hadash.*

Focus groups with participants in the third cohort indicated that they were inspired by the Kesher Hadash program in different ways. For example, one participant thought that the struggles encountered by Jewish people throughout history can inspire values of perseverance and self-reflection. Another participant felt that the program will enable her to design Judaic classes that integrate knowledge about Israel. Several participants felt that they learned how cultural arts (e.g., filmmaking, museums) can be used as a pedagogical tool to discuss the prism of Israeli culture and its complexities. One participant noted:

*People may look at a piece of art and may not necessarily know how it is connected to Israel or to Judaism. I am already engaging my friends and family in discussions about pieces of art that stuck with me.*

All participants felt that Israel education is evolving and is already different from what their parents experienced. Participants saw as a learning goal the ability to be honest and thorough when talking about Israel. Participants in the focus groups generally agreed that young people today prefer to have complex, authentic, and relevant conversations about challenges and struggles in Israel. The cohort experience offered a supportive community to participants and gave them an opportunity to engage in conversations, each having a different opinion and perspective of Israel. One participant commented:

*I would never feel comfortable speaking about these issues without the Kesher Hadash experience. If people want to know about Israel, it is important to give them a real portrayal of what is here. Israel is not just falafel and humus.*

In addition, participants agreed that because of the Kesher Hadash program, they feel part of a network and can follow up with their peers with questions about resources. According to the program director, participants now “know what they don’t know about Israel” and will be better able to search in a deliberate and informed way for additional materials. The program was designed to enable alumni of Kesher Hadash to continue to look for online resources to support their educational roles and settings and perhaps create a community of practice. The second cohort has already established a monthly Israel book club.

***Finding 5: Schools saw YU's certificate programs in educational technology and online/blended instruction as an important part of developing a schoolwide culture of technology use.***

The heads of schools that were interviewed did not see immediate impact of technology use on the ability of their schools to attract more students. The use of technology did not come from

families' requests. On the contrary, parents have voiced concerns about exposing their children to the Internet, and they are worried that schools will not sufficiently control web use by students. However, for the long-term, the heads of schools hope that the use of technology will contribute to the reputation of the schools, once they can demonstrate that the use of technology strengthens students' learning. Schools that sent their teachers to YU's certificate programs shared the understanding that technology can promote two main goals: (a) efficiency and communications, including making more information about the curriculum accessible online for students and their parents and for teachers to collaborate and share resources, and (b) increased opportunities for learning and engagement in the classroom, including differentiated instruction; active, hands-on learning; greater variety of projects; and in schools that provide college preparation classes, better preparation of high school students for college. For that purpose, all heads of schools that were interviewed reported assigning a lead teacher or hiring a coordinator who is responsible for overseeing technology integration and training teachers to use technology. YU's Certificate Program in Educational Technology and Certificate Program in Online/Blended Instruction enables lead teachers and technology coordinators to gain a broad perspective of the tools available to them. Heads of schools reported that as part of their investments in technology integration, they have or will send their staff to additional conferences and workshops about using technology. All heads of schools reported that putting technology in place is typically a multi-year process, during which time procedures and systems get refined.

#### Research Question 4

Do participants apply their new knowledge and skills in their work environment?

***Finding 6:** The experiential learning programs helped participants transform their practices and gain a sense of professional self-efficacy.*

HUC-JIR's CAEA aims to equip early-career professionals with knowledge about adolescence and emerging adulthood, experiential education, transformation and organizational dynamics, Judaic studies, social media and new technologies, Jewish education through the arts, Jewish service learning, and Jewish education and the environment. Learning occurs through in-person seminars, online learning, and mentoring.

JTS' JELI is designed for mid-career professionals who play a variety of roles in JCCs, such as director of arts and culture; community life and events directors; and directors of youth and family programs, camps, and Jewish education. The program was jointly developed by JTS' William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education and the Jewish Community Center Association. More than 190 JCCs operate in North America (Jewish Community Center Association, 2012). JCCs are a significant market for JELI. JELI offers learning through a combination of monthly online workshops; multiday, in-person seminars; mentoring; and an independent learning project.

YU's Certificate in EJE targets Jewish educators with at least 3 years of experience who are interested in transforming (and have some leverage to do so) education in their workplace. Drawing on research from several fields—such as cognitive psychology, group dynamics, and adolescent development—EJE offers participants practical tools for implementation. The program includes three in-person seminars, online learning, and a mentoring component.

All respondents to the survey agreed or strongly agreed that their program increased their leadership, management, and staff mentoring skills. Additionally, 99% of the respondents reported improved ability to support or provide professional development to others; 95% reported improved integration of Jewish knowledge into educational activities; and 93% reported improved youth engagement practices.

As one participant commented:

*I think that the youth are the future of the community, the congregation, and the Jewish people and so that's something that I will like to focus on. I actually have a meeting scheduled later this week with the president and vice president of the board to begin a conversation about strategic planning and how to bring in the youth program that I was running in my previous congregation, which I designed based on EJE ideas.*

Participants reported that because of their program they now use more practices, such as peers learning together in pairs or small groups (Hevruta), replacing discussions with projects and hand-on activities, greater integration of music and art, greater engagement of parents, greater use of social media, more frequent use of integrating higher order questioning in group discussions, greater emphasis on providing opportunities to practice youth leadership skills, and shifting the role of instructor from teacher to facilitator.

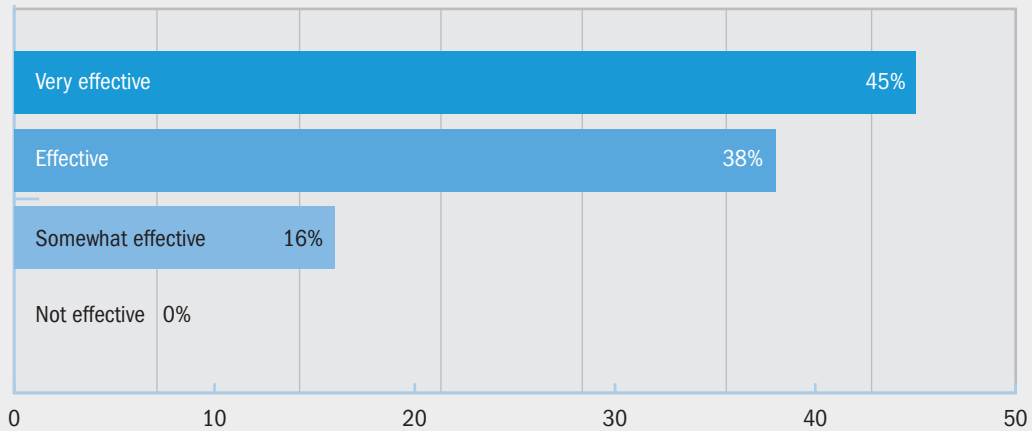
Participants gained a deeper appreciation of how hard it is to design a meaningful experiential learning activity that can enable the learner to take ownership of the material, internalize the content, and build skills. Despite requiring more time, energy, and resources, all participants believed that educational outcomes and level of youth engagement are much greater through experiential learning than through traditional instruction.

Participants attributed improved management skills and professional growth to building relationships with staff and supervisors. For example, one participant noted the challenges of balancing tight budgets and retaining staff:

*A lot of times I have lost perspective on making the right business decision versus doing the right thing related to our vision or related to treating people in the proper way. I think the program brought me back toward treating people the right way and doing the right thing.*

Overall, participants gave the three programs (CAEA, EJE, and JELI) high ratings on effectiveness. As shown in Exhibit 11, in response to the question “how effective is this program so far at developing the skills or tools you will need,” 45% of respondents to the AIR Current Participant Survey found the programs “very effective” and another 38% found the programs “effective.”

**Exhibit 11. Ratings of Program Effectiveness by Participants in CAEA, EJE, and JELI**



Source: AIR Current Participant Survey 2011–12, 2012–13, and 2013–14.

Note: n=128.

Among the first cohorts of the experiential learning programs (n=74), the majority of interviewees (71%) indicated that they changed jobs or advanced in their workplace after completing a program. The interviewees attributed this change to their program. Advancement took the forms of new titles, greater program management responsibilities (including staff supervision), and creating new programs. One participant shared:

*For the longest time, I have found the need to gain some professional development. I felt like I was ready to take on more responsibility at my job and didn't know how. Before JELI, I only supervised one staff person, and now I'm up to three. I also moved offices, so a lot has happened since JELI.*

**Finding 7:** Participants in JECELI reported receiving valuable professional development for their jobs.

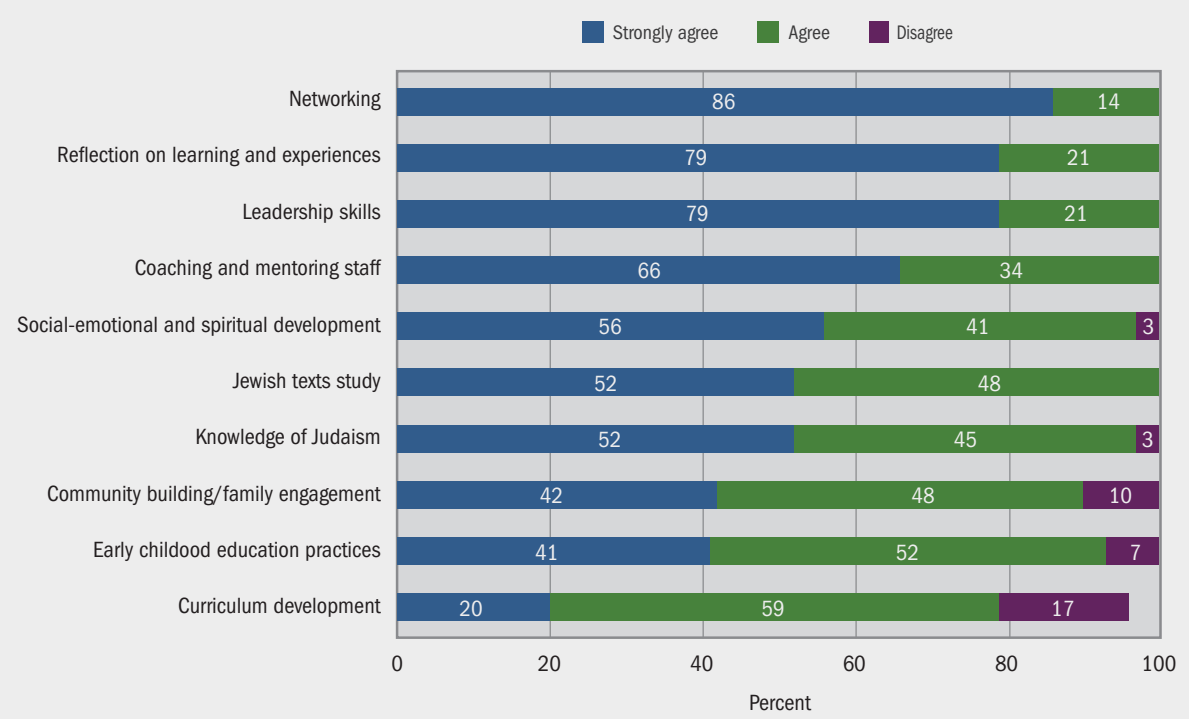
JECELI is a 15-month, joint program of JTS and HUC-JIR, in consultation with Bank Street College of Education. JECELI includes an in-person orientation, online study, communications with mentors once or twice a month, 2 weeks of study in New York City for two successive summers, and travel to Israel for a 10-day seminar. To be eligible for the program, participants should have up to 5 years of experience in a leadership position in a Jewish early childhood program or at least 3 years of relevant teaching experience and interest in assuming a leadership position. Participants are also expected to have at least a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a related field; have taken a course in the area of child development; and have a basic understanding of Jewish learning, such as the cycle of Jewish holidays.

