University Cited for Dozens of Building, Elevator Violations Over Past 3 Years

By Yitzchak Carroll and Yosef Lemel

Yeshiva University has been issued dozens of building code violations in the past three years, stemming from elevator issues on both the Beren and Wilf Campuses, The Commentator has learned.

Several of the violations are classified by the New York City Dept. of Buildings as “Code 1 — Immediately Hazardous” matters, and a number of the violations are still pending resolution. To date, the university has been assessed tens of thousands of dollars in fines for various building code violations from the Environmental Control Board, a city-run administrative tribunal that adjudicates summons issued by various city agencies.

This past spring, the university was issued a $1,250 fine for a Code 1 violation involving major safety issues on a Furst Hall elevator, including “door zone restrctor not working” and “door clutch stopping elevator in flight,” according to Building Dept. records. This past summer, YU was cited and fined $1,500 for failing to certify a correction of the violation.

Most recently, a Nov. 26 inspection of the Rubin Residence Hall led to the issuance of more than $10,000 in summonses for multiple Code 1 violations. According to records, Building Dept. inspectors “observed an illegal laundry room in the basement of [Rubin Hall]” with six active commercial gas dryers and new gas pipes, fittings and appliance valves in the kitchen and laundry room” of the residence hall, which also houses the Furman Cafeteria.

In 2017, YU paid more than $500 in fines to settle elevator code violations in Rubin Hall stemming from a defective door restrictor and elevator car door gibs in need of replacement. A door zone restrictor prevents an elevator’s doors from opening outside of the landing zone. A gib holds elevator doors in place while protecting occupants from flames in the event of a fire. In 2018, the university was fined $1,000 for not having an elevator door restrictor in place in Belfer Hall. A 2018 inspection also found that YU installed equipment in a Belfer elevator without a proper permit, an infraction the university paid more than $800 to settle.

YU’s Beren Campus in midtown Manhattan also had its share of violations. On Oct. 10, the university was assessed a $2,500 fine for an “immediately hazardous” violation of having a loose, cracked cowling on the 18th Floor of the Brookdale Residence Hall. This past May, YU was also fined more than $600 for “failure to maintain” the elevator in Stanton Hall at 245 Lexington Ave.

At the Schottenstein Residence Hall, the university was cited in June 2018 for an inoperative door zone restrictor and “failure to maintain building in code-compliant manner” with respect to the dorm’s elevators. YU was also issued a $500 summons in Sept. 2017 for elevator equipment

Continued on Page 3

Honors Program Celebrates Dr. Will Lee’s Retirement

By Jacob Stone

Dr. Will Lee, longstanding Professor of English at Yeshiva College (YC), will retire from the Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein Honors Program upon the occasion of his retirement on Dec. 3. At the event, YC faculty, members of the YU administration and former students celebrated Dr. Lee’s career and the impact that he has had at the college. Dr. Lee also spoke, reflecting on the honors he has received in his life and his passion for undergraduate pedagogy.

This semester is the first in which Dr. Lee is not teaching at YC. It is the end of an era that began when he came to YC as an Assistant Professor of English in 1983. Having lectured at the beginning of his career at the History and Literature program at Harvard, he approaches literature through cultural study, attempting to understand texts along with the societies that produced them. During his reflection, he noted that it was at Harvard that he decided to “master undergraduate teaching.” Several speakers lauded Dr. Lee’s focus on his pedagogy, mentioning his frequent development of new courses and pedagogy for co-teaching with faculty members from other departments.

Dr. Lee was chosen by students to receive the Senior Professor Award for distinguished teaching three times over the course of his career.

Dr. Lee’s classes were renowned through YC for being both challenging and rewarding to the students who took them. President Ari Berman remarked, “It was just yesterday that I was walking through these halls and taking Professor Lee’s class. When I entered Dr. Lee’s Expository Writing class, I knew I would be working ... And I did because he pushed me to do so.” Dr. Lee was chosen by students to receive the Senior Professor Award for distinguished teaching three times over the course of his career.

“The effort that Dr. Lee invested in understanding the world in which his students lived shone through in all his teaching,” said Yair Lichtman (YC ’19), one of his students. “With that comprehension, he orchestrated class discussions that embodied YU’s ideal of Torah Umadda.”

In the past five years, courses Dr. Lee has offered covered topics including Renaissance literature, Victorian literature and culture, and the interpretation of poetry. “Informed equally by Jewish analytical, philosophical and secular literary consciousness,” said Dr. David Lavinsky, Associate Professor of English, “his courses reflected the inclusive vision of the YC curriculum itself.”

Untraditionally, Dr. Lee was granted tenure at YC primarily not because of his published research but rather because of his commitment to teaching and public service. Dr. Lee was involved in the creation of the Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein Honors Program and served as its director for its initial years. He also worked on the Middle-States college accreditation process for YC.

Continued on Page 3
We Are Not an Afterthought: Gender Inequality is Pervasive at YU

By Chana Weinberg

My experience as a woman at Yeshiva University has been overwhelmingly positive. I find myself inspired by my classmates, strong Jewish women who are pursuing a higher education. My classmates and I have had the opportunity to learn from female role models such as Dr. Naomi Granhaus, Shoshana Shechter, Dr. Anne Peters, Dr. Schuk and Dr. Sharon Pocztar, to name only a few. YU employs these women to educate and teach us to be thoughtful citizens of the world.

At YU I am given the opportunity to get an advanced degree in Talmud with its Graduate Program in Advanced Talmudic Studies. I can strengthen my appreciation for culture by attending operas and plays, by going to museums with my classmates. There are numerous ways that YU has demonstrated it cares about furthering my education and the education of all its female students. Unfortunately, my positive experience here has been clouded by a harsh reality. The attitude of and actions taken by our school — whether intentional or not — often brand its female students as second class citizens.

