San Francisco State University Campus Climate Assessment Report

November 2021

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Assessment Overview

Assessment Purpose & Design

The Campus Climate Assessment (CCA) is an offering within Hillel International's Campus Climate Initiative and the Academic Engagement Network (AEN)'s Improving the Campus Climate Initiative, which work collaboratively with higher education administrators to ensure a positive campus climate for Jewish students and members of the campus community. Hillel International and AEN are committed to supporting campuses nationally to ensure a campus environment where Jewish students feel comfortable expressing their identity and values, free of antisemitism, harassment, or marginalization.

The CCA was designed by Hillel International and TCC Group, a national consulting firm committed to collaboratively solving complex social sector problems. The CCA helps higher education institutions better understand the climate for Jewish students on campus and inform strategic efforts for change, all within the context of the broader climate for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The CCA is built to:
- Offer a consistent framework across institutions through which to understand the campus climate for Jewish students
- Document change in campus climate over time
- Identify the need for interventions, programming, or other improvement strategies

The CCA was informed by Hurtado's Campus Diversity Climate Model,[1] a four-dimensional research model that looks at historical, structural, psychological, and behavioral dimensions of climate. It is designed to be campus-specific and administered regularly as part of campus-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

Campus climate is assessed through examination of campus-specific secondary data (i.e., campus policies and infrastructure), student media and activities, and key stakeholder surveys, focus groups, and interviews. Used repeatedly over time, this assessment model is designed to capture incremental change over time and recommend specific intervention methods for enhancing policies, educational programs, and practices to improve campus climate.

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[1] Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen. *Enhancing Campus Climates for Racial/Ethnic Diversity: Educational Policy and Practice.* 1998.

Assessment Indicators and Lenses

Though many elements make up campus climate, the key factors examined through the CCA include:[2]

- **Jewish student integration into campus life** – i.e., quality of relationships among students, faculty, and the administration
- **University leadership regarding inclusivity of Jewish students, faculty, and staff** – including both how the university leads in these areas and how others interpret the university's actions
- **Opportunities for learning and engagement**, both in and out of the classroom

The CCA measures the above factors through three interrelated lenses:

- **Experience and perception** of students, faculty, and staff/administration (including Hillel Director) – reflecting the experiences of members of the campus community, both Jewish and non-Jewish
- **Campus policies, academic programs, communications, and activities** – reflecting the University administration's efforts to support students
- **Student-driven activities and communications** – reflecting the actions of the larger student body and influencers within that community

The data derived from the CCA offers San Francisco State University (SFSU) and San Francisco Hillel (SF Hillel) a snapshot in time of the current campus climate for Jewish students, identifying both strengths and areas where the university could support Jewish student life on campus more effectively. This snapshot in time also captures systemic issues and institutional history, tying that institutional history to how the climate is experienced by current students, staff, and faculty.

Methodology

Data for this report was collected from surveys, focus groups, documents, and web-based materials, plus a review of campus policies, practices, and other activities. Survey data was collected in September 2021, with 245 students responding, 87 of which identified as Jewish. Student responses (Jewish and non-Jewish) represent approximately 1% of all undergraduate students; Jewish student responses represent approximately 11% of all SFSU Jewish students. Staff/administration and faculty surveys were also conducted, with 43 staff/administrators and 72 faculty responding. Two student focus groups were conducted – one with five Jewish students and one with four non-Jewish students. Five focus groups and interviews were also conducted with a total of eight faculty and staff members, seven of

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[2] Please see detailed list of analysis questions per category in the appendix

whom self-identified as Jewish. Finally, one interview was conducted with a Jewish SFSU alum and former Hillel staff member.

Secondary data was collected via web-based forms delineating various aspects of campus life, including policies and procedures, DEI staff and activities, demographics, campus infrastructure, campus history, administration and faculty behavior, student groups, websites, and student media. This information was provided by SFSU, SF Hillel, and Hillel International.

This report organizes the findings within three components of campus climate: **1) Jewish student integration into campus life, 2) University leadership regarding inclusivity of Jewish students, faculty and staff,** and **3) Learning and engagement opportunities at SFSU**. Recommendations drawn from constituent responses and compiled by TCC Group, AEN, and Hillel International are organized as follows: Recommendations for University Administration; Recommendations for Faculty and Academic Departments, and Recommendations for Student Groups and Government. The appendix of this report includes tables and graphs from survey data to further substantiate key findings.

Understanding Campus Climate and Evolving Jewish Identity

As numerous studies demonstrate, students and university employees (e.g., faculty, staff, administrators) all thrive in environments they perceive as healthy – free from negativity and discrimination, where inclusion and respect for diversity is the norm.[3] The CCA centers Jewish students at its core, positing that a climate perceived as "healthy" for Jewish students supports their learning and developmental outcomes. A healthy climate also supports employee (e.g., faculty, staff, administrator) attitudes toward their workplace, motivation, and retention, which ultimately foster a positive student experience for all.

For the purposes of this report, campus climate is defined as *the attitudes, behaviors, and standards of the campus community (e.g., faculty, staff, administrators, and students) concerning levels of respect for individual needs, abilities, and potential.*[4] Any number of factors might feed individual perceptions of what a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive climate looks like; undoubtedly, these notions vary widely across the student community.

Likewise, the notion of what it means to be Jewish, and one's association with Jewish identity itself, is neither uniform nor static. As learned through national research over decades, there are three

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[3] https://diversity.universityofcalifornia.edu/policies-guidelines/campus-climate.html and
https://campusclimate.ucop.edu/what-is-campus-climate/

[4] Adapted from University of California Diversity Page https://diversity.universityofcalifornia.edu/policies-guidelines/campus-climate.html

important realities within the Jewish community nationally that are important to consider in order to understand the rich diversity of responses informing this report:[5]

- For many people, **being Jewish is not their sole identity**. Students hold multiple identities shaped by many factors, including but not limited to religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and sexual orientation. Being Jewish is also multidimensional – it may involve a connection to Jewish spirituality, religion, culture, history, genealogy, ethnicity, among others – which may center differently in different people's lives.

- People associate their Jewishness with **different types of connections**, whether through local community or religious institutions (e.g., synagogue, Hillel), a commitment to social justice or *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), or tied more broadly to community through ancestry, family, and tradition. Similarly, Jews hold different connections to the State of Israel, inclusive of all political leanings and beliefs (from Zionist to anti-Zionist, ambivalence or apathy, and everything in between). 82% of American Jews say that caring about Israel is important or essential to what being Jewish means to them,[6] and they may define this connection in a wide variety of ways, e.g., cultural identity and heritage, religious connection to the land, political connection to the modern nation state, having family in Israel, etc.

- **Jews value many different expressions of Judaism and Jewishness**, ranging from synagogue and ritual observance to more informal opportunities, such as social gatherings and conversations infused into their daily life. Jewish students at SFSU, like many others of their generation and those who came before them,[7] value diverse forms of Jewish expression, which are often disconnected from organized Jewish life.

The SFSU Jewish student body is no exception to these realities. Indeed, survey responses from the 87 Jewish students demonstrate a wide range of relationships with Judaism, Jewishness, and Israel. For example, almost all Jewish student survey respondents feel some connection to "community" however they choose to define it; most feel a connection to "culture," "family," and "social justice;" fewer Jewish students feel a connection to "religious practice."

In addition, most SFSU Jewish students (67%) feel connected to Israel as part of their Jewish identity, though to varying degrees. While roughly half of the Jewish student respondents feel "somewhat" or "a little" connection to Israel as part of their Jewish identity, the remaining responses are split between "not at all" (33%) and "very much" (20%) (see charts in section B of the Appendix for further detail).

It is important to note that this report distinguishes between antisemitism and anti-Israel activity, and it simultaneously seeks to accurately portray the data gathered from members of the campus community. There are places in the report where student perspectives are cited that do not make this

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[5] This analysis builds on three influential national studies: Portrait of Jewish Americans, Pew Research Center, 2013. *Grande Soy Vanilla Latte with Cinnamon, No Foam: Jewish Identity and Community in a Time of Unlimited Choices*, Reboot, 2006; . OMG! How Generation Y is Redefining Faith in the iPod Era, Reboot, 2005.

[6] https://www.pewforum.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2021/04/PF_05.11.21.Jewish_Survey_Topline.pdf

[7] https://www.jweekly.com/2019/03/20/is-gen-z-alright-new-study-goes-deep-on-jewish-teens/ and https://ejewishphilanthropy.com/largest-study-of-jewish-teens-previewed-at-jewish-funders-network/

distinction. The views cited throughout the report do not necessarily reflect the perspective of TCC, Hillel International, and AEN, but it is important for those reading this report to understand how students articulate their own perceptions and experiences. The Recommendations section, and language used within it, reflects Hillel International's and AEN's suggestions for utilizing the findings to inform next steps.

While the responses of Jewish students are most visible throughout this report – given the research focus on their campus experience – it is notable to recognize that Jewish student perspectives are reinforced in the responses from non-Jewish students, as well as from Jewish and non-Jewish faculty, staff, and administrators.

Since the CCA ultimately aims to improve the Jewish student experience on campus by serving as a comparative measurement tool over time, it is important to recognize that the research findings offer numerous valid – yet sometimes contradictory – responses to the question of what constitutes a welcoming and inclusive community; this stems from the fact that there is no one singular way to define Jewish experience nor one single definition of what it means to be Jewish in America today.

Findings

Jewish Student Integration into Campus Life

1. Rich diversity on campus, but lack of understanding and representation of Jewish identity

An urban university, SFSU has a large student body of 30,000 undergraduate students from across California, the U.S., and the world. The University's website boldly celebrates its "vibrant and diverse community," depicting the campus as a place where all students belong – and a place that values learning from other cultures and experiences.