Findings are based on responses to the Current Participant Survey, which was administered to participants (n=29) in fall 2012 and 2013 when they were halfway through the program. The size of early childhood education centers represented by respondents varied: 52% very small centers (25 or fewer children), 28% small centers (26–50 children), and 20% moderate to large centers (more than 51 children). Most centers served a mix of Jewish, interfaith, and non-Jewish families.

Exhibit 12 presents results from the survey on the program's influence on professional practices. After their first summer in the program, most participants "strongly agreed" or

“agreed” that the program influenced their professional practices in many different ways, including connecting with members of their cohort (networking), reflecting on their practices, acting as leaders, coaching staff, and bringing into their centers Jewish learning practices and other practices to promote social–emotional development, community building, and child development.

**Exhibit 12. Percentage of Respondents by Agreement With Statements About the Impact of JECALI on Areas of Professional Practice**



Source: AIR Current Participant Survey 2012–13 and 2013–14.

Note: n=29.

Interviews were conducted with participants in the first cohort that completed JECALI. The interviews validated the responses to the survey and showed incremental increases in implementing the knowledge gained from JECALI.

As a result of participating in JECALI, participants more frequently integrated Jewish learning and activities into everyday learning at their early childhood education centers. They also noted greater motivation to insert Jewish learning into the mission statement of their center and to conduct staff meetings that explore what makes them a Jewish early childhood education center. For example, one participant began a Havdallah celebration at her school for all students every Monday morning. Another participant incorporated studies of Jewish text into staff meetings. Two participants commented:

*[My] major role as the day rises is to make the classrooms Jewish everyday rather than separate the secular and the Jewish learning. I want to bring out the passion for Jewish subjects, Jewish values, Jewish holidays, and the Hebrew language.*

*My view of the temple community is much broader now. I take on the responsibilities associated with being a leader in my field and hold myself accountable—whereas before I would shy away from the role. I now see and understand how Judaica can be woven into all areas of the classroom.*

A separate aspect of Jewish learning was fostered by the Israel trip as part of JECALI. Generally, Jewish educators who have been to Israel bring more of their own experiences and feelings to their teachings, creating a more enriching experience for the children (Feldman & Simchovitch, n.d.). Educators incorporated their experiences from Israel into their classrooms in several ways. For example, one educator presented a slideshow about her trip to Israel, and others spoke of incorporating an enhanced Israeli presence in the classroom and daily life.

Interviews also revealed that participants developed greater confidence through JECALI. Such confidence enabled participants to make bold decisions, change the ways things had been done in their centers, and invest more in the professional growth of staff. One director from a large early childhood center started a leadership program for staff at the center. The director of another center shared:

*I have implemented a reflective supervision process with my staff. So, every other week, I'm meeting with all of my staff for about 20 minutes of what we call our sacred time together, where it's really uninterrupted. The agenda, it comes from the teachers, not from me. It really helps to build relationships with the teachers and really have an understanding of what's happening in each classroom.*

Finally, participants in JECALI expressed eagerness for continued learning. Members of the first cohort have initiated and organized follow-up meetings as a cohort. Most participants indicated that they will continue to (a) seek learning opportunities in workshops and one-on-one mentoring around studies of Jewish text and (b) be part of the professional community of practice that JECALI created.

## Summary: Goal 2

Program participants transformed themselves as professionals and leaders. According to Michael Zeldin, Senior National Director of HUC-JIR's Schools of Education, transformational leadership is an important outcome:

*We've heard this repeatedly. The [Executive Master's] students who say 'I used to think I was an administrator, now I know I'm a transformational educational leader.' Nothing can make me happier than seeing an educator who thinks his or her job is to keep things really organized and keep people happy—to see that person become someone who knows that his or her task is to envision a more effective form or forms of Jewish education and to make them happen.*

According to a six-community study of the Jewish sector workforce, advancement opportunities are positively correlated with job satisfaction and retention (Kelner, Rabkin, Saxe, & Sheingold, 2005). As specialization increases and the organizational environment grows more complex, many professionals are becoming more isolated. As individuals become “pigeon-holed” in their specific niches (e.g., fundraising, planning, communications, etc.), they do not see or feel a part of the big picture and do not understand how the organized Jewish community works as a whole (Rosenberg & Sherr-Seitz, 2002). The experiential learning programs of the Education Initiative incorporate competencies that researchers have identified as being essential for successful leadership in the nonprofit sector in general (Bonner & Obergas, 2009; Nonprofit Leadership Alliance, 2011) and specifically in youth-serving organizations (Evans, et al., 2009; Johnson, Rothstein, & Gajdosik, 2004; Quinn, 2004). By creating a comprehensive curriculum for

professionals in Jewish education, the degree and professional development programs of the Education Initiative do more than just provide knowledge and skills—they set standards for better quality educational programming.

## **GOAL 3: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF EDUCATORS AND EDUCATION LEADERS PLACED, RETAINED, AND PROMOTED IN A VARIETY OF SETTINGS**

### **Introduction**

The selective admissions process of HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU ensures acceptance of highly qualified candidates—those that should not have much trouble finding a job after graduation, given their past record of job experience and academic ability. Despite these prospects, many master’s degree students are concerned about their professional life after the program, including:

- Finding a job that matches their education and interests
- Finding professional growth opportunities in their current workplaces
- Finding support to perform to expectations once placed in a new job

The Education Initiative invests in its degree- and professional development-seeking participants with more than just financial assistance and quality programming. It also builds and nurtures support for and develops long-term relationships among participants and alumni.

This section addresses the fifth research question of the Year 3 evaluation.

5. What career guidance services do beneficiaries of the Education Initiative need?

### **Research Question 5**

What career guidance services do beneficiaries of the Education Initiative need?

### **Findings: Goal 3**

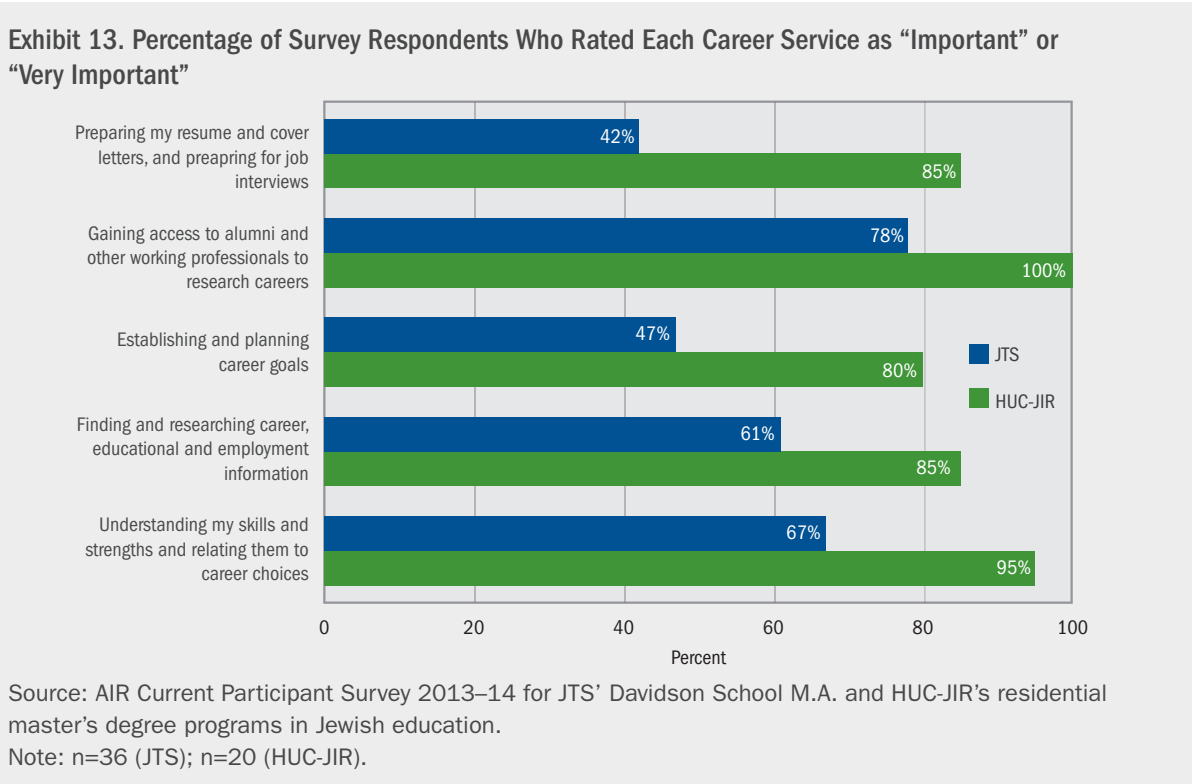
***Finding 1:** The career service that master’s degree students seek the most is access to alumni and other professionals to research career options.*

HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU offer help to prepare master’s degree students for their job search, including preparation for job interviews and information about employment opportunities. For the purpose of this evaluation of Year 3, information was gathered about the needs of master’s degree students that are addressed by the Education Initiative. Questions about the need for career services were included in the AIR Current Participant Survey for master’s degree students at JTS’ Davidson School and residential master’s degree students at HUC-JIR (i.e., all master’s degree programs except HUC-JIR’s Executive Master’s). Note that HUC-JIR’s students study full-time, but the students at JTS’ Davidson School are a mix of full-time and part-time students, and some of them take most of their courses online.