A moving editorial by The Commentator’s former Managing Editor Shoshy Ciment last February addressed the blatant disregard for and ill treatment of female students at YU. We have been silenced and filed from, labeled as outliers. Though the injustices mentioned by Ciment are incredibly important and must be faced head-on, I believe that they are just a “front page” display of the deeply rooted sexist culture at our university.

Beren students have access to fewer sidewalks were hit with the reality that our of transportation for women to this event was a gross understatement to call the lack of on Wilf, rarely do men give Beren events to the unequal culture that YU’s women experience daily. There are endless examples of how problems that could be excused as technical or logistical are actually overwhelmingly harmful specifically to women’s experiences as students at Yeshiva.

The attitude of and actions taken by our school — whether intentional or not — often brand its female students as second class citizens.

There is a scarce amount of Sym’s academic advisement on the Beren Campus. The most recent Sym’s Beren academic advisement sign-up page had three advisors for two and a half days a week. That is not enough availability for the 200 Beren students at Sym’s Beren. This slighth marginalizes some of the most creative and hardworking students in our institution, telling them that they are not worth the time. It is tragic that a student should feel that way about her education.

Last year on Yom Hazikaron, over 100 of my classmates and I stood flabbergasted on the sidewalk in midtown as three full buses pulled away, taking about 160 Beren students to the service. The ceremonial transition between Yom Hazikaron and Yom Haatzmaut. It would be a gross understatement to call the lack of transportation for women to this event an oversight. Each of us standing on that sidewalk were hit with the reality that our presence was not important enough to warrant greater funding. A less tangible, but equally important injustice is how the women are often marginalized in name. Yeshiva College, Stern College and Sy Sym’s School of Business for Men and for Women: each of these schools falls under the umbrella of Yeshiva University and should be referred to as such. Referring to Yeshiva College alone as “SY” effectively relegates Stern students compared to their YC peers, treating them as though they are not as essential to YU. While the forum of SYU Stern Confessions Facebook page is a valuable platform, its name ostracizes half the student body.

Though the separation of Stern from YU might seem insignificant, this phrasing actually makes Stern students an “other” in our community. A student who is “other” will not be motivated to have any school pride. A lack of pride drains positivity from the Beren Campus, making it an unpleasant environment to be a part of.

The lack of school spirit on the Beren Campus is often attributed to the many Beren students only spend three years on campus. I believe that the women of the Beren Campus lack spirit because they are constantly reminded that their school — both their fellow students and the institution — has not fully embraced them as active and important members of the student body.

Each member of our institution must make an active effort to change this reality. While many women shuttle to events on Wilf, rarely do men give Beren events the same respect. Men, make an effort to show up to events on Beren Campus. Women, improve our culture by supporting and including one another. Support your classmates by attending the SCDS show or going to a basketball home game at Baruch. YU administration, assess the relative funding of each campus and take steps to fix any inequalities.

In a recent video released by ESPN, female reporters satirize the serious discrimination they face as women in sports. Discrimination is a battle that all women who wish to enter the workforce are forced to face. Unfortunately, my experience at YU has prepared me for these realities of the world. I hope that future female students will find YU to be a more accepting space to find herself before facing the challenges ahead.
Monday, December 9, 2019

1 Commentator weddings
Welcome to the fam, Tali!

2 Goldman Sachs
I guess the video didn’t receive enough likes. Torah: o. Maddr: 1.

3 Mention of The Commentator on the Confessions Page!!!
This post was not endorsed by The Commentator staff.

4 Harry Styles takes over SNL.
Our 2012 celebrity crush is back and HE’S STILL GOT IT.

5 Caf balances go back up
My semester-long zoom is finally over!

6 Stern student spotted in the Gottesman Library
... before proceeding to be forgotten about forever.

7 YUPAC trip to Washington, D.C.
Wow, these college students sure look young for their age...

7 Up 7 Down

by Elisheva Kohn

MACs athletes
So ... do you guys own any real clothes?

Introducing the $745 Emeco Heritage by Phillipe Starck
aluminum chair, as seen in the caf
A great use of our tuition dollars — plus a fantastic way to blow out our eardrums. Talk about a win-win! (For bonus points, see if you can spot one of these super stylish seats on last week’s SNL)

Quality journalism
Empty pages. So original! *chirp chirp chirp*

Commentator sweaters:
One day. Ani ma’amamin.

Censorship
Yeah, I don’t think it “makes sense to invite a speaker who has recently been reporting on YU current events” either. Might as well expel all of us while you’re at it.

Missing a Commentator meeting
It’s an endless black hole, and there is no way of getting back in the loop.

Friendly reminder that the elevators will never be fixed
They use the Commentator stand to indicate that the elevator is broken. Oh, the irony.

Count += 1, Dec 8, 2019

Vows
The Commentator Editorial Board extends a Mazal Tov to Managing Editor Yossi Zimilover (SSSB ’20) on his marriage to Tali Greenberg (SCW ’19)! Ya’aleh hazivug yafeh regivnu baijs ne’emun beYisrael.

ELEVATOR VIOLATIONS, continued from Front Page
violations at the Schottenstein Residence Hall.
Senior Vice President Josh Joseph downplayed the university’s violations. “As a large real estate occupier with over 1.8 million square feet and 45 elevators, we occasionally receive violations from the city,” he said. “These are typically for non-safety related issues and often only require some paperwork to clear up, which can take city months to resolve and update in their system.”