Despite SFSU's reputation for embracing diversity and its marketing around it, however, participants of the CCA study tell a more nuanced story about the Jewish student experience. Many participants – both Jewish and non-Jewish students and faculty – note that Jews are not as visible as other minority groups on campus, and there are relatively few "openly" Jewish students at the University. They also note that Jewish culture and identity is not well recognized or appreciated; instead, Jewish people are largely understood solely as "white," but not as a distinct minority group with its own rich culture, diversity, and inclusion needs.[8]

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[8] While many members of the Jewish community identify as white and have arguably benefited from white privilege due to their perceived whiteness in a U.S. context, categorizing Jews as exclusively white has the potential to deny their unique identity as a minority community as well as their intersectional identities.

2. **While most Jewish students report feeling "welcome," the presence of antisemitic sentiment and behaviors on campus have a muting effect**

When asked in the survey about their sense of belonging on campus, and if they feel comfortable expressing their Jewish identity, most Jewish students respond positively or with a neutral/mixed stance. However, qualitative, open-ended comments reveal more conflicted views. The discrepancy in the data – between quantitative and qualitative response – could be telling. It could signal a response (or acquiescence) bias, given the sensitivity of the information at hand, leading respondents toward a more positive answer choice even if it is not entirely true. It could also signal the complexity and subjectivity of the matter itself, which cannot be divorced from broader social, political, and historic context. As the comments show, students hold different interpretations of what it means to "belong" – and expectations of what it means to belong anywhere as a Jew – stemming from their individual relationships with Judaism (including affiliations, knowledge, and confidence), belief systems, and life experiences. While some students may want to celebrate their identity (on campus, in their residence hall, in class, etc.), others might not and thus their sense of belonging is distinct from their identity as a Jew.

In general, students might not feel afraid to share their identity, but also not entirely supported or invited to do so. Indeed, most students report feeling relatively comfortable – or ambivalent – about sharing their Jewish identity with other students, staff and administrators outside of class. Some students say they neither feel welcome nor excluded, and others say the issue hasn't come up since campus life has been virtual during COVID; one student states feeling "accepted through indifference." That said, Jewish students feel differently among different groups, and at different times. **Most notably, a larger number of students report feeling uncomfortable sharing their Jewish identity in classroom settings** (see section B of the Appendix). This finding matches the sense of discomfort shared by a significant number of Jewish faculty respondents as well. According to survey respondents, **certain Jewish faculty members do not express their identity in class** because they feel it will be distracting or potentially harmful, and they do not feel it is safe to do so; others, however, freely identify themselves as Jewish and feel it has never caused problems.

This finding is significant in its revelation of how identity-based politics influence academic spaces and learning. Though many Jewish students (and faculty) may not voice discomfort, focus group and survey responses raised a common perception that Jewish identity is not valued or welcomed on campus. Some Jewish students and faculty cite specific incidents when they have felt "demonized" by other students or professors, but more commonly, respondents feel that, in one way or another, they are being "asked to put their Jewishness aside." Reasons include: encountering stereotypes (by faculty and student groups); feeling alienated as a Jewish person with more than one marginalized identity (e.g., racial minority, non-gender confirming) (in academic departments, among other students); fear of hostility from students; fear of being targeted by faculty who have expressed antisemitic and/or anti-Zionist sentiment; or a "feeling of subtle discrimination" that is accepted as the norm.

3. **Students (and faculty) who feel supported in their identity as Jews cite specific affiliations and relationships on campus that have had a positive impact**

As CCA data shows, relationships matter. Of those who feel supported on campus, several Jewish students cite their affiliations with SF Hillel; others note positive interactions with Jewish professors who make accommodations for Jewish holidays or demonstrate support for dialogue around issues facing the Jewish community. Similarly, Jewish faculty cite connections with other Jewish colleagues and at Jewish Studies department events that have made them feel welcome.

4. **Deep divisions on Israel/Palestine politics, leading to lack of trust, confidence, and, in certain cases, conflict**

CCA focus group, interviewees, and survey respondents highlight the campus' strong reputation for embracing the diversity of its student body; many even praise the University's left-leaning political stance. However, many students and faculty (Jewish and non-Jewish) are disappointed by the way the University has handled conflict on both sides when it comes to Israeli/Palestinian politics – especially how it was handled under the University's previous administration. Across all three constituencies, individual Jewish and non-Jewish respondents voice dissatisfaction with how the campus has approached Palestinian activism; others (from both groups) criticize how the campus has responded to pro-Israel activism. Specifically, **most student, faculty, staff and administrator respondents feel SFSU's approach to controversial incidents over the past several years has been at best agnostic, and at worst, dismissive and divisive (see section C of the Appendix for incidents list). Many students and faculty (Jewish and non-Jewish) believe incidents escalated unnecessarily, leading to social tensions that permeate the campus today.**

Some faculty members note the campus environment has become less favorable toward Jews over the years with more incidents taking place. One administration member suggests that antisemitic incidents seem to increase on campus whenever incidents about Israel and/or Palestine appear in the news. While there is some disagreement around whether the hostility originates from on-campus or off-campus entities (given SFSU's urban setting), all responses point to a **problematic rift along political lines, which has led to a lack of understanding and trust between individuals and groups perceived as sympathetic to one another or not**.

Many Jewish students and faculty cite frustration over Jewish identity being conflated with Zionism (or an outside misperception about what Zionism is), and/or a lack of understanding about the diversity of political opinions within the Jewish community. Both Jewish and non-Jewish faculty state that "conversations around Israel and Zionism are not given the same nuance and complexity as others," and there has been a "flattened understanding of Israel and Zionism" both on campus and more broadly. Relationships are reportedly fraught between Jewish and non-Jewish student groups because of this conflation, and – both Israeli and Palestinian groups feel marginalized. In addition, a small but significant percentage of left-leaning, anti-Zionist Jewish students, faculty, and

administration members feel alienated from the SFSU Jewish community (which they perceive as represented by Hillel). They indicate they are either inclined to suppress their Jewish identity on campus and/or seek Jewish community elsewhere.

University Leadership On Inclusivity for Jewish Students, Faculty, and Staff

1. Rigid campus policies around accommodations for religious and cultural holidays discourage Jewish students and faculty from making requests

SFSU's policy on Religious and Cultural Holidays is deficient in many ways, i.e., not requiring a publication of a calendar of such holidays for the campus community; requiring a written description of the holiday from the requesting student which puts burden on the student; and devoid of provisions to avoid scheduling major campus events, including the first day of classes, convocations, graduation, etc., on major religious holidays. The policy provides a narrow window for requesting such accommodations, requiring that students notify instructors of any absences during the first two weeks of instruction. CCA respondents have varied opinions on the ease with which accommodations have been made for those requesting time off for various holidays, with only one third of students (and less than half of faculty) reporting they received accommodations for time off requested. Many believe this policy creates a bias, favoring a "dominant (Christian) culture," with faculty and students alike citing their discomfort in making these requests in the first place. Student focus group participants noted that their knowledge that they are in the minority (i.e., the only Jewish student in a class making these requests) ultimately deters them from requesting accommodations at all.

2. Unresolved issues regarding academic freedom and freedom of expression in University policies and practices

Across CCA data, students and faculty perceive a fundamental conflict between the University's *purpose* **(e.g., stimulating intellectual development and learning), and its** *actions* **surrounding freedom of expression**. In general, all CCA participants desire a campus climate that more effectively and meaningfully celebrates its demographic diversity. However, many CCA participants (students, faculty, and staff/administration) note the need for SFSU's administration to maintain a welcoming campus environment for all students by ensuring the boundaries between free speech and unprotected speech are better defined and responded to. For example, one student shared "I have seen plenty of antisemitic imagery on campus, as well as hostility towards Jewish people and culture in the classroom from other students. SF State needs to stand with and protect Jewish students and faculty, and let it be known publicly that there is no place on campus for hate for people of [any background]."

Policy
SFSU's academic freedom and freedom of expression policies are guided by the AAUP's (American Association of University Professors) 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure. While the California State University (CSU) Systemwide Policy Prohibiting Discrimination appears to

adequately cover discrimination based on "Nationality, Race or Ethnicity (including color or ancestry), and Religion (or Religious Creed)," **it is unclear whether the policy protects against harassment, slurs, or offensive comments related to a Jewish student's ethno-religious identification with Israel or Zionism specifically.**

SFSU's Academic Senate Policy on Academic Freedom omits a key principle embodied in the AAUP Guidelines on Academic Freedom, which encourages faculty responsibilities to "at all times be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and make every effort to indicate that he/she is not an institutional spokesman." This omission can cause real or perceived variances in how faculty interpret and exercise their "freedom of expression" in classrooms, on campus, and even online (e.g., personal and institutional social media platforms).

About one quarter of Jewish students indicate they have witnessed or experienced antisemitic incidents on campus at least once,[9] and report lacking clarity on how to report such incidents. Of those students, a majority (nearly 70%) indicate they do not feel supported by the campus administration when reporting those incidents. Faculty and staff survey respondents site similar grievances – sharing that the administration does not do enough to respond to these incidents, and at times, treats "those who express concerns about antisemitism with skepticism." **Though CCA respondents' definitions of "antisemitic incidents" is subjective, Jewish and non-Jewish students largely believe the University's response has been lacking.** Further, it is important to acknowledge that not all acts of antisemitism are explicit – as one staff/administrator survey respondents reflects, "Jewish students face a lot of microaggressions from other students and faculty and it seems like there isn't a place for Jewish students to find support."