Across both groups, most respondents to the survey noted the importance of gaining access to alumni and other working professionals to explore possible careers. Participants also expressed the importance of receiving counseling that links their skills and strengths to career paths



(Exhibit 13). The types of counseling identified in Exhibit 13 require personalized consultation. These types of counseling are different from the career services (e.g., job readiness workshops, online job banks, resume preparation, and job fairs) that are typically provided by institutions of higher education (Vinson, Reardon, & Bertoch, 2011). As more participants complete their degree requirements and actively engage in job searches, more data will become available on the types of career services and guidance that help alumni find jobs.



**Finding 2:** *Participants of HUC-JIR’s Induction and Retention Initiative expressed a need for support transitioning into their new jobs, but the nature of support varied.*

HUC-JIR’s Induction and Retention Initiative entered its second year in 2013–14. The overarching goal of the Induction and Retention Initiative is to foster a smooth transition and success in new professional roles by developing a networking, mentoring, and personal support structure for new alumni. The initiative includes an in-person gathering of recent alumni; development of a personal integration plan; instruction and practice in practical skills, such as networking; and at least monthly mentoring from senior level alumni. Participants also complete personal reflective exercises.

Leadership and staff of HUC-JIR, including President Aaron Panken, view the Induction and Retention Initiative as an opportunity to develop capacity for the entire institution. The Induction and Retention Initiative holds special events focused on transition and includes a New Educators Transition Boot Camp, mentoring, and online learning sessions. The purpose of these activities is to help new alumni think intentionally about what it means to them to transition from being a student to being a professional.

Additionally, more experienced alumni are brought in to establish and sustain relationships with new alumni. Researchers suggest that mentoring can reduce the stress associated with managing the demands of a wide range of constituents; personal feelings of inadequacy; the



fast-paced environment; the task of supervising educators; and most of all, the sense of isolation that some education leaders sense in their new role (Alsbery & Hackman, 2006). Accordingly, HUC-JIR adopted the recommendations of the Wallace Foundation for successful mentoring of education leaders (Mitgang, 2007).

Participants in the 2013 cohort came from many backgrounds and represented a variety of careers. Some entered life in the synagogue as a rabbi, and others pursued education- or programmatic-oriented positions. Nearly all participants that attended the induction and retention boot camp appreciated hearing the perspectives of other young alumni. As an alumnus who recently entered a new position at a temple stated:

*With my classmates from HUC-JIR, we speak very much the same language, which makes talking about our challenges and successes a little bit easier to understand. And also, speaking of challenges, it's also nice to commiserate a little bit. . . . It's your first year on the job too—what kind of stuff are you dealing with, how is it working for you, and can you help me look at this a little bit differently. So I found that part of the day that I attended really nice.*

Interviewees felt that they needed support to transition into their new jobs. Some new professionals voiced a few examples of challenges:

*You're not prepared in school for parents calling you and yelling at you, basically that their child hates everything.*

*In the synagogue, everyone really likes to work together as a team; everyone really supports each other, which is great. But sometimes there are too many cooks in the kitchen. So figuring out who I am supposed to work with on this project and that project without stepping on anyone's toes has been a challenge.*

*The skill set required for the job has been just completely different [from the master's degree program]. And so that has been a really difficult transition. Going from doing one thing at a time, to having to multitask and do many things at once [has been] very challenging.*

*I found it difficult to understand the community structure and the flow of supervision. Who has an advisory role and who has a supervision role? Who is responsible for policy? Who is responsible for the budget?*

All interviewees saw the value in receiving transitioning support for their new jobs. However, there was no consensus among interviewees regarding the type of support that would benefit them. Some valued the support of an Education Initiative-provided mentor who works in the same role, and others preferred to find mentors on their own. A few interviewees felt that their master's degree program had already prepared them for much of the knowledge shared during the summer boot camp. Instead, they looked for a program that was more customized to their work setting and the types of challenges they would experience. Another common theme was a need for more opportunities for participants of the initiative to interact and form a support network. The opportunities to interact with alumni were perceived as just as important as the summer sessions. As one participant noted:

*I realized that we are all in the same boat in this, in the new job. So, when you're feeling alone, you are not really alone. This gave me a new network of people to*

*reach out to, and it reminded me of why I wanted to pursue this career. There are times when we get very frustrated, and being back in the same environment of classroom learning reminded me of why I wanted to do this during a time that was difficult for me and for my job.*

### **Summary: Goal 3**

Findings indicate that there is no one-size-fits-all support service that can help alumni identify employment opportunities and successfully transition into their new jobs. The diversity of settings and professional roles that individuals aspire or transition to, as well as differences in personal dispositions and preferences, make it hard to fully support all program graduates. Data from surveys and interviews suggest that participants would like a sense of choice when it comes to selecting and receiving a career service. The field lacks sufficient evidence about cost-effective, high-quality career guidance models. However, institutions should continue to explore services that can help its graduates advance in their professional careers.



## Part B. Capacity Building

To achieve and maintain long-term status as a premier institution of higher education in Jewish education, such institutions must have the capacity to provide competitive, high-quality programs that can attract the best and the brightest students, as well as recruit and retain top scholars and instructors. As institutions of higher education strive to maintain financial stability, they must find the right balance between funding their core missions and funding for innovation that will inform and be informed by the field. Goal 4 in Part B addresses all three facets of long-term success in providing higher education in the field of Jewish education: planning for financial sustainability, investing in innovation, and investing in human capital.

When done right, inter-institutional collaborations in higher education can support capacity building by joining resources, supporting student recruitment, and sharing knowledge (Perkins Nerlich, Soldner, & Millington, 2012; Ripoll-Soler & de-Miguel-Molina, 2014).

Goal 5 in Part B addresses current collaborations among HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU, and the extent to which the eLFF, which was created as part of the Education Initiative, supports this goal.

### **GOAL 4: DEVELOP THE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT WILL ENABLE THE PROGRAMS SUPPORTED BY THE EDUCATION INITIATIVE TO BE SUSTAINED**

#### **Introduction**

Financial sustainability is the ability of an entity or program to weather economic uncertainties over time (Bowman, 2011; DeBellis, 2012). Financial sustainability is achieved through careful planning, typically using a dynamic document that is reviewed and revisited periodically. Such a document may include all the details about strategies to contain costs and cover them with projected funding through fundraising and generating revenue (Sontag-Padilla, Staplefoote, & Morganti, 2012). The driving force behind sustainability efforts is the value that a given program holds for the field. Additionally, articulation of vision and results orientation (i.e., the expected impact that the programming efforts strive to have) are important parts of any financial sustainability plan (Hayes, 2002).

Experts recommend that financial sustainability plans detail alternative scenarios for program operation and the costs and revenues associated with each scenario. The minimum feasible scenario quantifies activities that are necessary to accomplish the programs' goals, and the extent to which the organization can cover its operational costs during a specified time period. Such information informs the associated fundraising goal (Leon, 2001).

Other important parts of financial sustainability plans are descriptions of prospective markets and recruitment strategies that are relative to enrollment goals. As part of the Education Initiative, the Jim Joseph Foundation provided grantees with access to Noel Levitz, a consulting firm that specializes in enrollment management for institutions of higher education. Enrollment management strategies enable efficient use of resources to strengthen student enrollment, help to determine which tuition and financial aid policies enable revenue while meeting enrollment goals, and promote effective marketing and campus-branding strategies (Dennis, 2012; Sugrue, 2010).

Financial sustainability goes hand in hand with investing in innovation and human capital. Capacity for innovation depends on channeling funds for that purpose. In the nonprofit world, covering the costs of new and innovative programs is perceived in economic terms as the sum of the program revenue (e.g., tuition and fees) and program value. Program value is defined as potential investment of private funders or community money on the expectation of production of “public good” or contribution to mission (DeBellis, 2012).

Institutions of higher education strive for excellence in their teachers by seeking a balanced mastery of content in a given discipline with the ability to engage, motivate, and inspire students. Across all departments and schools (e.g., business, engineering, liberal arts), classrooms serve as “laboratories for learning,” in which instructors explore potentially effective teaching practices in light of student diversity in background and learning styles (Conrad, Johnson, & Gupta, 2007). In the context of the Education Initiative, such laboratories for learning should convey best practices in Jewish education to future educators and educational leaders. Therefore, key building blocks of financial sustainability include identifying, hiring, and retaining capable instructors who are also top scholars.

This section addresses the sixth, seventh, and eighth research questions of the Year 3 evaluation:

6. What factors have facilitated or hindered progress toward the financial sustainability of new programs?
7. How do grantees ensure resource allocation for investing in innovation?
8. What strategies are in place to maintain the necessary human capital?

## Findings: Goal 4

### Research Question 6

What factors have facilitated or hindered progress toward the financial sustainability of new programs?

***Finding 1:** All grantees felt that it was necessary to ground their financial sustainability plans in a long-term vision for their schools of education. Such a vision was a challenge but necessary and informative.*

Financial sustainability planning as part of the Education Initiative is managed in parallel to institution-wide financial sustainability planning. HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU created draft versions of sustainability plans for programs covered by the Education Initiative. These plans describe the structure of the programs and the anticipated financial strategies needed to sustain programs.