Last month, a Stern student was reportedly caught in an elevator scare in Stanton Hall as it fell three floors and stopped abruptly. The student pressed the eleva-

tor’s emergency button, but to no avail. In May, The Observer reported that an elevator in the Brookdale Residence Hall lost control and went into a free-fall, as Shira Lindenbarg (SSSB ’20) suffered a concussion. In response, YU Chief Facilities and Administrative Officer Randy Apfelbaum noted that the university’s elevators have built-in safety mechanisms to prevent a free-fall.

These two incidents were not the only elevator mal-

functions that students have reportedly experienced recently. Rachel Rosenberg (SCW ’20) experienced a minor free-fall in a Belfer elevator last month with another student while leaving a Friday class on the Wilf Campus. “It is unclear to me why YU has spent a tremen-

dous amount of money heightening the security when we enter and exit buildings, yet does not spend enough money on the safety of students inside the buildings,” she said, noting the university’s recent addition of ID card scanners in the lobby of most buildings. “The fact that even one student has gotten stuck or free-fallen in an elevator is bad, but more than one is inexcusable.”

Joseph contends that “the safety of our students, staff and faculty is our top priority,” and that YU is at-

tentive to the summonses they are issued. “If the city inspector or our own maintenance vendor see a safety issue with either a building or an elevator, we take im-

mediate action,” he said. “The fact that the elevators are legally running indicates that the violations are not safety related.”

As The Commentator previously reported last year, YU was issued seven fire code violation summonses within a 18-month period, including one summons for “failure to maintain two-way communication capability between the fire command station and elevators” in the Schottenstein Residence Hall. The university has since settled three of the seven violations, according to state court records.

Students were surprised by the amount of building code violations YU has been cited for in recent years. “I know how much the school cares about the students; it’s one of the benefits of going to a smaller college,” said Eli Azizollahoff (SCW ’20). “So for this kind of thing to go unchecked feels like the antithesis of how they want to act towards the student body, especially when it comes to a safety issue.”

WILL LEE, continued from Front Page
served on the original YC faculty board and played an instrumental role in the development of the college’s core curriculum.

Outside of YU, Dr. Lee has become involved with local history: He has worked on historic preservation in Englewood, NJ and his efforts on historic and cultural restoration won the New Jersey State Senate and General Assembly Citation. Currently, he sits on the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee of Englewood and helps edit a Koren English translation of Tanakh.

“I believe that through this event,” said Dr. Lee, “Undergraduate teaching and the significance of undergraduate teaching is being honored. The importance of having a faculty that is deeply invested in the university and has high morale is being honored as an idea, and I hope as the future unfolds a reality once again.”
allegations of student cheating; this caused concern for inconsistent policy application. “Having a single committee,” the deans explained, “will enable us to follow a uniform process for all undergraduates and ensure consistency in outcomes across cases.”

The sequential procedure for addressing cheating is charted below and will continue to be the standard course of action.

![Academic Integrity Process Chart](chart.png)

**Process for academic integrity violations**

Composed of representatives from YU’s undergraduate schools, the new AIC will consider all factors before administering a student’s penalty; for example, as noted in the policy, the committee will weigh the violation’s severity, the student’s history with such infringements and the student’s acknowledgment of wrongdoing.

“Yeshiva University has a zero-tolerance policy for unethical behavior,” the draft warns, “to be enforced more strongly than ever before.”

Under these new policies, new preventative measures will be implemented to significantly limit the available opportunities to cheat. During an in-class examination, all personal items should be left by the door, and students should be assigned seating. For non-exam essays, alternative “A and B” versions should be given to adjacent students. Allowable supplies for exams will be limited to ten-button calculators without memory capacity, unless otherwise told by a professor. Once the exam begins, students will be denied bathroom usage until they hand in their tests.

Professors will also be advised to actively proctor exams by periodically walking around the classroom and avoiding cell phone or laptop usage. Additionally, if an exam is given in a classroom with built-in monitoring equipment, that preventive feature should be utilized.

One section of the new, drafted updated academic integrity policies is titled “Exam Formats.” Professors will be advised to create new exams each semester and are cautioned against using test banks. While test banks will still be permitted, new conditions for their usage ask faculty to collect questions from various sources and to not use the course textbook’s question bank.

Traditionally, professors would recycle past exams for new semesters, but they will be encouraged to upload past exams to the YU library, creating a resource for students to utilize when studying. This recommendation will be designed to even the playing field for all students, who would clandestinely pass old exams to new students to utilize when studying — colloquially known as “mesorah.” Mesorah has given an advantage to students who receive past course materials, leaving other students to get the brunt of the curve.

The policies will also mandate that any students seeking permission to take make-up exams will only be permitted to do so with documented proof of requisite circumstances. These acceptable excuses include three exams on the same day, death of an immediate family member (including grandparents) and sickness, among other examples.

Faculty will be provided instructions for how to take immediate actions if they have suspicions of cheating. For example, actions like photographing the offense, gathering evidence and removing the student from the room would be suggested.

Issues relating to academic integrity continue to dominate discourse on campus, ultimately resulting in a flurry of policy revisions. Over two years ago, The Commentator reported on the beginning of dialogue between deans and students to “discuss cheating on campus and methods to prevent it in the future.” The last official update of university-wide academic integrity policies were published on Dec. 14, 2018. However, in the spring of 2019, after students came forward with new concerns, the deans felt that YU’s academic environment was falling short of its expected ethical standards; this triggered minor policy updates only for Yeshiva College in April 2019. In light of that inconsistency, YU deans and Provost Selma Botman undertook the task of reforming the academic integrity policies across campus, as described above.