According to participating students, faculty, and staff, lack of clarity and inconsistent enforcement from university leadership on discrimination policies opens the door for incidents to occur.[10] Many Jewish students report, in the survey and/or focus groups, feeling that the administration "gives free reign" for students and faculty to "make dangerous claims" related to Jewish identity, Israel, and/or Zionism. Most students – Jewish and non-Jewish – share the desire to see the University administration take a more active role in "standing with and protecting Jewish students and faculty" by making public announcements and/or taking further action to condemn such incidents. Jewish faculty responses amplify this view, noting a "disturbing silence" on the part of the administration, which they believe is indicative of "an institutional culture that ignores and tolerates antisemitism."

Practice
The University's sponsorship of certain events over the past few years has caused widespread discomfort among Jewish and non-Jewish campus community members alike. Events most cited include: the exclusion of Jewish student groups from participating in the Know Your Rights Fair in 2017;

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[9] See Figure C in Appendix
[10] "Incidents" are those involving offensive comments, discrimination, harassment, or hate speech directed at Jewish students or other Jewish members of the campus community

the 2016 event with Mayor Barkat of Jerusalem, which was subsequently canceled due to student protest; and the invitation of Leila Khaled to speak at a virtual event in 2020, which was subsequently canceled by Zoom.[11]

These events – and SFSU's response to them – caused widespread backlash. In the case of the 2020 Leila Khaled event, many Jewish students believe that SFSU's willingness "to host and give a stage to a terrorist in the name of free speech is outrageous." Students were also disappointed in the University's public response – noting the administration seemed unwilling to take a strong position against antisemitism and anti-Israel ideologies. Faculty and staff shared similar sentiments, expressing frustration that the University puts forth "little to no public acknowledgement of antisemitism" and "because incidents are linked with Zionism, they are not adequately addressed or seen as antisemitic by University leadership."

Student-professor relationships and classroom conversations are also affected by prejudices, stereotypes, and fear of conflict. Many students feel professors have crossed boundaries in making claims – whether in the context of lectures or on social media – that caused them to feel targeted, attacked, or unwelcome. When asked whether students had witnessed or experienced antisemitism on campus, one Jewish student shared that their professor posted "anti-Israel memes" labeling Israel as an "oppressor and colonizer" on a social media platform using an SFSU-affiliated account. Another Jewish student shared that their professor told them that "Israel is a colony state and BDS is a legitimate social movement." Students describe these experiences as "othering," "uncomfortable," and inciting a fear of "being openly Jewish on campus and being active in Jewish organizations."

Meanwhile, many faculty members say they walk a fine line in sharing their views on contentious topics in and out of the classroom. Some Jewish faculty members, for example, state their reticence to express critical perspectives on Israel/Palestine in the classroom for fear that any critique of Zionism, or support for Palestinian students, will ignite backlash. Other Jewish faculty fear sharing their identity with students for fear of becoming targets of antisemitism. While the data is complex and varied, one key takeaway stands out: **the lack of comfort around challenging conversations on campus only leads to deeper fissures**. Better modeling from the administration, as well as deliberate training and education on what it takes to encourage *productive* dialogue, would benefit students, faculty, and the campus community.[12]

3. While SFSU's new administration is seen as more promising than the last, the University's response thus far has been perceived as inadequate

Many students, faculty, and staff reference a **long institutional history marked by the administration's failure to effectively support and communicate its position – particularly in condemning antisemitism** – to the campus community. Even when senior leadership has offered a

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[11] For more information on Incidents on the SFSU campus, see: List of Incidents in Appendix, Part C
[12] For more information on incidents on the SFSU campus, see: Section C in Appendix

response following incidents occurring on campus, CCA participants interpret the administration's public statements on reported incidents to be insincere and "corporate;" these responses are considered public relations strategies, rather than authentic efforts to condemn antisemitic acts. As one student survey respondent notes: "It is common to publish statements, but it's another thing to do what it means. It's disappointing that we hear about these issues but there is no sense of community, it currently feels very disconnected."

Despite ongoing claims surrounding the University's failure to adequately address antisemitic incidents, students and faculty widely believe the SFSU administration has made some improvement under President Mahoney's leadership (e.g., the President's public statements attempting to bridge divides among student populations). They are eager to experience sincere, action-oriented steps that address the multi-faceted challenges Jewish members of the campus community face.

Learning and Engagement Opportunities at SFSU

1. **Shared desire across students, faculty, staff, and administrators for SFSU to encourage healthy, open dialogue to bridge divides**

While many Jewish and non-Jewish respondents characterize the university as "friendly," "respectful," and "inclusive," they also believe efforts to foster relationship-building and dialogue have been lacking to date. Namely, they want the SFSU administration to play a more deliberate, proactive role in facilitating dialogue and connections amongst diverse populations. While many respondents consider SFSU's welcoming of controversial speakers to campus as examples of the administration's insensitivity to Jewish (and Palestinian) students, making them feel less welcome, students and faculty believe the administration's fear of reactionary conflict causes SFSU to miss important opportunities to create productive channels for dialogue and advance meaningful learning.

Jewish and non-Jewish students shared their disappointment that faculty and staff do not embrace difficult conversations nor teach students how to wrestle with complexity around Israel/Palestine, the relationship and differences between Judaism and Zionism, and Jewish identity. As one student notes: "Jews don't fit into the neat racial hierarchy." Without a highly visible presence of the diversity that exists among Jews on campus, the broader community misses the chance to better understand and empathize with peers through their campus experience. This lack of understanding invites dangerous assumptions and stereotypes to proliferate.

A significant percentage of Jewish and non-Jewish student and faculty respondents desire safe, apolitical spaces in which they can build community and learn from others across cultural, ethnic, religious lines. Some students suggest Hillel could invite Jewish and non-Jewish students to participate in shabbat dinners together; others envision a role for the administration to bridge alliances across

student groups and host more learning opportunities with speakers who can spark productive dialogue, rather than share biases and deepen political divides.

2. **SFSU's Jewish Studies department encourages dialogue and learning about the Jewish community, but there is room for improvement across departments**

While SFSU supports opportunities for Jewish learning and engagement for its students in targeted classes, few mainstream academic departments (e.g., literature, history, sociology) offer the chance to become more familiar with Judaism and Jewish life. Many respondents believe greater understanding and awareness of the diversity of the Jewish experience from across the campus community could lead to a more welcoming and inclusive environment for Jewish students.

Current sharing of knowledge at SFSU around Jewish culture, history, and Judaism is provided solely by the Jewish Studies department and SF Hillel. Though it is technically an off-campus entity, SF Hillel is the only campus organization focused on Jewish student life and offers a robust array of programs supporting community building, learning, service, and wellness of the Jewish student body. Although respondents are quick to note the dearth of Jewish gathering spaces outside of Hillel, more than half (approximately 60%) of Jewish student survey respondents note they have participated in Jewish learning and engagement activities "at least sometimes," suggesting that SF Hillel has been relatively successful in its programming and outreach.

Most student and faculty respondents consider the Jewish Studies program to be a welcoming and inclusive environment. SFSU faculty value their collegial relationships with Jewish Studies faculty and staff, with some highlighting special efforts made by the department to support new faculty members' orientation to the campus community. Jewish student respondents who identify as part of the program say they feel valued in their identity as Jews and appreciate the accommodations made for religious holidays. Though some student respondents suggest the program could be more robust and include more diverse faculty, students offer minimal criticism. Responses show that, as one of few venues for Jewish learning on campus, the Jewish Studies department could potentially host or co-host more – and different – opportunities to foster greater cross-community understanding.

Several student and faculty CCA participants believe there could be opportunities to infuse greater understanding about Judaism as an ethnicity at SFSU through cooperation between the Jewish Studies and Ethnic Studies departments. Ideas shared across student and faculty (Jewish and non-Jewish) included the potential to integrate educational opportunities from the Jewish Studies Program with the College of Ethnic Studies or bring the two programs closer together in other ways (e.g., shared programming, or even a shared building). Although it is unclear whether this issue is being discussed in any way at the administration level, those who raise this idea acknowledge potential benefits and challenges. If the University were to identify opportunities for joint educational programming between the Jewish and Ethnic Studies programs, it could signal an important, positive shift toward recognizing

Jewish identity beyond religion and politics and broadening understandings of its complexity. It would also help forge connections with other diverse groups on campus, including Arabs and Palestinians. However, some Jewish students highlight pre-existing tensions surrounding this topic; for example, one student warned of campus community members' tendency to associate the Jewish Studies department with a Zionist, pro-Israel agenda. This leads many students to presume that the Jewish Studies department would not be welcome in Ethnic Studies.

3. **Survey and focus group data suggest student groups and activities, outside SF Hillel, are not as welcoming and inclusive of Jewish students as they could be; new Jewish Life Coordinator in DEI Office reflects a promising opportunity**

Many Jewish students, faculty, staff, and administrators state that SFSU has a reputation for not being a safe place for Jewish people. They point to the administration's failures to condemn intolerance and antisemitism, and to a general lack of institution-wide training "to deal with antisemitism in the same way they do for other forms of hate and bias."

While there is need for more opportunities and spaces on campus for all students to learn specifically about Jewish identity, Jewish life, and Judaism, there is also a need for co-curricular spaces to be more welcoming and inclusive of Jewish students. As part of the new University administration's efforts to address intolerance and discrimination, they will be positioning a Jewish Life Coordinator within SFSU's DEI Office. This is an important first step toward "unsiloing" the Jewish experience on campus and giving representation to Jewish students alongside other minority groups. Respondents who spoke about this new position are optimistic that it will promote greater opportunity for integrating Jewish perspectives, culture, and identity into all aspects of campus life.