HUC-JIR contracted with the Executive Service Corps of Southern California (ESC) to support data collection and analysis that informs its financial sustainability plan. According to Dr. Zeldin, ESC interviewed stakeholders, board members, national administrators, deans, faculty, leaders of Jewish education, leaders of the Union for Reform Judaism, and people who were directly engaged in the initiative. Based on data from these interviews, ESC developed a series of findings and recommendations for HUC-JIR to consider when thinking about the future of specific programs and the Schools of Education. This is an important step within the institution

in the continued development of HUC-JIR's Schools of Education. Dr. Rob Weinberg, Project Manager of the Education Initiative at HUC-JIR, observed:

*In the last recruiting year, 50% of those who were accepted and admitted in all programs of studies beginning in 2013–14, were students in education programs. That's pretty significant in an institution that historically understood itself to be primarily a seminary that also did other things.*

JTS' efforts to plan for financial sustainability are based on the strategic plan that was created in 2013 for the Davidson School. This plan informs refinements to program development and fundraising goals for the next 5 years. According to Dr. Deborah Miller, Project Director of the Education Initiative at Davidson School, financial sustainability planning has triggered in-depth conversations about Davidson-wide programmatic goals.

At YU, financial sustainability planning is closely linked to capacity building with regard to enhancing Azrieli School's support of translating theory into practice, reaching out to the international market and to geographically remote markets in the United States, and creating a continuum of continued education programs for educators and education leaders. The financial sustainability plan operates in the context of YU's budget deficit, which requires budget cuts and maximizing efficiencies in YU to maintain high-quality, financially sustainable programs in all schools. By the end of summer 2014, 100 people from YU will be let go and \$40 million will need to be cut. Cuts will occur in the positions of adjuncts, contract faculty, and support staff.

For all three institutions, the decision-making process for financial sustainability planning encourages more meetings of representatives of different offices (e.g., development, admissions, financial aid, provost, etc.). The meetings serve as opportunities for different offices to state their positions and collaborate on creating scenarios for financial sustainability.

## Research Question 7

How do grantees ensure resource allocation for investing in innovation?

**Finding 2:** *To support financial sustainability, HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU are revisiting student financial aid policies.*

HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU—after consulting with Noel Levitz—are including in their admissions process a measure of the student's ability to pay. The three institutions are considering redistributing the funds that are originally allocated to student financial aid to (a) increase the range of minimum and maximum scholarship dollar amounts and (b) potentially increase the number of enrolled students by more carefully targeting financial aid dollars. For example, more financial aid may become available to individuals with greater demonstrated need and to more desirable students. Applicants' desirability may be determined by professional experience, academic excellence, and characteristics of targeted subpopulations (e.g., male elementary school teachers, career changers).

Redistributing funds may reduce scholarships to some students but does not necessarily translate into greater program revenues. All grantees are wary of the risk of changing financial aid policies. Therefore, some policies may be gradually phased in through ongoing analysis of impact on enrollment. The institutions, however, understand that this is a valuable learning

experience in terms of identifying efficient financial sustainability strategies. The proven track record of the three institutions may be a sufficient motivator for student enrollment. Richard Joel, YU's President, stated, "If students are not going to come because of financial aid, then let us know that." AIR's pricing sensitivity analysis based on survey data confirmed that program participants are willing to pay some part of the tuition (Appendix B). Therefore, full tuition waiver may not be necessary to draw talented prospective students to degree and professional development programs.

## Research Question 8

How have grantees built the human capital required for sustaining new and revised programs?

***Finding 3:** HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU invested in recruitment and professional development of instructors and administrators.*

Faculty members are a core resource in any educational program. But institutions of higher education must carefully consider dividing up total spending among instruction, student services, academic support, and administration (Hurlburt & Kirshstein, 2012). One possible financial strategy is employing a combination of full-time and adjunct faculty to promote a program that achieves the program vision and is financially sustainable. Faculty members with strong reputations in the field can attract and retain students, but adjunct faculty may be the solution to growing enrollment and cutting costs (Meyer, Bruwelheide, & Poulin, 2009).

HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU have explored staffing combinations that are economically efficient and beneficial to the quality of programs. Dr. Jeff Kress, Interim Dean of JTS's William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education, noted a need to expose students to (a) talented adjuncts who can bring their experiences from the field into the class and (b) regular faculty members who are part of the reputation of the school and who can, in the long run, maintain connections with alumni, schools, and communities.

During the Education Initiative, HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU together added about 15 full-time equivalent staff as program directors and assistant directors, 12 full-time equivalents as course instructors, and 5.5 full-time equivalents as information technology and distance learning technical support staff. These new hires are to be expected, given the number of new and expanded programs (see Overview to this report). But, according to all three grantees, the real story is not in the number of new hires. Instead, the institutions highlighted the diversification of staff, the growth in staff skills, and the re-assignment of staff within institutions.

For example, according to Dr. Weinberg, the Education initiative has provided new teaching opportunities that have expanded the portfolios of core, tenured-track faculty (especially in the context of the Executive Master's program). An increasing number of faculty members have been given opportunities to teach in different formats, including online courses and courses with compressed schedules. The diversification of teaching opportunities promotes interactions among faculty members and provides opportunities for team teaching, which requires joint planning and attending each other's lectures. In some cases, faculty members also increased the extent to which they build on each other's work.

According to Dr. Scott Goldberg, YU's Vice Provost for Teaching & Learning, the Education Initiative has provided opportunities to develop faculty members' advanced understanding of online education and technology-enhanced education. Identifying and training faculty to design and deliver online training are important parts of technology capacity building. The piloting of programs has affected the entire university. Because of this capacity growth, YU better understands how, as an institution, it can move forward with online and blended learning across schools. Dr. Goldberg commented:

*We, as an institution of higher education that is one of the top 50 research institutions and grounded in and informed by Jewish values, can promote not only the Jewish education that we represent but also the higher education leadership that we get to be a part of in terms of moving higher education online and into blended learning opportunities. We would not be where we are today without the Jim Joseph Foundation grant.*

At JTS, existing faculty and administrators divide their time between existing and new projects. The Education Initiative has motivated the administration at the Davidson School to reorganize its staff to address concerns about overextending the school's small faculty. But hiring additional staff was not enough to develop new programs. Therefore, 12 individuals who worked at the Davidson School before the Education Initiative were reassigned to new roles or promoted to have greater responsibilities. In the future, faculty members may further diversify their knowledge through professional development in the form of "innovations hubs"—discussions about major topics in Jewish education with experts inside and outside the school. Some of these topics, such as experiential education, are directly related to building the field as part of the Education Initiative.

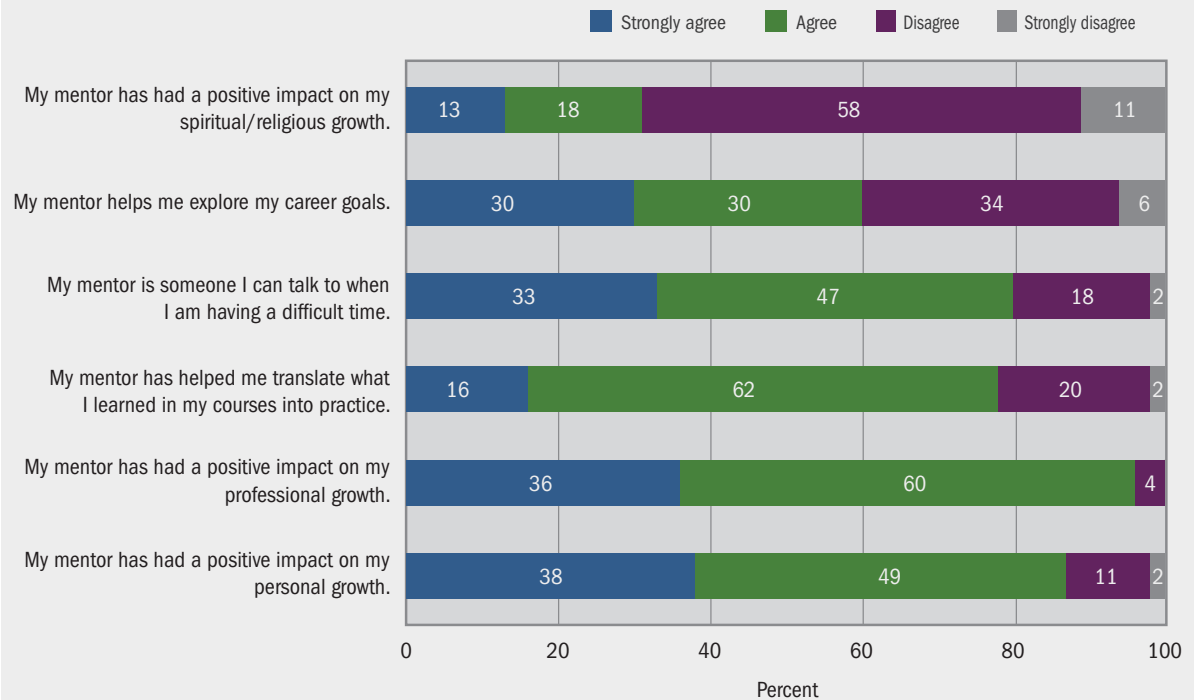
***Finding 4: HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU built capacity for mentoring participants in the degree and professional development programs.***

All institutions developed the networking capacity to recruit mentors for various programs. For example, the program director of JTS' JELI identified mentors by interviewing nearly 300 professionals who had been involved with experiential learning in different settings. Based on the talents, accomplishments, and reputations of these individuals (partly from site visits), he selected mentors that would be appropriate to participants in JELI. Similarly, because of the overlap between the first two cohorts in JTS'/HUC-JIR's JECOLI, the program director identified a separate set of mentors for each cohort. The mentors formed strong connections among themselves. Consequently, JECOLI now has a cohesive professional community of mentors that are ready to support future cohorts.

The recruitment and training of mentors for JTS' Davidson School Master's program and HUC-JIR's Residential Master's programs yielded important supports to most participants (Exhibit 14). Most participants felt that their mentors had a positive impact on their personal growth, professional growth, and their translation of course knowledge into practice. In addition, most participants felt that they can talk with their mentors when they have difficult times. Most participants did not feel that their mentors had an impact on their spiritual or religious growth, which is indicative of the mentors' roles related to practicing Jewish education.



### Exhibit 14. Influence of Mentors on Professional and Personal Growth



Source: AIR Current Participant Survey 2013–14 (JTS’ M.A., HUC-JIR’s Residential M.A.).  
 Note: n=52.