“Stronger academic integrity is in everyone’s interests. It enables us to make a kiddush Hashem,” the deans remarked. “The new policies will remove temptations to compromise on [our] values … and will hopefully increase the ways in which we can all work together to ensure the utmost integrity within and beyond YU.”

Weiner added, “Discouraging [cheating] and promoting a non-cheating atmosphere on campus when it comes to tests and papers is how we will continue to try and move forward on this issue.”
Meal Plan Changes Reverted Following Student Backlash

By Elisheva Kohn and Jacob Rosenfeld

This semester’s controversial new Dining Plan was restructured over the weekend of Dec. 1, after several weeks of student outcry. In an email sent out to the student body on Nov. 27, Dean of Students Chaim Nissel announced that the changes will be “retroactive to the beginning of the current semester and both the membership fee and the discounts received, will be reversed.” Almost all students have already seen their balances updated to reflect the change.

In his email, Nissel acknowledged that “the current meal plan is not working for many students” and announced that the administration “decided to revert to the debit system we had in place last year, with the full value of a student’s dining card available for direct purchases in the cafeterias and caf-stores.” As of Dec. 1, the $675 membership fee for the semester has been redeposited into students’ accounts. In addition, the funds students have saved thus far with the 40% discount have been deducted from their updated balances. Going forward, there will no longer be a 40% discount on items in the cafeteria, but all students have seen an increase in their balance from these changes, due to the reimbursed membership fees. Students were notified of their updated balances via email after the change was made.

The most recent update to the Dining Plan comes after several student-led initiatives protesting the new plan, where many complained that the plan lacked transparency and was taking a toll on their finances. In response to student backlash, “info sessions” were held on both campuses at which university representatives responded to student concerns and discussed possible changes to the plan that would meet students’ needs.

Following the info sessions, several students, chosen by Resident Advisors and student leaders, were invited to participate in a small focus group on Nov. 26 with Nissel, Chief Facilities and Administrative Officer Randy Apfelbaum and Beren Director of Housing Rachel Kraut to discuss the possibility of reversing the controversial changes this year, essentially reverting to last year’s Dining Plan structure. Both “in-towners” and “out-of-towners” were invited to participate in the focus group, which was held on Beren Campus, to ensure that the students represented the different needs of the two groups on campus. According to Apfelbaum, students at the focus group “unanimously voted to go back to last year’s system.”

“At that point,” explained Apfelbaum, “we made the decision to follow the students’ voice.”

With this reversal, students on the Reduced Plan who currently have no “Dining Dollars” left on their meal plan (not including “Flex Dollars”) were credited approximately $225 to their Caf Cards. This is because these students were credited the $675 membership fee they were charged at the beginning of the semester but were charged the difference between the discounted and full prices of all food they had purchased. As Apfelbaum stated at the focus group, “Depending on where you are in your spending, you are either going to get a lot of money back or a little less money back, but everyone is going to see money back.” Apfelbaum and Nissel also emphasized that neither the $1,500 Reduced Plan nor $1,750 Standard Plan provides students with enough money to eat three meals a day for 15 weeks (the length of a semester) without adding any additional funds.

According to university officials at the info sessions, the new plan this semester was originally introduced in response to students’ complaints last year regarding money which was not used up by the end of the semester. Small focus groups were held at the time, and students in those groups indicated that they preferred the new plan to the system in place last year. Additionally, university officials maintained that this semester’s plan was preferable because it allowed students greater value when adding money once they had run out. “The initial focus group participants felt that the change in plan would be beneficial to students, so that they could add money as needed,” explained Apfelbaum.

“However, once the plan was implemented feedback from students was overwhelming that they preferred last year’s plan.” Sara Leah Zans (SCW ’20), who participated in the Nov. 26 focus group, remarked, “I’m happy they’re resorting back to the previous meal plan. But I still think there are a lot of issues that need to be resolved, and there needs to be a committee for this that is listening to the students on a regular basis. Food isn’t something that should be a luxury; it’s a necessity, and we need a fair plan that pays for what we are buying.” Akiva Poppers (SSSB ’22), a vocal participant in the Wilf info session, said, “I am extremely satisfied with the decision to change the caf plan.” Poppers also expressed his gratitude to the people who contributed to the major change in the meal plan. “I am impressed with the abilities of the YU administration to address these problems,” he said.

Some students who added funds to their Caf Card were upset as they felt that they may have done so unnecessarily. Naama Schwartz (SCW ’21), a Jewish Education major who had refilled her caf balance prior to Nissel’s email, commented, “I hope and expect that YU offers to refund money already refilled before Dean Nissel’s email concerning the recent changes to the new meal plan. Students were beginning to become concerned with their low balances so there was no choice but to refill.” When reached for comment, Apfelbaum maintained that “only a small number of students have added money to their caf cards. This money can be rolled over to next semester.”

Apfelbaum declined to comment on the impact this change will have on the university’s finances.

Chana Weinberg contributed to this article.

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Per Semester

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</tbody>
</table>

Now-defunct meal plan prices

![Yeshiva University Logo](Yeshiva_University_Logo.png)
NEVER. STOP. COMMENTATING.

Got something to share?
Email adhirsch@mail.yu.edu
The plaintiffs argued that by denying them a hearing prior to their suspension, the school had violated their constitutional right of due process — and the court agreed.