Recommendations

Recommendations for University Administration

Learning and dialogue

- Provide ongoing education and training for students, faculty, staff and administrators on building relationships and dialogues across differences, and how to navigate disagreements in a respectful manner while respecting free speech and academic freedom.
    - *Students:* Provide dialogue training to equip students with skills that foster democracy and encourage active listening and engagement with diverse perspectives, enabling students to have more productive conversations about Israel/Palestine and other issues.
    - *Faculty:* Actively increase faculty engagement with the challenges of teaching students to both think for themselves and respectfully disagree with one another.
    - *Administrators:* Provide training on free speech and academic freedom, and how to balance the rights and responsibilities involved.

- Create learning opportunities for students, faculty and staff to learn more about other cultural, religious and ethnic groups and their traditions and practices. For example, host more interethnic and multi-faith programs to encourage dialogue and community across all groups on campus.
- Provide specific training for students (including student group leaders), faculty, staff and administrators on Jewish identity and antisemitism, as is provided about other identities and issues. This training should distinguish between criticism of Israel and antisemitism, while also recognizing that anti-Israel sentiment sometimes stems from or veers into antisemitism and/or can target and marginalize Jewish students, faculty, and staff.
- Create shared spaces for open, respectful dialogue and learning about Israel/Palestine. Consider offering signature programming and speakers that address Israel/Palestine from truly diverse perspectives. Programming should also include opportunities for students to gather to tell their stories, share their perspectives, and listen actively to other narratives.
- Create structures for strategically designating trainings as required vs. optional for different audiences (e.g., new student orientation, student leadership orientation, staff and faculty onboarding, etc.), and hold participants accountable for completion.
- Encourage the creation of inter-departmental faculty/staff affinity groups, including a group for faculty/staff who identify as Jewish.

Policies and procedures
- Under the leadership of the new Jewish Life Coordinator within SFSU's DEI Office, ensure that Jewish students are represented alongside other minority groups in DEI spaces, programs, policies, and procedures, with the goal of "unsiloing" the Jewish experience on campus.
- Develop and implement protocols to ensure bias incidents and grievances are consistently investigated and discrimination policies are enforced across identity groups.
- Add religion as a protected category within the Bias Incident Education Team at SF State document.
- Within existing policies, e.g., CSU's Systemwide Policy Prohibiting Discrimination and the University Policy on Student Activities, ensure that Jewish ethnic-religious identification with Israel or Zionism is recognized as one aspect of Jewish identity and that policies protect Jewish students, faculty, and staff from discrimination based on this identification.
- Hold student organizations and academic departments accountable to create an inclusive environment that encourages diversity of viewpoints and welcomes Jewish students regardless of their relationship to Israel. Accountability for academic departments can come through faculty trainings, requirement of statements on syllabi about support for diverse viewpoints, and accountability for faculty for faculty who create or tolerate antisemitic environments in their classroom.
- In advance of a planned rally, protest, demonstration, or a campus event at which a protest is likely to occur, take proactive measures to assure public safety and socialize the Time, Place, & Manner regulations. Groups and individuals that violate university rules regulating demonstrations (e.g., by engaging in harassment, incitement of violence, violating Time, Place & Manner regulations) should face meaningful sanctions.

- Create more inclusive policies and procedures for accommodating and celebrating diverse religious holidays so that students and faculty know they will be supported. This should include steps such as providing and publicizing a calendar of observances, amending policies to ease the burden on students to request accommodations, providing training for faculty and students on relevant policies, and identifying a clear point-person whom students can approach if they have challenges when requesting accommodations. Please see *Recommendations for Supporting Jewish Students with Religious Holiday Observance* for more detailed recommendations.
- Regularly assess the campus climate for the Jewish community at SF State.

Communication
- Identify proactive ways to highlight and celebrate positive aspects of Jewish culture and identity and create spaces for members of the campus Jewish community to openly express their identity (e.g., on-campus celebrations of Jewish holidays led in partnership with Jewish students, SF Hillel, and/or other Jewish organizations; all-campus communications about diverse traditions' holidays).
- Ensure processes for reporting bias incidents and grievances, including antisemitic incidents, are known and accessible to students, faculty, staff and administrators. These processes should be:
  - Socialized during New Student Orientations, Student Leadership orientations, Residence Hall orientations
  - Listed by faculty, along with other accommodations, on course syllabi.
  - Highlighted in campus communications, including:
    - University-wide messages about bias incidents
    - University Website
    - Campus social media accounts
    - Flyers in Residence Halls and other campus buildings
- Be more open and transparent about how the University communicates about incidents of antisemitism and ensure that it follows a similar process for how the university communicates about other bias incidents. When warranted by the known facts, the administration should issue a timely public statement condemning the act, showing support for those impacted, and providing context of what happened so that the entire campus community can learn, grow, and heal. Even when antisemitic incidents are Israel-related, the administration should show leadership in naming it as antisemitism and articulating how it differs from criticism of Israeli policies or actions.
- Develop a communication plan and strategy for when potentially controversial speakers come to campus, which can be implemented quickly and nimbly when protests or demonstrations occur. Use these events as opportunities to communicate the university's commitment to free speech, the opportunity to hear diverse perspectives, and the importance of protest activity that does not infringe on others' rights.
- Include issues relevant to the Jewish community and antisemitism in diversity, equity and inclusion content (e.g., webpage, programs, newsletter, etc.) to facilitate integration of these topics into DEI spaces.

- Proactively and transparently communicate results, learnings, and commitments to subsequent action steps from campus climate assessments, including this assessment, to the campus community.

Recommendations for Faculty and Academic Departments

Faculty
- Faculty should:
    - Explicitly confront antisemitism and antisemitic comments in the classroom.
    - Model respectful discussion and hold space for challenging conversations among students.
    - Participate in professional development opportunities, as suggested above, to learn the strategies and skills to confront antisemitism, facilitate challenging discussions, and connect students to campus support services if necessary.
- Faculty outside of Jewish Studies should consider integrating content related to history, literature, politics, and sociology of the Jewish community, antisemitism, and related topics

Academic Departments
- Consider how Jewish Studies fits within broader academic frameworks that consider ethnic, religious, and racial diversity. Such a shift would reflect changes in approaches to conversations about identity, marginalization, and discrimination which have taken place in the last 50 years since these academic programs were established.
- Consider creating more interdisciplinary Jewish studies programs, cross-listing courses between and Jewish Studies and departments within Ethnic Studies, and/or co-sponsoring educational programming between these departments.
- Academic departments should host or co-host educational learning opportunities for the campus community on the diversity of the Jewish community, Jewish identity, and historical and contemporary antisemitism, as well as opportunities to foster greater cross-community understanding.
- Academic departments should hire with the intention of having faculty who represent diverse viewpoints on contentious topics including Israel/Palestine. They should also intentionally hire faculty who are committed to productive and respectful discussion and welcome diversity of viewpoints on controversial topics.

Recommendations for Student Groups and Government

Faculty advisors to student groups, student officers of student organizations, and staff liaisons to student government should:
- Host events to bring Jewish and non-Jewish students together in open, respectful dialogue, appreciating learning that comes from difficult conversations.

- Provide incentives for student-led programming that involves collaboration between student groups across areas of deep difference
- Host community building opportunities and learning exchanges focused on ethnicity and culture, rather than politics (e.g., celebrating diverse traditions' holidays, joint service projects)
- Ensure that student leaders are required to participate in the learning opportunities recommended above, as well as training on the Time, Place, & Manner regulations.
- Condemn antisemitism and name antisemitic attitudes and behaviors when they appear within student organizations.

Appendix

A. **Data Analysis Questions**
B. **Tables for Key Metrics**
C. **Antisemitic and Anti-Israel Incidents and University Responses**
D. **Hillel International's Policy and Procedures Review**
E. **Recommendations from Hillel International for Supporting Jewish Students with Religious Holiday Observance**

A. Data Analysis Questions

Jewish student integration into campus life

1. Do Jewish students feel welcome and/or a sense of belonging on campus? How comfortable are Jewish students in sharing their identity with others on campus (students, faculty, staff, administrators)? What influences their ability to feel comfortable/welcome on campus or not? What are the relationships between Jewish and non-Jewish students?
2. What are the relationships between Jewish students and faculty? Administration? Do Jewish students feel that faculty/administration individually and collectively value their opinions and identity?
3. What are the relationships between faculty and administration on matters related to the campus climate for Jewish students? Are they individually and collectively committed to supporting Jewish students as part of the rich diversity of the campus community?
4. How are these relationships perceived by Jewish students, as compared with non-Jewish students? What policies, practices, resources, or additional learning could lead to more positive relationships built on mutual commitment, respect, and trust?

Leadership from the University (both real and perceived) regarding respect and inclusivity for Jewish students, faculty, and staff

1. How do students, faculty, staff and administrators perceive SFSU's interest and commitment to creating a campus climate that is welcoming and inclusive? What efforts stand out?
2. What policies and procedures exist that do or do not support Jewish students' inclusion within the campus community?

3. Does the university make any accommodations for Jewish students? (e.g., holiday celebrations and course absences, kosher dining options, etc.) Do Jewish students feel comfortable using them? If not, what are the barriers?
4. How often do antisemitic incidents occur? How do they impact members of the campus community?
5. Do students know where and how to report bias incidents and grievances? How accessible are reporting channels? How responsive is the administration to bias incidents and grievances reported through those channels?
6. How do the administration and campus community respond to incidents (subtle or explicit) of antisemitism when they occur?