### Summary: Goal 4

Because of improved capacity, HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU have expressed optimism about being able to maintain at least some of the development aspects of the Education Initiative. But the presidents of these institutions have voiced some level of uncertainty about achieving financial sustainability through tuition revenue. Fundraising is still the most viable form of financial sustainability of current programs.

This is not an uncommon attitude. According to a Gallup Education (2014) survey, 74% of university presidents either agreed or strongly agreed that their respective campuses are still affected by the economic downturn that started in 2008 in the United States. The economic realities are reflected by increased tuition discounting, which reached an all-time high across private U.S. colleges in 2012 (Weinberg, 2013). According to Moody’s Investors Service (2013), the higher education sector in the United States will remain stressed in 2014 and 2015. Revenue growth is expected to remain much lower than historical standards and to be eclipsed by expenses. Approximately 20% of private universities are projected to suffer declines in revenue in 2014. The grantees of the Education Initiative hope that continuing to offer high-quality programs that are aligned with a deep understanding of the job demands of Jewish education will continue to (a) attract talented prospective students to advanced degrees and professional development programs and (b) support donors who are invested in Jewish education.

## **GOAL 5: IDENTIFY AREAS OF PROGRAMMATIC AND INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION THAT CAN IMPROVE PROGRAM QUALITY AND MAKE IMPROVEMENTS SUSTAINABLE**

### **Introduction**

Higher education is moving toward greater use of technology in the classroom and online learning. Many instructors are willing to try new technology, but they may get overwhelmed by the numerous technological advancements, applications, and processes (e.g., web- and computer-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration) that can be used for instruction (Mason & Rennie, 2006; Moser, 2007; Njenga & Fourie, 2010). During the next few years, new generations of technology tools will revolutionize instructional practices in higher education (Johnson et al., 2013). As a result, faculty members will assume the role of lifelong technology learners (Kukulska-Hulme, 2012). For these reasons, HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU identified the use of technology for instruction as a common interest on which the three institutions can collaborate, with the goal of promoting the knowledge and skills of faculty members.

As part of the Education Initiative, the grantees designed and piloted the inter-institutional eLFF. The first cohort participated in the eLFF from May 2013 to April 2014. The cohort included 18 fellows (five from HUC-JIR, six from JTS, and seven from YU). Fellows met over the course of 1 year in five in-person sessions and five virtual meetings. On average, each session lasted 2 hours and exposed fellows to three different tools and applications that may be used for online or in-class instruction. The sessions were created and led by the Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning (CCNMTL) at Columbia University.

A main goal of eLFF is to bring faculty members to the level of sophistication that will enable them to plan instructional strategies for improved student learning and identify the technology tools that fit these strategies. Fellows are expected to integrate some of the tools learned into a course of their choice. They could also work with the educational technologists at their institutions to identify more applications that may address the needs of their students. Fellows revised or enhanced in-class and online courses using a small number of tools that they found most relevant to their courses. Technology tools were integrated into courses in several ways:

- Engaging students in collaborative work around online assignments (e.g., co-authoring, commenting, and conversations)
- Providing instructions and posting handouts online
- Teaching students how to keep virtual notebooks
- Teaching the use of online learning platforms
- Teaching students how to create digital presentations
- Posting meeting agendas, summaries, assignments, and resources to Canvas, an online learning management system.

Fellows used Canvas to post their assignments, respond to postings by other fellows, and communicate with instructors from CCNMTL.

Fellows (and other invited faculty members) attended sessions as a group at the Annual Sloan Consortium International Conference on Online Learning. During the fellowship year, fellows participated in two showcase events. The first was held at YU in November 2013 and featured

poster sessions and a panel discussion. During the poster sessions, pairs of fellows (typically from different institutions) took turns presenting while the other circulated through the stations. Within each pair, the partners discussed each other's integration of technology into their courses. The panel discussion featured one fellow and one educational technology staff member from each institution who discussed his/her internal collaborations.

The second showcase was held at HUC-JIR at the end of the fellowship in March 2014. This event featured two sets of faculty-led roundtable discussions about topics that were selected and developed by the fellows. In two small groups, joined by staff and guests, fellows discussed key issues, such as technology-enhanced assessments and providing feedback to students in online and hybrid environments. Fellows also presented to each other on the projects they had developed in the final phase of the fellowship. The event concluded with an hour-long, facilitated cohort conversation about the implications of eLearning for their teaching and their institutions.

This section assesses the results of the pilot year of the inter-institutional eLFF. Before summarizing findings for this unique fellowship, this section provides data about the status of existing collaborative relationships among the three grantees and the overall attitudes of faculty members toward inter-institutional collaboration.

This section addresses the ninth and tenth research questions of the Year 3 evaluation:

9. To what extent do the grantees engage in inter-institutional collaboration?
10. How has the eLearning Faculty Fellowship addressed the needs of professional development and enhanced inter-institutional collaboration?

## Findings: Goal 5

### Research Question 9

To what extent do the grantees engage in inter-institutional collaboration?

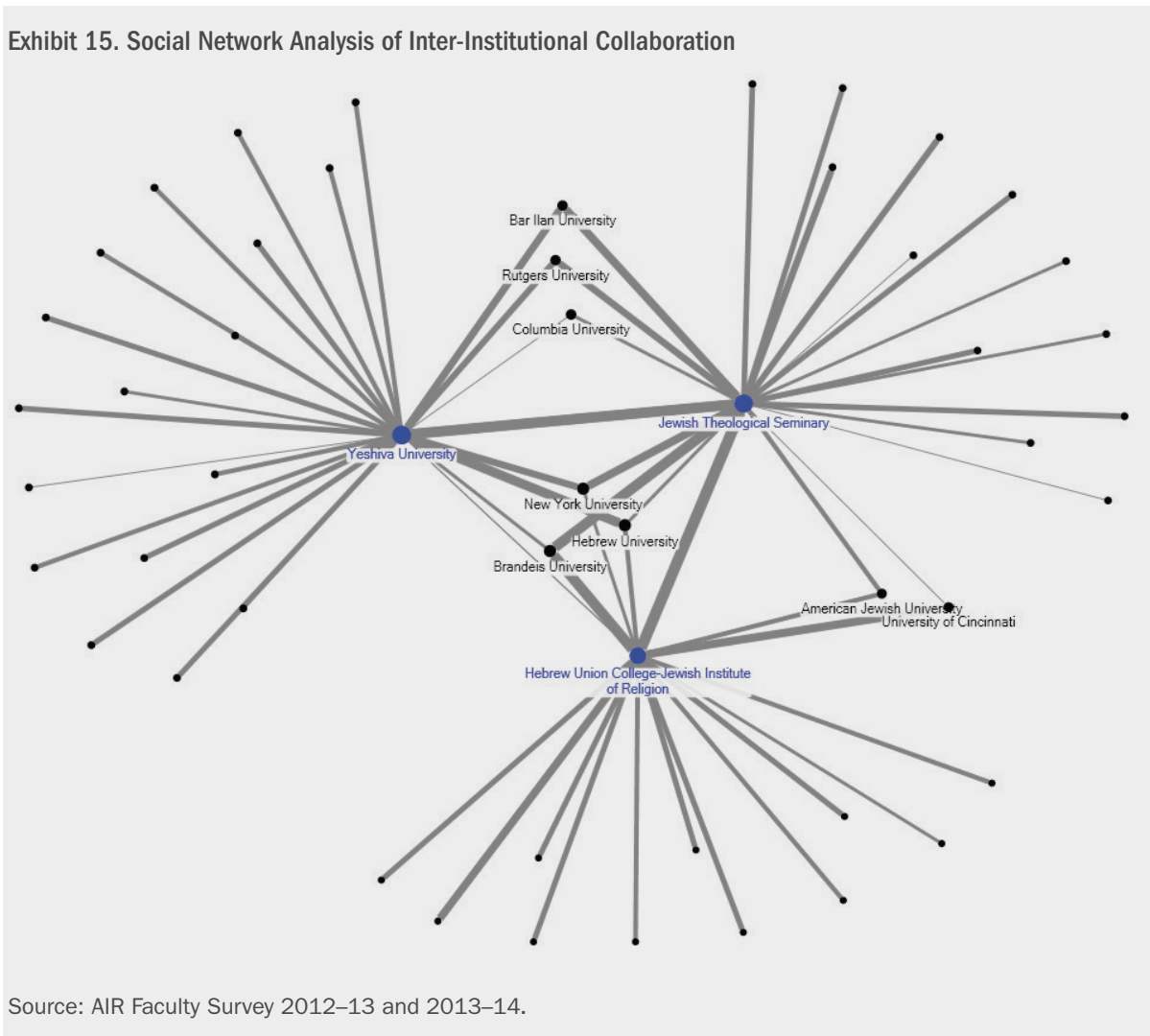
*Finding 1: Faculty members reported existing collaborations with individuals from other academic institutions.*

Data from the faculty survey were analyzed using social network analysis (SNA) to depict connections. SNA may be used to examine connections beyond organizational boundaries. Researchers claim that connections that span multiple organizations, and hence, multiple knowledge sources, can allow access to information otherwise not available within a single organization (Kezar, 2014). In the context of higher education, connections across organizations can support the achievement of goals of departments and institutions. For example, prior research using SNA in higher education found a positive relationship between networking and departmental scholarly activity, including publications and grant submissions (Katerndahl, 2012). Through SNA, researchers can investigate the strength of connections (e.g., frequency) and the diversity of connections (e.g., the number and nature of connecting individuals or organizations). Stronger connections may be more stable over time and more likely to affect the capacity building of institutions.

For the current evaluation, faculty members were asked to respond to the following survey question: "Please name a faculty member outside your institution who is important to you in your

professional network. He or she could be someone who shares intellectual work with you, helps you think about issues in Jewish education, or collaborates with you on joint professional activities (e.g., teaching, researching, serving the community).” Survey respondents were asked to provide three names and to indicate affiliation and frequency of contact (often, sometimes, occasionally, and rarely) for each named individual. Nearly one-third of the survey respondents (27%) reported no collaborations with professionals outside their institution. Survey responses were analyzed to create a graph in which each node represents an academic institution and the thickness of each connection between two nodes represents the number of individuals within an institution who reported a connection with (and frequency of) the contact (Exhibit 15).<sup>10</sup>

The shape of the graph shows that each of the three grantees has its own network of collaborators across institutions of higher education. Yet, some level of inter-institutional collaboration among grantees already exists. Data show a strong connection between YU and JTS. Bar Ilan University, New York University, and Rutgers University have relatively strong connections with YU and JTS. These relationships could potentially further enhance the existing collaborations between YU and JTS. The connection between JTS and HUC-JIR is strong. Brandeis University also has strong connections with JTS and HUC-JIR and could support further inter-institutional collaborations.