In this case of Goss v. Lopez, 419 U.S. 565, the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and granted them declaratory and injunctive relief because they were “suspended without hearing prior to suspension or within a reasonable time thereafter.” On appeal by the school, the Supreme Court affirmed the decision that public schools were constitutionally bound to abide by due process when taking disciplinary action. The Due Process Clause specifically defends a person’s life, liberty, or property. In Goss v. Lopez, the court decided that the students’ education were considered a property interest and their reputation and integrity qualified as liberty. Therefore, given that students’ property and liberty were being challenged by the Ohio public school’s 10-day suspension, the disciplinary procedure required due process. The case recognized that institutions of public education — as instruments of the state — must adhere to the due process clause when administering disciplinary actions. Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education, 294 F.2d 150 reached a similar conclusion about public education institutions; the court concluded in 1961 that disciplinary actions taken by a public college against a student must require notice and an opportunity for a hearing.

Those cases did not, however, define the boundaries of a school’s disciplinary protocol that would qualify as sufficient due process. Furthermore, due process as it applies to private colleges was not addressed. Nancy Jean Tedeschi’s suit, in Tedeschi v. Wagner College, 40 N.Y.2d 652, against Wagner College, a private university, lends insight into this relationship.

Enrolling in Wagner College in September of 1976, Tedeschi experienced social and academic challenges, received two incomplete grades for courses, and was recorded to be behaving in class as “irrational” and “disruptive.” The following January, the academic dean initiated a phone call to discuss Tedeschi’s academic situation, but her mother refused to participate. Soon after, Tedeschi made phone calls harassing her Latin professor, resulting in an oral notification that she was suspended because of “her bad character” and “repeated disruption of her Latin class.” A meeting later took place between her, the academic dean, the dean of students and an assistant to the president of the college. The dean of students later notified Tedeschi that she was being withdrawn from her Spring classes and could reapply in the fall; her Spring tuition was consequently refunded. Her mother admitted in court that she had called the school several times to arrange a hearing, but to no avail.

When Tedeschi sued Wagner College, she asked for an order reinstating her and her damages. The trial court said that no constitutional violation took place and ruled in favor of the college. On appeal, the Appellate Division affirmed that decision. Interestingly, both courts acknowledged the Wagner College’s guidelines which entitle a student facing suspension or expulsion to a hearing from a college court, the right to be heard by the Student-Faculty Hearing Board, and have those findings presented to the president of the college for a final decision. The courts held that Tedeschi had refused several opportunities to “arrange a conference,” and the university was, therefore, within its rights to withdraw her. The New York Court of Appeals, however, reversed the decision of the lower courts, explaining that a private educational institution must abide by its own precepts to suspend a student. Wagner College’s 1976-1977 guidelines stated, “A student may be suspended or expelled from the College by the Dean of Students or the Dean of Academic Affairs. If he is suspended or expelled for any cause other than failure in his academic work, and has not had recourse to a hearing before an established College Court, he shall have the right to be heard by the Student-Faculty Hearing Board which shall present its findings to the President of the College for final determination.” Therefore, Wagner College’s failure to suspend and withdraw Tedeschi in accordance with their own, self-decided procedures of disciplinary action was unconstitutional.

The outcome of Tedeschi v. Wagner College has far-reaching implications. It essentially defines the boundaries of due process to be those outlined by the university, binding the administration to their own, self-decided procedures of disciplinary action.

The headnotes of this case differentiated between academic and nonacademic grounds of suspension or expulsion. On nonacademic grounds, it explained, private colleges and universities must adhere to their own procedural guidelines in dealing with disciplinary matters for students. Regarding academic grounds, it becomes a more complex. Those matters usually pertain to academic standards which are subject to the discretion of educators, warranting judicial scrutiny. Nevertheless, the court’s determining factors for suspensions or expulsions on academic grounds rely on whether the institution acted in good faith or the punishment was arbitrary or irrational. The opinion of the judges in Tedeschi’s case discussed the complexities of viewing a private college’s relationship to its students more as a contractual agreement, rather than a private institution which is mandated to abide by due process. See Galiani v. Hofstra Univ., 118 A.2d 572.

In Galiani, the Supreme Court of Nassau County originally annulled Hofstra University’s — a private university — sanctions against a student, and ordered the university to reinstate the student from his suspension. After the student filed for an injunction, the court reviewed and reversed their judgment. The court saw that the student was afforded every right of a disciplinary proceeding, as outlined in Hofstra University’s regulations. Additionally, that suspension was deemed to be under reputable and honest discretion, thereby not arbitrary or capricious. Moreover, the punishment relating to the student’s offense was matched and would not question a sense of fairness. Given those details, the court held the student was not denied his right to due process.

As seen from the courts’ rulings and opinions, due process is a constitutional right well afforded on the college campus. Public universities must abide to stricter guidelines of due process when disciplinary action is taken against students, and private universities must follow the parameters they have registered as university protocols. All in all, if faced with the consequences of your actions by your university — whether public or private — know that your right to due process will not be compromised.
From the Archives (December 8, 1993; Volume 59 Issue 6)
Perspective: Yeshiva, Yes, University, Yes

By Dr. Will Lee

G.K. Chesterton once posited that there’s no such thing as a Catholic university. Insofar as it’s Catholic, it’s not a university. Insofar as it’s a university, it’s not Catholic. Is there any such thing as Yeshiva University? Yes, but without controversy and contradiction.

As the Rav pointed out long ago, Judaism doesn’t obey the law of the excluded middle which serves as the basis of Chesterton’s apothegm. Fortunately for us professors in the liberal arts, neither does Yeshiva University.

We second the objections of Rabbi U. M’Dacha which try to exclude part of the middle. Only Madda which facilitates making a living M’Dacha which directly aids halachic learning. Only scientific Madda. In almost all of the formulations which Rabbi Lamm characterizes in Torah U’Madda, on the other hand, the middle broadens to include liberal arts pursued from within a Torah worldview.