Opportunities for learning and engagement, both in and out of the classroom
1. How do students learn about Jewishness (culture, identity, ethnicity) and Judaism on campus?
2. How do Jewish students engage with SFSU student life (co-curricular organizations, student government, social media, newspaper, etc.) Do they feel welcome and included in their identity as Jews?
3. What opportunities exist for Jewish and non-Jewish students to productively engage with one another? How do faculty and administrators support these efforts, if at all? What could they do better?

B. Student Survey Findings – Quantitative Data

Figure A

Jewish student comfort expressing their identity on campus

Jewish students' feelings of comfort and belonging on campus are mixed. Though most students (72%) feel they belong on campus, the percentages of students who feel comfortable expressing their Jewish identity in different venues is smaller. For example, only 45% of students feel comfortable expressing their Jewish identity in their place of residence. The percentage of respondents who feel comfortable are a bit higher in their classes (52%), outside of class (60%), and with campus staff and administrators (60%).

Jewish student comfort expressing their identity on campus

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel that I belong on campus.	2%	11%	14%	47%	25%
I feel comfortable expressing my Jewish identity to campus staff and administrators.	5%	10%	24%	37%	23%
I feel comfortable expressing my Jewish identity to other students outside of class.	7%	14%	20%	44%	16%
I feel comfortable expressing my Jewish identity in my classes.	8%	21%	20%	38%	14%
I feel comfortable expressing my Jewish identity in my residence hall or place of living.	3%	2%	49%	29%	16%
If/when I choose to engage in Jewish activities or observances on campus, I have places to go where I feel…	1%	21%	47%	20%	12%

Few students know of comfortable places to go for Jewish activities or observances. Only 32% of Jewish respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they have places to go where they feel comfortable to engage in Jewish activities or observances. Almost half answered "neither agree nor disagree," which may indicate that for many respondents this topic does not come up regularly. Nearly a quarter disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating that there is something lacking in their knowledge or availability of options.

Figure B

Experiences of discrimination and feelings of unwelcome

About one-quarter (1/4) of Jewish students have experienced discrimination on campus based on their Jewish identity. There was a higher incidence of respondents who witnessed or heard about this type of discrimination against someone else – 42% of all respondents, both Jewish and non-Jewish, had witnessed or heard about this occurring at least once.

Many students are the subject of blame for the actions of the Israeli government. Almost half of respondents (44%) have at some point been blamed for the actions of the Israeli government based on their Jewish identity.

Experiences of discrimination and feelings of unwelcome

Statement	Never	Hardly Ever	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently
I have felt unwelcome in or excluded from a campus organization because of my Jewish identity.	72%	7%	8%	8%	5%
I have personally been discriminated against on campus on the basis of my Jewish identity.	76%	10%	2%	6%	6%
I have witnessed or heard about someone else being discriminated against on campus on the basis of their Jewish identity.	58%	12%	8%	13%	9%
I have been blamed for the actions of the Israeli government because of my Jewish identity.	56%	14%	13%	8%	9%

Legend: ■ Never ■ Hardly Ever ■ Occasionally ■ Sometimes ■ Frequently

Figure C

Experiences with Antisemitism

While most students say they have neither experienced nor witnessed antisemitism on campus, **experiences with antisemitism on campus are not uncommon.** 11% of Jewish student respondents report personally experiencing antisemitism on campus **at least occasionally** and nearly one fifth (19%) of all students (Jewish and non-Jewish) witness antisemitism on campus **at least occasionally**.

Experiences with antisemitism (Jewish Students)

Statement	Never	Hardly Ever	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently
I have personally experienced antisemitism on campus.	84%	6%	7%	3%	1%

Legend: ■ Never ■ Hardly Ever ■ Occasionally ■ Sometimes ■ Frequently
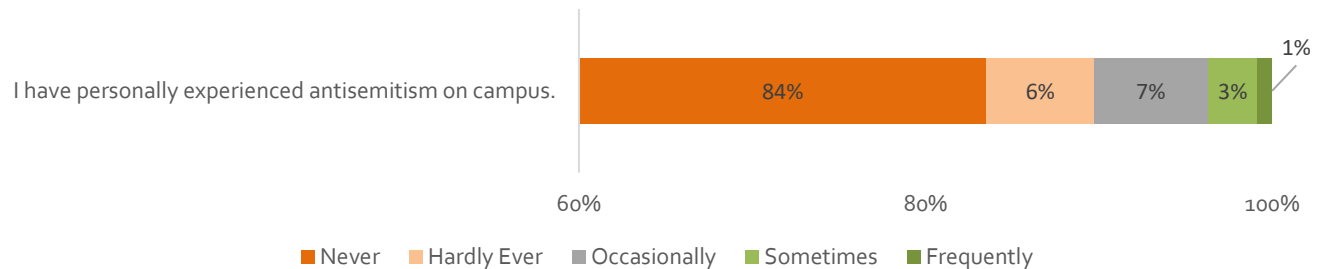
Experiences with antisemitism (Jewish and non-Jewish Students)

I have witnessed antisemitism on campus.
| Never | Hardly Ever | Occasionally | Sometimes | Frequently |
| 77% | 9% | 7% | 5% | 2% |

Never ■ Hardly Ever ■ Occasionally ■ Sometimes ■ Frequently

Figure D

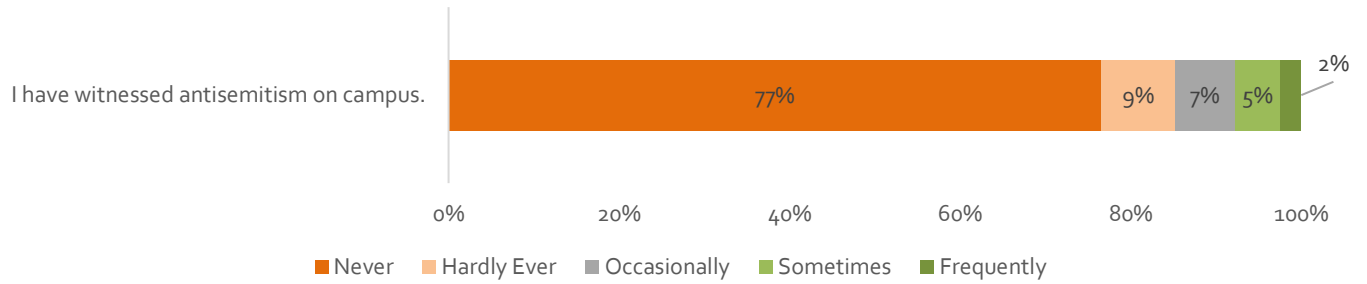**Campus administration is falling short in providing support for students after antisemitic acts.** Over three-quarters of all students (Jewish and non-Jewish) who report having witnessed or experienced acts of antisemitism[13] felt at least somewhat unsupported by the administration in response to antisemitic incidents they reported. These findings may point to a lack of a unified or codified method for administration responding to antisemitism.

Students' perceptions of administration support after antisemitic occurrence reported

I have…
| 24% | 8% | 68% |

■ Felt supported by the campus administration in their response to antisemitic act(s) reported.

■ Felt supported by the campus administration in response to SOME antisemitic acts reported.

■ Not felt supported by the campus administration in their response to antisemitic act(s) reported.
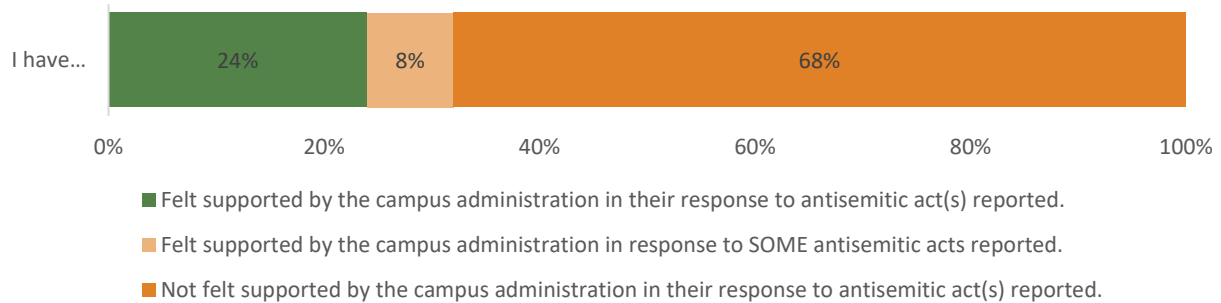
[13] 29 students indicated they reported an antisemitic incident they witnessed or experienced to the campus administration; Of those 29 students, 25 responded to the follow-up question asking the degree to which they felt supported by the campus administration.

Figure E

Understanding of antisemitic incident reporting

Most Jewish and non-Jewish students (60%) report not knowing how or to whom to report antisemitic incidents when they occur.
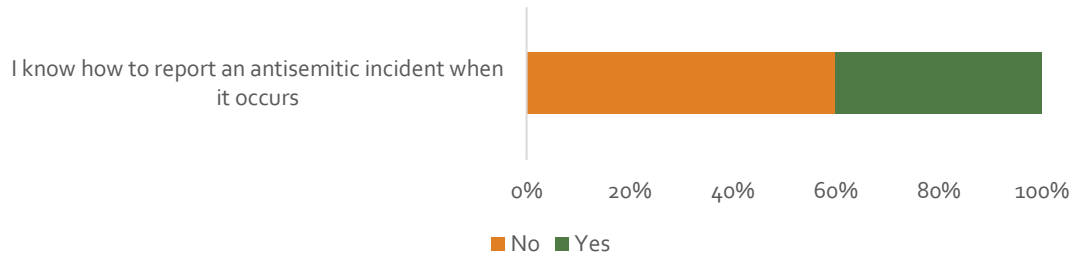
I know how to report an antisemitic incident when it occurs

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

■ No ■ Yes

Figure F

Hiding Jewish identity

Most students have felt some need to hide their Jewish identity in university venues. Students feel the greatest need to hide their Jewish identity in class and from other students outside of class. For example, 65% of respondents felt some need to hide their Jewish identity from students outside of class. This number was only slightly lower (57%) in their classes. They are less inclined to hide their Jewish identity in their place of residence (39%) and to campus staff and administrators (46%).