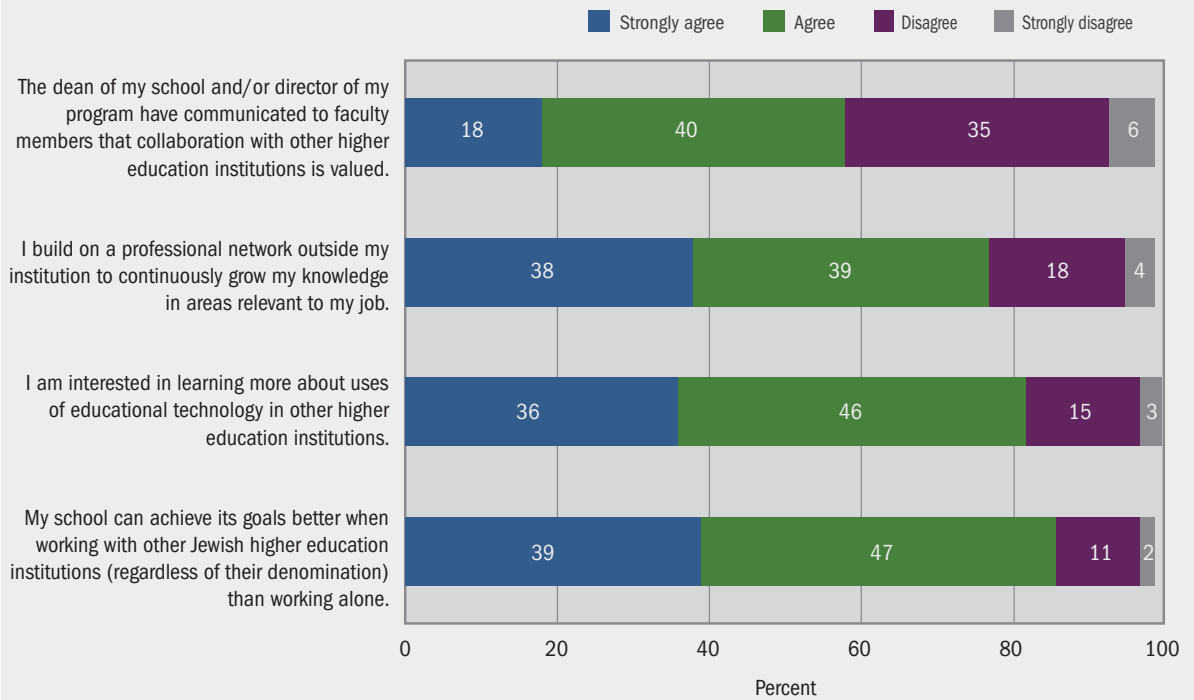


<sup>10</sup> The Harel-Koren Fast Multi-Scale Method algorithm was used to generate the graph (Harel & Koren, 2002).

**Finding 2:** Most faculty members at HUC-JIR, JTS, and YU have favorable attitudes toward inter-institutional collaboration.

Most survey respondents who were faculty believed that inter-institutional collaboration can help their schools achieve goals (Exhibit 16). Additionally, most respondents reported that they already build on professional networks outside their institutions to further enhance their knowledge. But nearly two-thirds of respondents (58%) reported that their dean or program director communicates the value of inter-institutional collaboration.

**Exhibit 16. Percentage of Survey Respondents Who Agreed With Specific Statements About Inter-Institutional Collaboration**



Source: AIR Faculty Survey 2012–13 and 2013–14.

Note: n=113

## Research Question 10

How has the eLearning Faculty Fellowship addressed professional development needs and enhanced inter-institutional collaboration?

**Finding 3:** Most fellows in Cohort 1 enhanced their confidence in using technology.

Interviews with eLFF fellows and results of the faculty survey showed substantial awareness among faculty members about the importance and benefits of using technology for instruction. Faculty members are interested in using technology to achieve a number of goals, such as giving their students greater access to course materials, supporting more communication among students, and teaching in a more efficient and engaging manner (Appendix C). At the same time, most faculty members have low confidence in their abilities to use technology for instruction.

Survey data showed that at the start of the eLLF program, participants in Cohort 1 varied in their skill level and comfort using technology. After the 1-year fellowship, most fellows reported higher levels of confidence using technology. Here are some of the ways in which eLFF impacted participants:

- Four fellows changed their level of confidence in designing online courses from “novice” to “partially proficient,” and two fellows changed their level of confidence from “partially proficient” to “proficient.”<sup>11</sup>
- Three fellows changed their level of confidence in incorporating technology (e.g., presentation software, online tools for lesson planning) into on-campus classroom teaching from “partially proficient” to “proficient.” The remainder of those who took the survey in both years did not change their ratings, but their level of confidence was high to begin with.
- The percentage of fellows confident in their abilities to use tools for online conversations—such as discussion boards, Live Chat, and blogs—increased from 45% to 83%.
- The percentage of fellows confident in their abilities to use tools for sharing—such as wikis, Piazza, and Google Docs—increased from 36% to 83%.
- Using learning management systems—such as Moodle, Sakai, and Blackboard—to deliver courses increased from 55% to 78%.
- Using such tools as Skype, Adobe Connect, and WebEx for online meetings increased from 45% to 72%.

According to fellows, eLFF taught them how to be intentional when selecting technology tools for their courses. They considered the use of tools from a pedagogical standpoint rather than a technical standpoint. That is, they realized the different uses of every tool and could critically assess the appropriateness of given tools to their courses. As one fellow noted:

*I might be actually using less technology than before. But I'm using it in a much more informed manner. Before I introduce something, I ask myself clearly, 'What do I want to achieve by it? Why am I using this?' I'm more able to weigh the potential advantages of the tool, and on the other hand, see potential pitfalls and appreciate difficulties that can arise. [I can] think before the core session starts to see whether it's worth it and also think I became a little bit better at just evaluating tools.*

Another fellow described how eLFF motivated more systematic and deliberate use of tools:

*For a while, I used all these programs. Some of them, it was just free stuff that you could find on the internet, like flash card programs to help students with their vocabulary. We also did audio programs, where students recorded themselves, and I could give them feedback. I started to think that I was using all these tools in a way that was not very organized. Every time, I would introduce something new and then it either worked or didn't work. I just felt that I was doing this in a way that was too disconnected from pedagogical considerations. I wanted to be able to start with the question—what am I trying to do—and then go and find the tools that would help me with that.*

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<sup>11</sup> Seven fellows did not take the baseline survey and the remaining five fellows did not change their level of confidence.



Most fellows reported greater self-efficacy with regard to exploring tools for instruction. They learned that they do not need to settle for tools because they are already familiar with them. Instead, they can set goals and search for the right tools that can help them meet goals. As one fellow explained:

*I think my biggest discovery was that the goal was less about any one tool and more about developing digital literacy—developing a kind of intuition about the way the tools are set up. There are similarities across tools, and that, I believe, is really important for novice learners to know. It shouldn't be so scary. If you develop that kind of interaction with multiple tools, you learn to get a sense of kind of the way things work in this world, and then you start to get more comfortable.*

Finally, several fellows acknowledged that even if they hesitated to join eLFF, because of their busy schedules, they knew that their participation was important to their schools and that they would gain knowledge on which they could continue to build. Dr. Rona Novick, Dean of YU's Azrieli Graduate School of Education, participated in the first cohort of eLFF. From her perspective, effective use of online tools for learning is of primary importance for Azrieli School. Thus, eLFF helped her help the school build further capacity. She noted:

*Our long-term goals are to no longer be site-centric and assume that people have to or are able to come to us. Part of it is that as a graduate school, we are often training people who are in the trenches. We do not want to rob the people from the schools at which they work in order to enable them to get graduate training. We want them to be able to work as principals, teachers, or counselors while they are completing advanced graduate studies. Without online learning, we can't do that with schools in Washington, Colorado, Kansas, and Florida.*

#### **Finding 4: Fellows in Cohort 1 advocated for more community-building activities.**

All eLFF fellows were aware that strengthening inter-institutional connections was one of the goals of the fellowship. But they were not sure whether the design of the sessions was conducive to developing such relationships. Fellows in Cohort 1 shared the opinion that connections among participants will not develop naturally just because they attend the same sessions together. A theme that surfaced in all interviews was the benefit of using deliberate and intentional community-building activities to accomplish the collaboration goal of eLFF. Fellows suggested several community-building activities: more in-depth introduction of participants in the first session; greater use of break-out sessions and small group discussions; more robust technology and video conferencing management and presentation practices for including remote participants; and better understanding of best practices for group interactions online.

Generally, fellows entered eLFF with a high level of readiness to become part of an inter-instructional community. As one fellow shared:

*I was curious about the collaboration between the three different institutions of Jewish education and Jewish higher learning, so I was hoping to meet a lot of people. Very often, especially in my program, there aren't a lot of opportunities for collaboration with other institutions. So, I was eager to kind of meet people in other places and find out from them what they were doing and their challenges.*



Fellows also shared the sentiment that learning about the work of others is not enough to form a sense of community. Fellows believed that more explicit collaboration tasks, such as the ones used in the final showcase events, are the types of activities that help to build a community. Several fellows commented that the best opportunities to form connections were the face-to-face meetings, especially during the showcase events and the Sloan conference. The use of online workshops did not demonstrate to them how a professional community can be formed through virtual interactions. According to Debra Kerschner, a member of the eLearning management team, the lessons learned from the pilot year will be applied with Cohort 2. For example, rather than providing virtual meetings to the entire cohort, small group instruction will be provided to 6–8 participants at a time.