In “The Hasidic Model: M’dina and Yadiva,” the main contribution he sees himself as making to the dialogue, Torah Jews integrate Madda within a worshipful life. In “The Idea of a University,” Newman argued that the guiding purpose of higher education is not religious but secular, but knowledge for its own sake, yet his thinking closely parallels Rabbi Lamm’s: for a religion-centered person, the university is best seen as a place for pursuing knowledge as worship — including knowledge of the profane as well as the holy. This synthesis of Torah and Madda is a possibility because “the subject-matter of knowledge is intimately united in itself, as being the arts and works of the Creator.”

In the wake of the confiscation of Kol on the basis of vulgar language and sexual content, many students have raised their voices and moved their mice to uphold the central values of the yeshiva — the equivalent in our context of motherhood and marriage. Both for the student and the student’s parent, this has caused major anxiety. You can understand why, whether you agree wholeheartedly or not, that the issue is very important. Many administrators would feel and raise objections to certain passages. Mutilation in judgment is not only inevitable in this university, however, but in a sense desirable. Students who choose wrongly and regret it have internalized their values; those who feel values imposed upon them from on high may soon feel as if their values may conform, but they aren’t necessarily speaking and acting from within.

Everyone knows that YU comprises one community with many subcommunities which differ from one another. Many of our students have always inhabited the yeshiva world; should have realized how certain path very far into religious Judaism. Some highly valuable secular studies; others put up with them. At the same time that the Jewish religious world has moved to the right and Jewish students are said to have adopted an increasingly stringent orthodoxy, we have reached further out to students who come to us having assimilated more abstract forms of modern secular life. Between these two extremes, the university points of view.

A university exists to consider truths based on various fields and divergent viewpoints, to remain indifferent.

Torah and Madda, yeshiva and university inevitably clash at times because the assumptions behind them fundamentally differ.

The Commentator archives

Purple Perspective: Yeshiva, Yes, University, Yes

by Dr. Will Lee

G.K. Chesterton once posited that there’s no such thing as a Catholic university. Our founder Dr. Revel studied Hindu philosophy and wrote on Milton, subjects which some might consider halachically contraindicated. Our current president contributes to the debate on American education in general as well as writing on Jewish education, hasidism and Talmudic law. The argument that we are fully a university hinges partly on state aid due by virtue of our legal standing as a secular university, and partly on our accreditation and membership in good standing among American universities.

No one should lightly dismiss those worldly factors, all of which contribute to our students’ access to respected graduate and professional programs, their being hired for desirable jobs, and their success in the real world after they graduate.

Most of our faculty members in the liberal arts would like to believe that we teach in what is not only a real yeshiva but also a real university. If Yeshiva University, the institution we all share, deserves to be called great, it is because most of our students develop religious and moral seriousness at the same time that they learn to think critically within the broad horizons of the real, diverse world we live in.

At its best, YU aspires to be both implicitly religious right falling across the YU landscape. They should not have distributed Kol to all students’ mailboxes, thereby pushing it under the nostrils of many students who found it repugnant. Perhaps they should have asked the authors whether it would be possible to change the obscene language without compromising “artistic intent and immortality.” Perhaps the authors should have changed the language without being asked. Perhaps the faculty advisors, including me, should have realized how certain students and administrators would feel and raised objections to certain passages. Mutilation in judgment is not only inevitable in this university, however, but in a sense desirable. Students who choose wrongly and regret it have internalized their values; those who feel values imposed upon them from on high may soon feel as if their values comply, but they aren’t necessarily speaking and acting from within.

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From the Archives (December 8, 1993; Volume 59 Issue 6)
Perspective: Yeshiva, Yes, University, Yes

by Dr. Will Lee

G.K. Chesterton once posited that there’s no such thing as a Catholic university. Insofar as it’s Catholic, it’s not a university. Insofar as it’s a university, it’s not Catholic. Is there any such thing as Yeshiva University? Yes, but without controversy and contradiction.

As the Rav pointed out long ago, Judaism doesn’t obey the law of the excluded middle which serves as the basis of Chesterton’s aphorism. Fortunately for us professors in the liberal arts, neither does Yeshiva University.

We second the objections of Rabbi U. M’Dacha which try to exclude part of the middle. Only Madda which facilitates making a living M’Dacha which directly aids halachic learning. Only Scientific Madda. In almost all of the formulations which Rabbi Lamm characterizes in Torah U’Madda, on the other hand, the middle broadens to include liberal arts pursued from within a Torah worldview.

In “The Hasidic Model: M’dina and Yadiva,” the main contribution he sees himself as making to the dialogue, Torah Jews integrate Madda within a worshipful life. In “The Idea of a University,” Newman argued that the guiding purpose of higher education is not religious but secular, but knowledge for its own sake, yet his thinking closely parallels Rabbi Lamm’s: for a religion-centered person, the university is best seen as a place for pursuing knowledge as worship — including knowledge of the profane as well as the holy. This synthesis of Torah and Madda is a possibility because “the subject-matter of knowledge is intimately united in itself, as being the arts and works of the Creator.”

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At its best, YU aspires to be both literally religious and worldly. Our modern world believes deeply in credentials. Most of our students live in both worlds, yeshiva and university, or three worlds counting contemporary society. More precisely, most attempt to live in the Torah world while encountering the university world and resisting moral corruptions. As President Lamm was paraphrased in his November 9 issue, “A Jew should learn the ideals of the Western World uncensored in order to be able to say that he rejects those values but he understands them.” Studying, understanding, even empathizing is not the same as accepting or believing.