I have felt a need to hide my Jewish identity...

	Never	Hardly Ever	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently
...In my residence hall or place of living.	61%	27%	4%	7%	1%
...To campus staff and administrators.	53%	23%	10%	12%	1%
...From other students outside of class.	36%	23%	16%	20%	6%
...In my classes	43%	17%	18%	14%	8%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

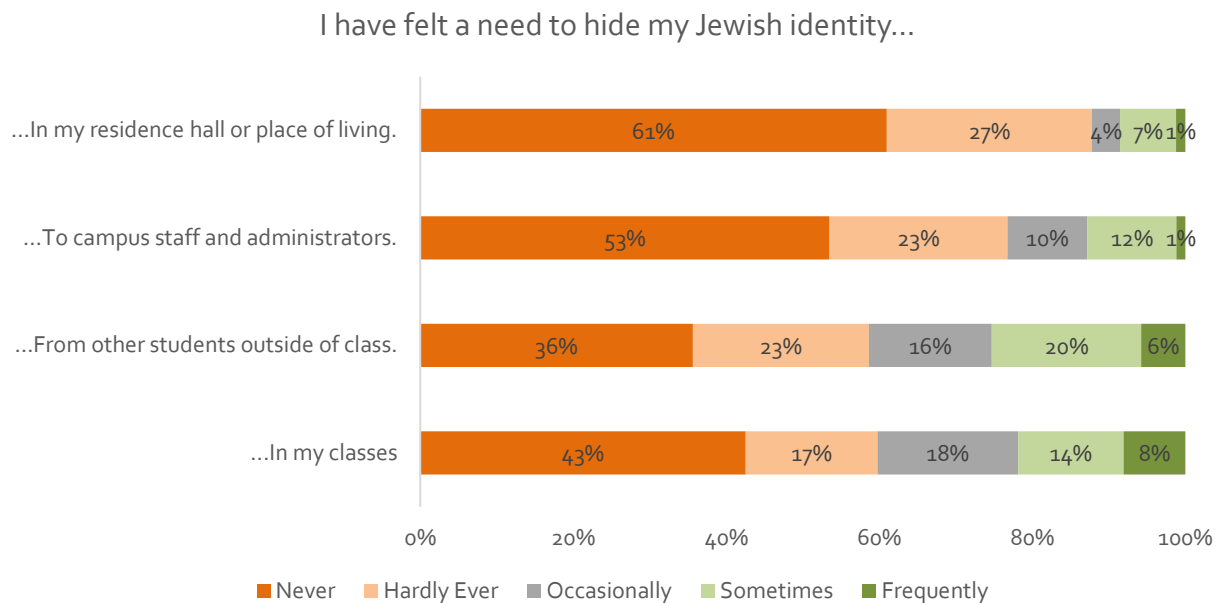■ Never ■ Hardly Ever ■ Occasionally ■ Sometimes ■ Frequently

Figure G

Accommodation for Jewish Students

Students have experienced varying levels of accommodation in their celebration of Jewish holidays and other observances. When asked about how well faculty accommodate their needs in this area, over one third (36% of respondents) either agreed or strongly agreed their needs were accommodated. 17% of respondents have had at least some difficulty in these accommodations. The degree to which these holidays are accommodated may vary by instructor, department, or other factors.
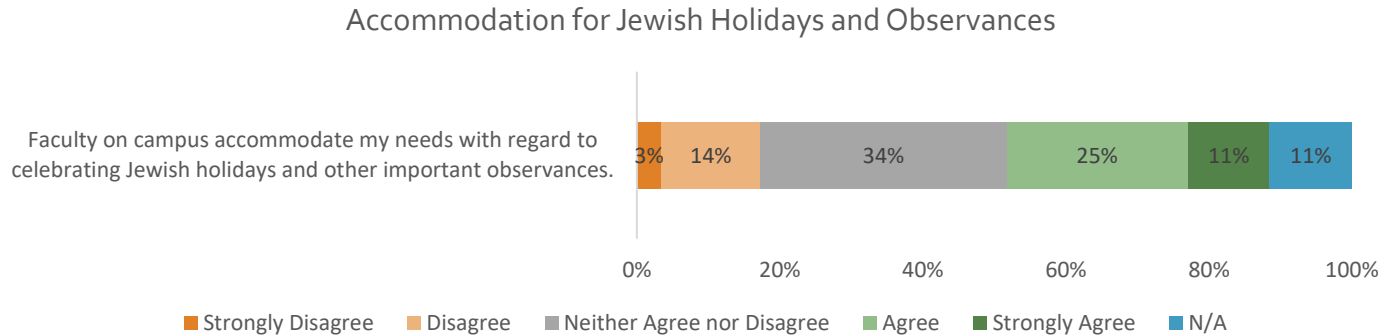
Accommodation for Jewish Holidays and Observances

Faculty on campus accommodate my needs with regard to celebrating Jewish holidays and other important observances.	3%	14%	34%	25%	11%	11%

Legend: ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree ■ N/A

Figure H

Jewish student support

Faculty and the administration have room for improvement in their support of Jewish students on campus. Less than one-third of student respondents agreed or strongly agreed that either faculty or administration members understand what Jewish students need to feel supported on campus. These numbers likely indicate there are at least some areas where faculty and administration can improve the degree to which they provide a positive, welcoming atmosphere for Jewish students.

Jewish Student Support on Campus

Faculty understand what Jewish students need to feel supported on campus.	7%	15%	47%	25%	6%
Members of the administration understand what Jewish students need to feel supported on campus.	9%	16%	48%	20%	7%

Legend: ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree
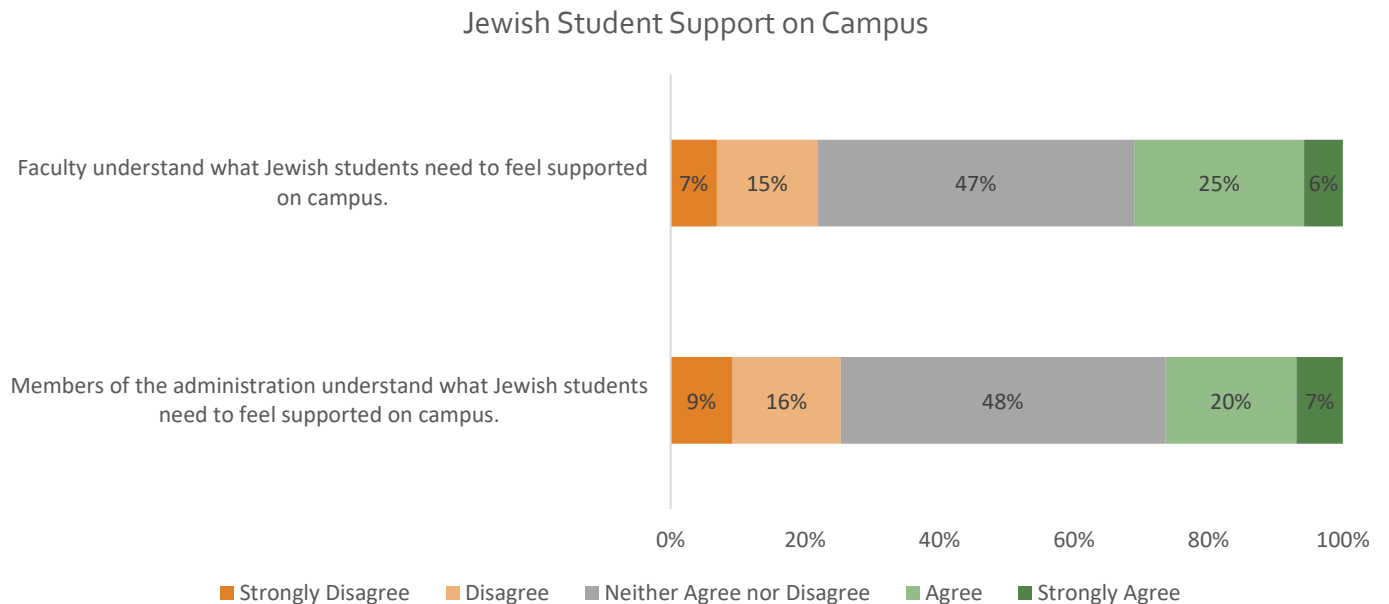
Figure I

Respect for diverse views on Israel and Palestine

The conversation around Israel and Palestine occurs occasionally on campus. Only 37% of respondents believe these issues are frequently discussed on campus. Even fewer (19%) consider themselves to be personally engaged in these issues. These numbers indicate there is likely some campus conversation on the topics, but it is not widespread.