## Summary: Goal 5

All grantees felt that the inter-institutional collaboration presented substantial organizational challenges, not because of conceptual differences, but mainly because of busy schedules and different institutional policies, procedures, and preferences. However, the experience of planning an inter-instructional collaboration in the form of eLFF was a valuable learning experience. Each of the grantees strengthened its understanding of what it takes to initiate and maintain inter-institutional collaboration. For example, Dr. Scott Goldberg, Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning at YU, noted that institutionally, YU has developed a clearer sense of what it takes to develop faculty members who have both the stance and the skills to collaborate. This understanding has also promoted intra-institutional collaboration within YU.

The selection of technology for instruction as the topic of the inter-institutional collaboration was timely. All grantees expressed interest in keeping up with current trends in higher education, according to which undergraduate and graduate students have increasing access to a wide range of learning opportunities outside of traditional brick-and-mortar classrooms. The implication is more than technical—the use of technology for instruction, especially in online sessions, requires instructors to rethink instructional practices and to switch from traditional instruction to facilitating independent learning, research, and discovery.



# Conclusions of the Year 3 Report

Beginning in the 2009–10 academic year, the Education Initiative offered new programming and financial aid to 1,284 participants in degree and professional development programs. 2013–14 was the last year of the Education Initiative at YU. Funding of the activities at HUC-JIR and JTS will continue through 2015–16. The third year of the independent evaluation of the Education Initiative focused on programmatic accomplishments to date and the capacity built to sustain these accomplishments beyond the Education Initiative. This report was organized in two parts: (a) Educator and Education Leader Preparation and Support and (b) Capacity Building. The following sections provide conclusions from the data presented in these two parts.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND IMPLICATIONS: EDUCATOR AND EDUCATION LEADER PREPARATION AND SUPPORT

The impetus for the Education Initiative was the premise that high-quality continued education for educators and education leaders is necessary for the success of Jewish educational programs in schools, congregations, community centers, university campuses, camps, and other settings. The key to high-quality education is effective preparation of a large number of educators and education leaders. Data show that participants in programs covered by the Education Initiative are satisfied with their programs (e.g., they feel that they received the knowledge needed for their job). Many of these individuals have already translated their knowledge into practice. The implications of this large-scale influence is that in future years, many Jewish education settings (e.g., Jewish day schools, congregational schools, JCCs) may have improved access to outstanding educators and education leaders that have advanced practices in their programming. However, these effects are more likely to be shown in the Northeast, where the reach of the initiative is the greatest.

The programs covered by the Education Initiative support the professional growth of educators and administrators. Educators and school leaders should take part in a continuum of professional growth opportunities to best serve their communities. This continuum of professional growth may include degrees in education and administration, licensure, induction and mentoring, professional development, and performance management (Learning Point Associates, 2008). Investments in educators stem from the premise that administrators cannot, and should not, be the only leaders in their school or educational program. Given the current demands for high-quality, engaging, and meaningful educational experiences, administrators cannot carry the burden of educational innovation and quality instruction by themselves. In addition, professional development programs are likely to increase teachers' involvement in a number of leadership activities in the school, including redesigning instruction, mentoring new teachers, and creating partnerships with the community (Greenlee, 2007).

In several states, teachers at public schools are required to accumulate a state-determined number of graduate credits or continuing education units that verify participation in shorter graduate-level workshops. These credits and units help educators maintain teaching licenses, advance on the salary scale, progress from an initial beginners' license to a regular professional license, or progress from a regular professional license to a master's teacher license. Professional development experiences must be completed and assessed in a set

period of time, usually every 4 or 5 years. Jewish day schools and congregational schools do not have such requirements, but they have the same needs for highly qualified educators that are well-prepared for the demands of education in the 21st century. The programs created and expanded through the Education Initiative aim to raise the standards for educator preparation and demonstrate how the field of Jewish education can be professionalized across formal and informal settings.

One example of professional development is the use of technology for instruction. Eitan Novick, Project Coordinator at YU, commented about the importance of developing new professional development programs that center on technology skills:

*There are not enough people in the Jewish world that are [using technology for instruction]. Jewish education has been slower to get on board using educational technology. Yeshiva University finds it important to offer frontline, cutting edge instruction and be seen as not afraid to experiment and try new things.*

Investments in high-quality educators and education leaders and in professionalizing the field of Jewish education has far reaching implications for the field. First, supplying the field with highly trained educators may support the needs of schools and congregations for qualified and well-prepared educators who are knowledgeable in educational pedagogy and Jewish studies. Previous research shows that Jewish communal professionals who are likely to stay in the field longer and take on greater responsibilities are also those more likely to pursue professional development opportunities (Cohen, 2011). As discussed for Goal 1 in this report—as well as in previous reports about the Education Initiative (Schneider et al., 2012; 2013)—recruitment of talented prospective students should take into account job experience and level of readiness to engage in transformative practices. For example, Gaby Shoenfeld, Project Coordinator at YU, commented about recruitment for the Certificate in EJE:

*The people that we are looking for are people who have a clear sense of their educational vision and mission. And they're coming for a reason. They're coming because they know that there's something missing in their practice, and they're looking for something to help them in their work.*

At HUC-JIR, the Education Initiative promoted the idea of adding Jewish education to the preparation of rabbinic and cantorial students. One anecdote that exemplifies this interest comes from the most recent cohort of rabbinical students at the HUC-JIR campus in Los Angeles, CA. Six out of the eight cohort members elected to stay in school another year and to obtain a degree in Jewish Education. Dr. Zeldin had this to say from conversations with rabbinical students who applied to stay the additional year:

*When we interviewed candidates, the first thing we asked them was 'why do you want to take an already rigorous 5-year program and add a 6th year to it in order to study Jewish education?' Most of the answers we got were, 'because we realized that education is an important part of the rabbinate; to be a rabbi is also to be a teacher.' One young man answered the question by saying, 'You are asking me the wrong question. You shouldn't be asking me why I want to be in the School of Education. You should ask me, why I applied to rabbinic school 3 years ago. I always knew that I wanted to be a Jewish educator and that I wanted to go to a school of Jewish education.'*

The field of Jewish education also benefits from scholarly work that documents the experience of the Education Initiative and the theoretical frameworks used and developed as part of this work. Here are some examples of recent publications about the programs of the Education Initiative:

- Shuki Taylor, a Project Coordinator at YU, contributed a chapter to an upcoming book about experiential Jewish education (Torah Aura Productions; David Bryfman, editor). The chapter, titled “Experiential Jewish education: Impacting the formation of Jewish identity,” presents a framework developed through YU’s Certificate in EJE.
- Lessons from YU’s Certificate in EJE have been shared in articles in eJewish Philanthropy (e.g., Bernstein, 2014; Gerech, 2014; Taylor, 2013; 2014).
- The Education Initiative programs at HUC-JIR are mentioned in an upcoming publication by J. Krasner (forthcoming) in the Journal of Jewish Education.
- Jeff Kress, Interim Dean of Davidson School at JTS, and Mark Young, a Project Coordinator at JTS, contributed a chapter to an upcoming book about experiential Jewish education (Torah Aura Productions; David Bryfman, editor). The chapter, titled “Preparing experiential Jewish educators,” presents a framework developed through JTS’ experiential education programs.
- Mark Young (2012) published an article for eJewish Philanthropy about the framework that was integrated into the Experiential Learning Initiative (ELI) concentration in the master’s program at JTS’ Davidson School.
- Jeff Kress (2014) published an article in Conservative Judaism about the ELI concentration in the master’s program at JTS’ Davidson School.
- The knowledge gained from JTS’ Kesher Hadash semester in Israel program will be shared in an upcoming article by Ofra Backenroth (Associate Dean at JTS’ Davidson School) and Alex Sinclair (Program Coordinator at JTS’ Davidson School) (forthcoming) in the Journal of Jewish Education.
- Lessons from JTS’ Kesher Hadash program have been shared in eJewish Philanthropy (Sinclair, 2014).

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND IMPLICATIONS: CAPACITY BUILDING

The information included in this report suggests that all grantees dramatically expanded their capacity, especially with regard to investing in innovation and human capital. This capacity building prompted the presidents of the three institutions to consider further capacity-building goals. For example, President Panken of HUC-JIR commented:

*A lot of our programs are smaller than they should be. I would like to double the number of students in rabbinical programs without adding faculty. We constantly hear from major cities, such as Los Angeles, that they have more job openings than HUC-JIR graduates to fill those positions. Since 2010, HUC-JIR has had high placement rates because of that high demand. Similarly, Hillels have a hard time finding people. An important goal can be over-supplying the Reform movement with rabbis and cantors; those who will not be hired by congregations will go to Hillels, the Army, etc.*

Although these ambitious goals pertain to rabbis and not educators, President Panken felt that the high interest in rabbinical students with a master's degree in Jewish education, may signal a need for more collaboration among the HUC-JIR Schools of Education in California and New York and further investments in the joint master's degree (Rab-Ed). The Education Initiative triggers interesting conversations that may influence ideas to further promote Jewish thought leadership.

Dr. Arnold Eisen, Chancellor of JTS, noted that the Education Initiative encourages and supports the expansion of the Davidson School. The culture of the Davidson School has been transformed because of staff re-assignment and hiring and increased programming. The development of pioneering programs demonstrated to Davidson School that it needed and will continue to need more staff with specific expertise in cutting edge topics. These staff will also support the increased involvement of the school in service to the community.

YU's President Joel sees the development of technology capacity as a core component of institutional growth. The lessons learned from the Education Initiative will be combined with more work by CCNMTL and support a central unit that will enable further developments of online courses across YU's schools. The outreach goals of the resulting courses are ambitious and will address the international Jewish community.

The visions of the presidents have a common theme for continued advancement—that is, to preserve institutional leadership in terms of program quality and support of the field, the institutions must evolve and innovate. Institutions will continue fundraising to sustain existing efforts, and programs will be refined to accommodate the interests of funders and demands from the field. Moreover, with the hands-on experiences of running new programs and courses during the past few years, the institutions are now better equipped to manage financial and human resources more effectively and to strategically recruit the next cohorts of program participants.