Through students’ eyes, I can see some objections to Kol which deserve to be taken seriously. The editors’ disclaimer states that the “language and subject matter which some readers may find objectionable... appear in the voices of personnel and do not necessarily represent the views of the authors or the Board.” Perhaps, given the loaded material, they should have added “and certainly in no way represent the views or the values of Yeshiva University.” Perhaps the disclaimer should have appeared in a more prominent position, like the warning label on a CD. Perhaps they should have omitted the university shield from the back cover. Perhaps they should not have selected for the cover a photo of the shadow of a hasidic dew praying at the Western Wall, an image which not everyone sees as representing the shadow of the religious right falling across the YU landscape. They should not have distributed Kol to all students’ mailboxes, thereby pushing it under the nostrils of many students who found it repugnant. Perhaps they should have asked the authors whether it would be possible to change the obscene language without compromising “artistic intent and immortality.” Perhaps the authors should have changed the language without being asked. Perhaps the faculty advisors, including me, should have realized how certain students and administrators would feel and raised objections to certain passages. Mutilation in judgment is not only inevitable in this university, however, but in a sense desirable. Students who choose wrongly and regret it have internalized their values; those who feel values imposed upon them from on high may soon feel as if their values comply, but they aren’t necessarily speaking and acting from within.

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and acting from the heart.

Everyone knows that YU comprises one community with many subcommunities, of which there is another. Many of our students have always inhabited the yeshiva world; others are returning to or finding their way back into another religious Judaism. Some highly value secular studies; others put up with them. At the same time that one culture is moved to the right, and more of our students have adopted an increasingly stringent orthodoxy, we have reached further out to students who come to us having assimilated more aspects of modern secular life. Between those two extremes, modern orthodoxy has come under more strain and has had more trouble centering itself. But all our students are members in good standing of the yeshiva community, so that no subcommunity, however sincere, should suppress the feelings and opinions of another. Moreover, I can say without a doubt that I am still sensitive to students' religious feelings and beliefs. I hope so, not at the expense of the truth. I can without a doubt wholeheartedly represent. When I devoted several freshman composition classes to the controversy over Dr. Schwartz, the academic vice president, who objected to hearing the offending language and content described to leave the room for a few minutes, became impossible. The students, delinquent, objected. At the same time I gave every student the full opportunity to express his views, and I did not back away from any fact, truth, or argument. A university exists to consider truths based on various fields and divergent viewpoints, not to remain true to any particular individual. Kol is a literary magazine, not a shir. Defenders of academic freedom and freedom of speech, of course, have two points again and again. First, the university must serve as a haven for difficult ideas and words which might be offensive. The second: Students feel quite upset and rush over to the Dean of Students’ Office. The university lawyers, consulted by the Dean of Students, advise him that unless the story has compelling educational value and is straightforward and finds offense, the Student Council President is pulled out in the middle of class. He finds the passages disgusting and, on the behalf of the elected Student Council and the student body whom the Council represents, signs a letter to the editor of the campus paper that sponsored and paid for it could act for the university’s behalf. (As I understand it, so could the Board of Trustees, if the other administrator acting on the authority of the President or the Board.) President Lamm, consulted by the Dean of Students, advises him that certain stories and poems that sponsored and paid for it could act for the university’s behalf. (As I understand it, so could the Board of Trustees, if the other administrator acting on the authority of the President or the Board.) President Lamm, consulted by the Dean of Students, advises him that certain stories and poems that sponsored and paid for it could act for the university’s behalf. (As I understand it, so could the Board of Trustees, if the other administrator acting on the authority of the President or the Board.) President Lamm, consulted by the Dean of Students, advises him that certain...
Department faculty members would find it impossible to participate in the process. Would a frustrated minority of students then organize their own samitz-dat in order to express themselves freely to their fellow members of the creative underground?

If the confiscation of Kol is discouraging students from speaking and writing their minds, a “chill” is blowing across the landscape of YU in a way that’s quite different from the self-censorship which might have resulted from openly and passionately arguing that student writers and editors showed bad judgment or diverged from Torah values. A healthy university welcomes controversies. Surely, no institution dedicated to freedom of inquiry.

Whatever decision an administrator makes in a case like this, he or she is going to offend some members of YU and of the broader community. Kol deeply disturbed some students; its confiscation deeply disturbed others. All these students’ feelings and opinions deserve respect. Meanwhile, administrators must worry not only about religious values but also about prospective students, their parents, and their relatives, potential donors to YU, and journalistic sharks who love opportunities to attack us and identify us with corrupt modern values. At stake are our enrollments, our financial strength, and our reputation inside and outside the Jewish world. The Martilla and Kiley survey indicated that key constituencies look for a genuine university which represents academic excellence and integrity. In a “both/and” institution, it’s difficult to judge the religious, educational, and practical consequences of any “either/or” decision.

If YU rejects censorship and suppression in the future, given that students, like faculty and administrators, are not infallible, what protects YU against intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dangers? In 1986, the YC ad hoc Committee on Academic Freedom, consisting of five liberal arts faculty members including two rabbis, placed its trust in four factors, each of them connected in some central way with education in the broad sense. First, the responsible self-government of each member of the university community. Second, the process of consulting with other members of the community — not to be told what to think or do or write but to reach judicious decisions. Third, the inevitability of controversy at YU and at other universities, giving everyone access to various strongly held, strongly expressed viewpoints. And finally, the prerogative of conscientious objection should some event or practice prove problematic on halachic or other religious grounds. None of these safeguards is a quick fix, but together, they provide firm ground on which we can all engage in the complex interactions of freedom and moral responsibility which constitute our university at its best.