Students' perception of the level of respect around Israel/Palestine conversations is mixed. Overall, students tend to feel either positively or ambivalent about the level of respect coming from staff and administrators on these topics. On the other hand, one-quarter of students perceive a lack of respect of diverse opinions with students outside of class. These numbers appear to indicate a divide in perception, with some having favorable experiences, others having unfavorable experiences, and a great deal having ambivalent feelings (which could indicate neutrality, or a sign of students who do not feel comfortable submitting a response).
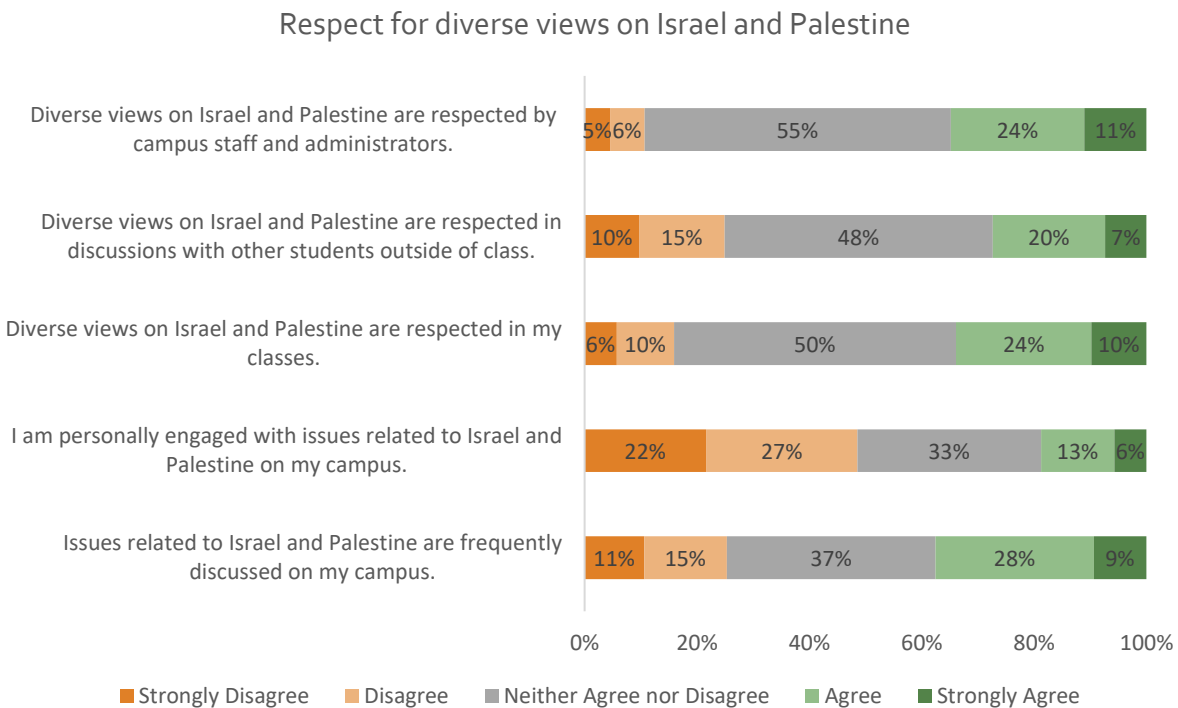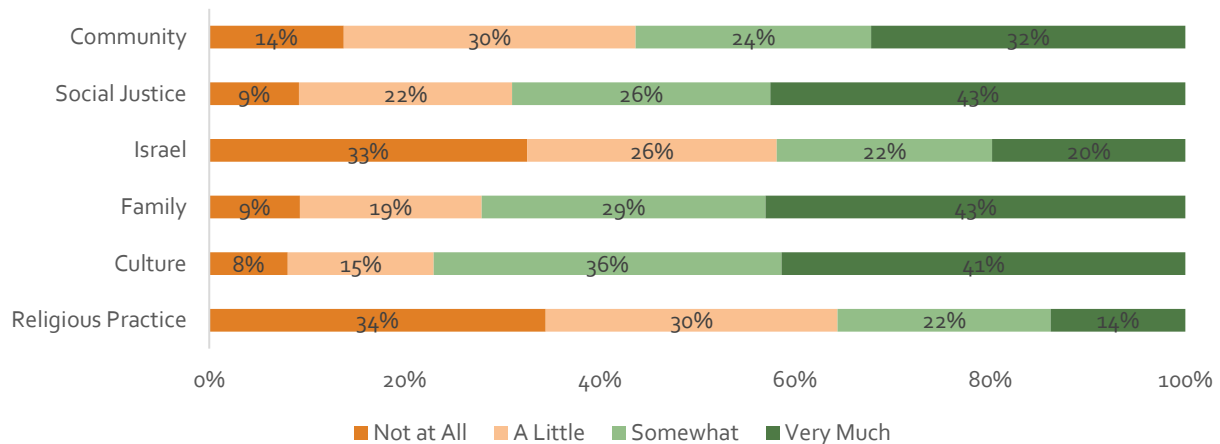
Respect for diverse views on Israel and Palestine

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Diverse views on Israel and Palestine are respected by campus staff and administrators.	5%	6%	55%	24%	11%
Diverse views on Israel and Palestine are respected in discussions with other students outside of class.	10%	15%	48%	20%	7%
Diverse views on Israel and Palestine are respected in my classes.	6%	10%	50%	24%	10%
I am personally engaged with issues related to Israel and Palestine on my campus.	22%	27%	33%	13%	6%
Issues related to Israel and Palestine are frequently discussed on my campus.	11%	15%	37%	28%	9%

Figure J

Jewish student connections to Jewish identity

SFSU Jewish students connect with Judaism and Jewish identity in different ways. Students were asked to rate the extent to which they feel a connection to various components of Jewish identity, including their community, social justice, family, Israel, culture, and religious practice. Students felt the

greatest degree of connection with culture (77% felt at least some connection) and family (72%). Of these six components, students felt the lowest level of connection with religious practice.

To what extent do you feel a connection to the following as part of your Jewish identity?

	Not at All	A Little	Somewhat	Very Much
Community	14%	30%	24%	32%
Social Justice	9%	22%	26%	43%
Israel	33%	26%	22%	20%
Family	9%	19%	29%	43%
Culture	8%	15%	36%	41%
Religious Practice	34%	30%	22%	14%

C. SFSU Incidents and Related Statements from SFSU Administration

Note: The antisemitic incidents were recorded by Hillel International and SF Hillel, and the university statements were provided by the SFSU administration.

Antisemitic incidents in recent years	**April 2016**: Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat is interrupted by student protesters and prevented from speaking during his lecture. Protesters chant profane slogans at both Mayor Barkat and Jewish students present during lecture. University officials present failed to intervene or uphold student conduct regulations during the event. **November 2016:** Know Your Rights Fair, where multiple student organizations, staff and faculty collaborated to exclude SF Hillel from tabling during the fair, against instructions from a university official. An off-campus, anti-Zionist Jewish organization was invited to participate to represent a Jewish viewpoint after Hillel was excluded.[14] **December 2019:** Antisemitic signs posted in a parking lot of the Park Merced apartment complex, where many SF State community members live off-campus/adjacent to campus. Student brought the signs to the attention of campus student life staff. No perpetrator found. **March 2020:** Posters are found around SF State's campus for the white supremacist group, The Patriot Front, who has a history of propagandizing at SFSU. The posters were not explicitly antisemitic but many groups, including Jews, found the posters threatening. **May 2021:** Following the establishment of the Bias Incident Education Team (BIET) in February 2021, where SF State community can report bias-related incidents, one report was submitted where a campus community member reported alleged

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[14] https://live-jweekly.alleydev.com/2017/08/04/investigation-finds-hillel-improperly-excluded-sfsu-student-fair/

	antisemitic social media postings by a student organization. The BIET has reached out to the person who submitted the report for follow-up, but the person has not responded to invitation to meet.
High-profile anti-Israel incidents in recent years	• **September 2020:** Professors invite Leila Khaled, a Palestinian activist who participated in two airplane hijackings targeting civilians in 1969 and 1970 as a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, to speak to their classrooms via Zoom. The PFLP is currently designated as a terrorist group by the US State Department. Tech companies (Zoom and Facebook) refuse to platform the event, citing private company policies and potential Federal action. Youtube discontinued streaming of the event midway through, as Khaled advocated violence, citing violation of their terms and policies. • **November 2020:** Associated Students votes to approve a divestment from Israel resolution. University President Mahoney indicates she will not implement it or ask the SFSU Foundation to implement it. • **April 2021:** A second attempt to host a lecture with Leila Khaled is blocked by tech companies.[15] • **September 2021:** "We Will Not Be Silenced: Defending Palestine, Academic Freedom and Anti-Colonial Pedagogy" panel conversation in which Hillel, AEN, and the Campus Climate Initiative were maligned.
Public Statements from University Administration (Support or Acknowledgement of Issues/Incidents Affecting Jewish Students/Jewish Campus Members)	*Leila Khaled Event* • [J-Weekly Op-Ed](#) – September 24, 2020 • [SF Hillel Vigil](#) – September 2020 • [J Weekly Interview](#) – September 2020 *BDS Resolution* • [Letter to AS Board of Directors](#) – November 23, 2020 • [Opposition to BDS Resolution](#) – November 2020 *Volk Lawsuit* • [Volk Settlement Coverage](#) – June 2019 *Professor Abdulhadi's Misuse of SFSU Facebook Page* • [J Weekly Story](#) – November 2019
Public Statements from University Administration (Support or Acknowledgement of Issues/Incidents Affecting all Students/Campus Members)	• [Academic Freedom on a Welcoming, Inclusive Campus](#) – September 5, 2020 • [Academic Freedom Debate Continues](#) – September 23, 2020

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[15] https://jweekly.com/2021/04/23/tech-companies-block-leila-khaled-event-at-sfsu-for-a-second-time/

Public Statements from University Administration (Support or Acknowledgement of Issues/Incidents not specific to Jewish Students/ Campus Members)	• Black Lives Matter: The SF State Community Responds – 2020-21 • A Guiding Light in Dark Times – January 22, 2020 • Words Matter – February 19, 2020 • Cultural Humility in the Face of Tragedy and Turmoil – May 29, 2020 • Juneteenth 2020: Celebrating and Realizing Freedom – June 17, 2020 • Black Lives Matter @ SF State – July 17, 2020 • A Message of Gratitude – November 23, 2020 • Standing in Solidarity with AAPI Communities – February 17, 2021 • Working Together Against Hate – March 25, 2021 • Justice for George Floyd – April 20, 2021

D. Hillel International's Policies and Procedures Review

These comments are based on a preliminary review of selected University policies and procedures that may affect the campus climate for Jewish students. Further review and discussion with appropriate University officials will be important if the meaning and effect of these policies and procedures in light of our observations below is to be clarified.