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# Appendix A: Programs and Scholarships Supported by the Jim Joseph Foundation Education Initiative

| Institute                  | Programs and Scholarships   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Start Year: 2009–10</b> |   |
| HUC-JIR                    | Scholarships to residential master's students and internship stipends   |
| JTS-Davidson               | Executive Doctoral Program  |
| JTS-Davidson               | Reinstated Visions and Voices (a 10-day Israel seminar)   |
| JTS-Davidson               | Increased number of fellowships for students in Davidson School's doctoral and master's programs                |
| YU-Azrieli                 | Financial assistance to Azrieli graduate students   |
| YU-CJF                     | Experiential learning missions  |
| YU-Stern                   | Increased number of scholarships to attract students to master's degree in Biblical and Talmudic Interpretation |
| YU-Stern                   | Graduate-level courses for senior students (B.A./M.A. program)  |
| <b>Start Year: 2010–11</b> |   |
| HUC-JIR                    | Executive Master of Arts (EMA)  |
| HUC-JIR                    | A joint rabbinical education program in Cincinnati and a cantorial education program in New York                |
| YUSP                       | Certificate in Differentiated Instruction (DI)  |
| YUSP                       | Certificate in Educational Technology (ET)  |
| <b>Start Year: 2011–12</b> |   |
| HUC-JIR                    | Certificate in Jewish Education Specializing in Adolescents and Emerging Adults (CAEA)                          |
| HUC-JIR and JTS-Davidson   | Jewish Early Childhood Education Leadership Institute (JECLEI)  |
| JTS-Davidson               | Kesher <u>H</u> adash semester in Israel program for master's students  |
| JTS-Davidson               | Master of Arts in Jewish Education with a focus in Jewish Experiential Education                                |
| JTS-Davidson               | Jewish Experiential Leadership Institute (JELI)   |
| YU-Azrieli                 | Accelerated Master's Program  |
| YU-Azrieli                 | School Partnership Master's Program   |
| YU-CJF                     | Innovators Circle   |
| YU-CJF                     | Certificate in Experiential Jewish Education (EJE)  |
| YUSP                       | New Teacher Induction Program   |
| <b>Start Year: 2012–13</b> |   |
| HUC-JIR                    | Induction and Retention Initiative  |
| YU-Azrieli                 | Azrieli Online Master's Program   |
| YUSP                       | Certificate in Online/Blended Instruction   |
| YUSP                       | Online professional development modules   |

Notes: Azrieli = Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration; CJF = Center for the Jewish Future; Davidson = The William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education; HUC-JIR = Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion; JTS = Jewish Theological Seminary; Stern = Stern College for Women; YU = Yeshiva University; YUSP = YU Institute for University–School Partnership.



# Appendix B: Pricing Analysis Results

| Institution | Program (Respondents)                | Lowest Price | Optimal Price Point   | Highest Price | Tuition (2013–14)            | Optimal/Tuition |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|---------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| HUC-JIR     | CAEA (15)                            | \$1,000      | \$1,500               | \$1,900       | \$3,000                      | 50%             |
| HUC-JIR     | Residential M.A. (20)                | \$15,000     | \$15,000              | \$19,500      | \$23,000                     | 65%             |
| HUC-JIR     | EMA (12)                             | \$4,000      | \$4,750               | \$6,000       | \$16,000                     | 30%             |
| HUC-JIR/JTS | JECALI (14)                          | \$500        | \$850                 | \$1,250       | \$1,000                      | 85%             |
| JTS         | JELI (15)                            | \$625        | \$1,000 <sup>12</sup> | \$1,325       | Not applicable <sup>13</sup> | Not applicable  |
| JTS         | Davidson Master's (36) <sup>14</sup> | \$5,000      | \$5,750               | \$7,900       | \$12,910                     | 45%             |
| YU          | Online M.A. (12)                     | \$1,000      | \$1,500               | \$2,000       | \$6,180 <sup>15</sup>        | 24%             |
| YU          | EJE                                  | \$1,000      | \$1,500               | \$1,700       | \$3,350 <sup>16</sup>        | 45%             |
| YU          | EdTech and Online/Blended            | \$325        | \$1,050               | \$1,250       | \$2,500                      | 42%             |

Source: AIR Survey 2013–14.

Notes: (1) HUC-JIR: Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion; JTS: Jewish Theological Seminary; YU: Yeshiva University; CAEA: Certificate in Jewish Education for Adolescents and Emerging Adults; EdTech and Online/Blended: Certificate in Educational Technology and Certificate in Online/Blended Instruction; EJE: Certificate in Experiential Jewish Education; EMA: Executive Master's Program; JELI: Jewish Experiential Leadership Institute; JECALI: Jewish Early Childhood Leadership Institute. (2) The percentage of tuition that participants are willing to pay is not comparable across programs because of differences in the nature of programs and their target audiences and variations in other program costs (e.g., travel costs).

<sup>12</sup> In addition to participant fees, institution fee is \$2,000 per participant.

<sup>13</sup> No charge for tuition. Fellow's local JCC pays the \$1,500 per participant.

<sup>14</sup> Tuition per semester.

<sup>15</sup> Estimated tuition per semester. The master's degree program is a 36-credit program. The tuition per credit is \$1,030.

<sup>16</sup> Combined tuition for participant and sponsoring organization.



# Appendix C: Responses to the Faculty Survey

Exhibit C-1. To What Degree Does Each of the Following Attract You to the Use of Educational Technology in Your Teaching?

| Statement   | Large Degree | Moderate Degree | Small Degree | Not at All |
|---|--------------|-----------------|--------------|------------|
| Desire to increase program participants' access to course materials             | 53%          | 32%             | 9%           | 6%         |
| Desire to facilitate communication between program participants and instructors | 53%          | 30%             | 12%          | 5%         |
| Ability to use multimedia course materials                                      | 53%          | 30%             | 12%          | 5%         |
| Ability to address varied learning styles and needs                             | 50%          | 33%             | 11%          | 6%         |
| Potential to make teaching more efficient                                       | 56%          | 22%             | 15%          | 7%         |
| Participants' demand for technology   | 15%          | 35%             | 30%          | 20%        |
| Personal enjoyment of working with technology                                   | 14%          | 35%             | 30%          | 20%        |
| Desire to increase program participants' familiarity with technology            | 23%          | 21%             | 37%          | 19%        |
| Desire to promote collaboration among program participants                      | 35%          | 42%             | 14%          | 9%         |

Exhibit C-2. Rate Your Level of Confidence in Your Current Ability to Use Each of the Following Types of Technology.

| Type of Technology  | Completely Confident | Quite Confident | Fairly Confident | Somewhat Confident | Slightly Confident | Not Confident at All |
|---|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Tools for online conversations (e.g., discussion boards, Live Chat, blogs)      | 16%                  | 18%             | 22%              | 15%                | 10%                | 20%                  |
| Tools for sharing (e.g., wikis, Piazza, Google Docs)                            | 16%                  | 20%             | 15%              | 15%                | 15%                | 19%                  |
| Tools for creating concept maps (e.g., MindMeister, Bubbl.us)                   | 4%                   | 1%              | 6%               | 5%                 | 12%                | 72%                  |
| Tools for creating maps and charts (e.g., SmartDraw)                            | 3%                   | 5%              | 8%               | 2%                 | 14%                | 68%                  |
| Tools for feedback and self-reflection (e.g., ePortfolios)                      | 7%                   | 8%              | 8%               | 7%                 | 23%                | 48%                  |
| Tools for creating and sharing visual presentations (e.g., Prezi, VUE, Animoto) | 9%                   | 6%              | 8%               | 9%                 | 14%                | 54%                  |
| Tools for creating and editing images (e.g., Photoshop.com, Fireworks)          | 7%                   | 3%              | 11%              | 7%                 | 20%                | 52%                  |
| Tools for annotating online resources (e.g., Delicious, Diigo, Mendeley)        | 8%                   | 3%              | 7%               | 6%                 | 11%                | 65%                  |

| Type of Technology  | Completely Confident | Quite Confident | Fairly Confident | Somewhat Confident | Slightly Confident | Not Confident at All |
|---|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Tools for creating multimedia (e.g., iMovie, Audacity)          | 9%                   | 1%              | 10%              | 14%                | 12%                | 54%                  |
| Tools for narrated online course materials (e.g., ProfCast)     | 1%                   | 5%              | 5%               | 5%                 | 19%                | 65%                  |
| Tools for delivery of courses (e.g., Moodle, Sakai, Blackboard) | 20%                  | 27%             | 9%               | 10%                | 14%                | 19%                  |
| Tools for online meetings (e.g., Skype, Adobe Connect, WebEx)   | 21%                  | 25%             | 18%              | 13%                | 12%                | 12%                  |
| Tools for connecting with others (e.g., Facebook, Edmodo)       | 20%                  | 17%             | 14%              | 12%                | 14%                | 22%                  |

Exhibit C-3. How Would You Rate Your Level of Proficiency in . . .

| Statement   | Expert | Proficient | Partially Proficient | Novice |
|---|--------|------------|----------------------|--------|
| How would you rate your level of proficiency in designing online courses?   | 1%     | 12%        | 25%                  | 62%    |
| How would you rate your level of proficiency in incorporating technology (e.g., presentation software, online tools for lesson planning) into on-campus classroom teaching? | 5%     | 16%        | 43%                  | 35%    |

Exhibit C-4. To What Extent Do You Agree With the Following Statements?

| Statement  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| In my institution, there are benefits from forming collaborative relationships across centers, campuses, or schools (intra-organizational collaboration).                    | 29%            | 52%   | 15%      | 4%                |
| [The previous statement] can achieve its goals better when working with other Jewish institutions of higher education (regardless of their denomination) than working alone. | 39%            | 47%   | 11%      | 2%                |
| I am knowledgeable of my colleagues' uses of educational technology.   | 4%             | 35%   | 46%      | 15%               |
| I am interested in learning more about uses of educational technology in other institutions of higher education.   | 36%            | 46%   | 15%      | 3%                |
| I build on a professional network within my institution to continuously grow my knowledge in areas relevant to my job.   | 24%            | 57%   | 16%      | 3%                |
| I build on a professional network outside my institution to continually grow my knowledge in areas relevant to my job.   | 38%            | 39%   | 18%      | 4%                |
| My school explores ways to foster collaboration among faculty members within the school.   | 16%            | 50%   | 28%      | 6%                |
| The dean of my school and/or director of my program have communicated to faculty members that collaboration is valued with other institutions of higher education.           | 18%            | 40%   | 35%      | 6%                |



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