

belongs to the PHridays committee and, as a member of the Orthodox community's Chesed committee, helps organize and run charity events for such causes as breast cancer awareness.

Belfer is also government affairs director of the Penn Israel Coalition, a nonpartisan, student-run Israel activist group on campus. As a liaison to local Congressional offices, he plans lobbying trips to Washington.

M a d d y Yasner, 22, who grew up in Cherry Hill as a member of Temple Beth Sholom and also attended

Akiba Hebrew Academy, graduated from Penn in May with a degree in digital media design. She was looking for a college with an active Jewish community and kosher food. Penn did not disappoint.

"I went to Friday night services at Penn Hillel on the first Friday during freshman orientation, and I never stopped going. I met my best friend that first night, and my closest group of friends came from the community I found at Hillel," said Yasner, now living and working in New York.

By her second semester, Yasner was sharing the position of gabbai (religious services coordinator) of Hillel's Conservative community minyan with her new best friend. She kept the position for a year and a half, and helped coordinate and run three years worth of student-led high holiday services as well as weekly Shabbat services and numerous other programs and events. She also co-chaired KOACH Kallah, the national convention for Conservative college students, when it was hosted at Penn during her sophomore year. This experience spurred her on to spend a month studying in Israel at the Conservative Yeshiva and to seek out Jews overseas as she traveled in New Zealand and studied in Australia.



Other Philadelphia universities also report the best of climates for their Jewish students. Like Drexel University,

next door to Penn, which has a very active Hillel, according to Jody Peskin, its director of Jewish life.

"It's a great place to be a Jewish student—very warm and welcoming," said Peskin, who estimates there are 750 to 900 Jewish students on campus. Drexel's Hillel does not have its own building, but has a lounge in the student center. "It allows us to maintain a small campus feeling and challenges us to get out on campus a lot more," she said.

Traditionally, there are two sukkahs on campus, and Drexel's Hillel hosts Shabbat dinners every other week. While the university does not serve kosher food, there is a kosher-for-Passover meal plan. There are weekly Conservative services, with Reform services available, but Orthodox students usually gravitate to Penn to satisfy their spiritual needs.



At Temple University, which is seeing an increasing Jewish enrollment from across the country, 60 percent of its approximately 3,000 Jewish students still hail from South Jersey and the Philadelphia suburbs on the city's side of the Delaware, Hillel Director Phil Nordlinger said. Despite the proximity to home, a significant number—like Jewish students at Penn and Drexel—live on campus and thus have more need for a lively and all-encompassing Hillel.

"For students coming from Cherry Hill and nearby, Temple has the student life they want as well as the programs," Hillel Program Director Sarah Feinberg said. She is referring to its Hillel, a pluralistic organization that she said caters

to all Jewish movements and functions as a support system that can respond to every issue.

While Temple's Hillel held Shabbat services and dinners every other week in its former building on Broad St., the plan was to go weekly once it moved into the new, \$8.5 million Edward H. Rosen Hillel Center in October 2009. The new facility, at 15th and Norris Sts., has kosher dining available. Ten years in the making, the center boasts 13,000 square feet of usable space and a rooftop garden terrace.

Temple's Hillel holds a freshman-only Shabbat at the beginning of the school year, as well as a Chinese food Shabbat. It also reaches out to students at the university's opening Temple Fest. The organization has an executive board comprised of students representing a number of committees, and focusing on cultural and spiritual needs—including an active emphasis on Birthright—leaving the political side to other campus organizations.

Temple Students for Israel works in conjunction with a staff member from Hillel of Greater Philadelphia, the city's umbrella group. Temple's Hillel works in tandem with Chabad on campus as well as Maimonides and Meor fellowship groups.

Despite an anti-Semitic event on campus a couple of years ago, Temple lives up to its nickname of "The Diversity University" for the most part, according to Feinberg.

"The Jewish community is another one of many ethnic, cultural and religious groups on campus," she said.

Nordlinger touts "All Sides," a group comprised of Jewish and Palestinian students concerned with dialogues about Israel. "Formed last semester, it continues to grow," he said.



While some Hillels, such as Temple's, have affiliated rabbis who

(Continued on next page)

The Rutgers-New Brunswick Hillel has purchased land around the corner from its current busy location on the College Ave. campus and is in the midst of a capital campaign to demolish the dilapidated fraternity on the site and build a new facility.

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