- The Academic Senate Policy on Academic Freedom fails to incorporate a key principle embodied in the AAUP Guidelines on Academic Freedom related to faculty responsibilities to "at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that he/she is not an institutional spokesman."

- CSU's Systemwide Policy Prohibiting Discrimination appears to adequately cover discrimination based on "Nationality, Race or Ethnicity (including color or ancestry), and Religion (or Religious Creed)." However, it is unclear whether the Policy protects against harassment, slurs, or offensive comments related to a Jewish student's ethnic-religious identification with Israel or Zionism. And notably, the Bias Incident Education Team at SF State document fails to mention religion at all as a protected category.

- The Student Conduct Code prohibits "willful, material and substantial disruption or obstruction of a university-related activity, or any on-campus activity," but does not expressly protect students' 1st Amendment rights to invite and receive opinions from speakers and otherwise gather for religious or other communal purposes, or provide consequences for violation.

- SFSU's Policy on Religious and Cultural Holidays is deficient in many ways, e.g., in not requiring a publication of a calendar of such holidays for the campus community; in requiring a written description of the holiday from the requesting student; in not having any provision to avoid scheduling major campus events, including the first day of classes, convocations, graduation, etc., on major religious holidays, etc. See CCI's recommended best practices document below for related recommendations.

- University policy on Student Activities bars discrimination by student organizations on the basis of religion." But it is unclear whether or how this policy can be, or has been, enforced to protect against discrimination related to a student's Jewish identity, including their identification with Israel or Zionism.

Hillel International's Recommendations for Supporting Jewish Students with Religious Holiday Observance

As part of cultivating a welcoming and inclusive climate for Jewish students and all religiously diverse students, institutional leaders at all levels must be attentive to holiday observances and ensure appropriate policies, educational offerings, and communications. This resource outlines some key best practice principles and offers specific examples for each.

I. Religious Holiday Calendar

Colleges and universities should have a religious holiday calendar that:

- Includes religious holidays from different traditions

- **Specifies the following:**
  - When the holiday begins, e.g., does it begin in the morning or at sundown
  - The significance of the holiday
  - Whether it involves limitations on academic work or other restrictions
  - Recommended accommodations

- Is **widely publicized and easily accessible to the campus community** for planning courses, co-curricular activities, and major campus events. It should be accessible from primary academic calendars and any other planning calendars that are generally used across departments.

Suggestions for maximizing the effectiveness of these calendars:

- **Multi-year calendars:** Helpful for forward planning, to avoid overlap of major university events with religious holidays.

- **Proactive communication and celebration:** Go beyond *accommodating* students by proactively communicating about and *celebrating* diverse traditions, e.g., sending all-campus emails about major religious holidays that highlight student voices and experiences, and/or including holiday foods from diverse traditions in the dining halls.
  -

- **Consider having a world holiday calendar subscription automatically populate** all foundational academic, employee, facility, and room calendars, with accompanying links to relevant campus policies and educational content.

To learn more about the Jewish calendar and the meaning of different Jewish holidays:
- [Breakdown of the Jewish Holidays](), curated by San Francisco Hillel
- [Calendar of Major Jewish Holidays]() from myjewishlearning.com
- [Guide to Jewish Holidays]() from myjewishlearning.com

Religious Holiday Calendar: Best Practice Example:

- [University of Vermont's Interfaith Calendar]()

II. Religious Holiday Course Absence Policies

- As academic calendars are typically structured around Christian holidays, administrators and faculty should proactively support Jewish and other religious minority students in observing their own religious holidays, including Shabbat.

- Religious holiday course absence policies should be adopted and clearly communicated to all members of the campus community, especially faculty.

- Strong procedures are important to ensure policies are enforced.

- **Effective holiday course absence policies:**
    - State the college or university's commitment to supporting students' diverse religious identities and practices
    - Create a consistent approach for requesting a holiday absence and making up missed work or a missed exam before or after the holiday
    - Trust students to identify their own religious needs and request an absence from faculty in advance
    - Do not require students to provide documentation or explanations of their requests
    - Are clearly communicated to faculty and students by the senior administration, with a request that major assignments or events are not scheduled on major religious holidays when possible
    - Require the holiday policy to be included on all course syllabi, to make clear to students how they can make these requests and that they will be accommodated when they do so

Religious Holiday Course Absence Policies: Best practice examples:

- [University of Michigan's Guidance to Students Regarding Conflicts Between the Academic and Religious Calendars](#)
- [UNC Charlotte's Religious Accommodations for Students](#)

III. Navigating Conflicts: Major Campus Events and Religious Holidays

Colleges and universities should:

- Avoid scheduling major campus events on *major religious holidays* observed by a *meaningful proportion of the campus community*. This involves:
  - Determining which holidays constitute "major religious holidays" based on the demographics of the campus community.
  - Considering events such as the first day of classes, key admissions events, student organization fairs, family weekend, etc.
  - Communicating this clearly to all departments and campus leaders.

- Clearly acknowledge that any holiday list will not be exhaustive, and that some religious holidays observed by students may not be included in a list of major religious holidays. Depending on the campus, this may impact Jewish or other religious minority students whose holidays are not included because they are a demographically small part of the campus community. It may also impact students from traditions whose major holidays are included, but who also observe additional holidays that are not included.
  - Example: There are up to 13 holiday days a year in which some Jewish students may not do academic work or attend campus events, so even with a strong policy in place that avoids events on major religious holidays, conflicts between campus events and the religious holiday requirements of some students are likely.

- Offer reasonable accommodations and communicate them proactively for students who need to miss events due to their holiday observance.

Navigating Conflicts: Best Practice Example:

- [Colgate University's Policy on the Observance of Religious Holidays](#)

IV. Academic Year Starting on Jewish Holidays

- The Jewish High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur - the holiest period in the Jewish calendar - usually fall in September, which sometimes leads to conflicts with the start of the academic year or other important events at the start of the year.

- We believe that no student should be forced to make a choice between attending the first day of classes and observing an important religious holiday. Starting fall instruction on these

holidays can set an unwelcoming and exclusionary tone for the Jewish community across campus and create challenges for Jewish students and faculty alike.

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● The size of a campus's Jewish population is important to consider in determining whether or not it is problematic for a particular institution to start classes on these holidays, or on the additional fall Jewish holidays of Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, and Simchat Torah, which are also important holidays but are typically observed by relatively fewer Jewish students.

● Colleges and universities should consider all communities' needs in a transparent and inclusive process for setting the academic calendar well in advance to avoid these types of conflicts whenever possible. Institutions should have clear planning processes in which they examine a calendar of major religious holidays years in advance when setting the college or university's academic calendar. This way, intentional decisions can be made about when to avoid starting classes on particular holidays.

● If a major event or the start of the academic year is inadvertently scheduled on a holiday and cannot be changed, the organizers can respond by publicly apologizing for the mistake, offering to meet with impacted students to learn more about their needs, and identifying and committing publicly to specific action steps that will ensure they avoid similar mistakes in the future.

Academic Year Starting on Jewish Holidays: Best Practice Examples:

● [University of Wisconsin-Madison's Chancellor Message to faculty and staff: start of fall classes and Rosh Hashana](#)
● [University of Wisconsin-Madison's Chancellor Message to students](#)

V. Training and Communication

● In each of these areas, it is important that a specific campus administrator is designated and publicly communicated as the responsible party and the person to contact for any challenges or conflicts.

● Training should be required as part of campus employee, faculty, and student leader onboarding on the topics above, so that campus leaders at all levels are familiar with relevant religious holiday policies, procedures, and norms.

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● Training should also be provided to the general student body, so that students know to accommodate their peers when navigating group projects and religious holidays.

● Engaging the Jewish community and other religious communities in these areas is critical to ensure that policies, procedures, and calendars meet diverse communities' needs. Each

institution should find ways to engage their diverse religious communities - including both students and professionals - to provide guidance on these topics.

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VI. Questions and Additional Consultation

For questions and consultation on these topics, feel free to reach out to the **Campus Climate Initiative Team:**

- **For legal policy questions:** Mark Rotenberg, Vice President, University Initiatives & Legal Affairs (mrotenberg@hillel.org)
- **For educational programming and communications questions:** Rebecca Russo, Executive Director, Campus Climate Initiative (rrusso@hillel.org)

Some content was adapted from Interfaith Youth Core's resources on religious accommodations and policies in higher education:

- *https://ifyc.org/resources/religious-and-non-religious-accommodations-higher-education*
- *https://ifyc.org/resources/religious-accommodations-and-policies*