I’ve written this essay for four main reasons: to argue that YU should allow students the maximum possible freedom of expression while relying on halachic standards to evaluate and wherever necessary criticize what they express; to object to the ad hoc, hasty non-procedures which led up to the confiscation and censorship of Kol; to defend student editors and authors who acted with integrity; and to express my own conviction that the greatness and uniqueness of Yeshiva University derive from our struggling to inhabit simultaneously the world of the yeshiva and the world of the modern American university.

Dr. Lee is an Assistant Professor of English at Yeshiva College

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FROM THE ARCHIVES, continued from Page 9
Elyasi with health problems, unsure of whether to go to the hospital. "When my friends started approaching me asking if anyone had a blood pressure cuff, I knew something was seriously lacking on campus," she said. "At night, and during weekends, there were no medical staff to help girls who needed even light medical attention, such as a routine checkup ordered by a doctor, or just some help for stomach pain or a headache."

By Yitzchak Carroll

A cadre of trained first responders have been providing emergency medical care to their fellow students at Stern College for Women. Ezras Nashim, an all-female emergency medical services agency, has had an active branch on the Beren Campus since April 2019.

The group’s state-certified emergency medical technicians respond to calls at all hours of the day throughout the week on the Beren Campus. Comprised entirely of Beren students, volunteers serve in 12-hour shifts, on which they may respond to anywhere from zero to 10 calls.

Though the Stern chapter is affiliated with the Brooklyn-based central command of Ezras Nashim, it raises its own funds and holds its own training drills to ensure its members are well-prepared to respond to emergencies. Founded by Judge Rachel "Ruchie" Freier in 2011 in response to the lack of female EMTs in Hatzalah Volunteer Ambulance Corps, Ezras Nashim began in Brooklyn and has since branched out to Monsey and the Five Towns.

Ailin Elyasi (SCW ‘20) serves as the group’s coordinator. Elyasi initially volunteered for Ezras Nashim’s central branch, and after seeing a need for the service at Stern, she approached Freier with the idea of starting a Stern chapter of the agency. "She was immediately on board, and the plan was set in motion," Elyasi said.

As a practicing EMT, students approached equipment, located strategically throughout campus buildings. Working as a team, the Ezras Nashim EMTs stabilize the patient and call for an ambulance to transport to a hospital, if needed.

Concerning medical issues, Elyasi urges fellow students to be safe rather than sorry. "People can call us with an obvious emergency, or with any medical questions they have. If anyone is unsure of whether or not to call, it is better to call."

Prior to the arrival of Ezras Nashim on the Beren Campus, students experiencing medical emergencies would have to wait upwards of 10 minutes for a city ambulance to arrive. "There was a serious lack of immediate medical care available to the Stern Campus," said Elianna Ashendorf (SCW ‘23), Ezras Nashim’s training coordinator, noting that Ezras Nashim’s average response time on the Beren Campus is under two minutes.

Ashendorf, who also serves as an EMT with the Bergenfield Volunteer Ambulance Corps, cited the benefits of being cared for by peers in an emergency situation. "Sometimes seeing a friend or a fellow student can be calming and more relaxing in a time of stress than having a team of random EMS responders from the city," she said.

"The feeling of seeing a girl who needs help and then being able to provide her with the care she needs is indescribable." — Ailin Elyasi (SCW ‘20), Stern Ezras Nashim Coordinator

Elyasi cited the efforts of Dean of Students Chaim Nissel and Beren Housing Director Rachel Kraut-Sivorinovsky in the group’s formation. Nissel lauded the agency’s life-saving work and role on campus. "We are confident that when we do need them, Ezras Nashim will continue to provide prompt, sensitive and quality medical interventions," he said.

The group is actively seeking new members in both emergency care and support roles, both of which are equally essential to the agency’s operation. Currently, nearly 20 Stern students volunteer for Ezras Nashim as emergency responders. Ezras Nashim provides state-issued vouchers to defray the cost of an EMT course for new volunteers. In addition to the 150-hour initial certification course, members constantly train to hone their skills. "It’s not easy being an emergency responder, but it definitely is worth it,” Elyasi said, noting the significant time commitment involved for volunteers.

Moving forward, the group plans to raise further awareness of their work and run first-aid events for the general campus community, Schwartz said. "We are proud to call ourselves members of Ezras Nashim," Elyasi said. "We are also the first Ezras Nashim branch and are assisting in the formation of new Ezras Nashim branches."

"Above all, the satisfaction of helping a fellow member of the YU community in an emergency motivates Ezras Nashim’s members to invest their time and efforts. "There are not enough words to describe what it means to treat a person in need," Elyasi said. "The feeling of seeing a girl who needs help and then being able to provide her with the care she needs is indescribable.""
May Physicians Lie to Patients?

In healthcare, many doctors and other health care professionals are constantly faced with difficult situations where they need to decide whether to withhold information from or even possibly deceive patients. In rare instances, it is beneficial for the physician to withhold information from the patient. He created a “deception flowchart,” which lays out his requisite rules for when he believes that a health professional, specifically a doctor, should deceive a patient. His flowchart leads a physician to lie to the patient when the patient is saved from psychological pain, while also possibly preserving life or giving the patient long-term autonomy. He argues that in these rare cases, the compassion of the doctor should overrule the strict code of honesty that each physician is required to uphold. As part of his flowchart, he also adds many “safety checks,” to keep the physician’s moral code balanced. In addition, he argues that the physician needs to feel comfortable defending his or her decision in a court of law and explain how this specific action would not erode the patient-physician relationship. However, many other ethicists argue that truth must always be upheld. They view truth as one of the core pillars that the health field relies upon to properly function. They argue that patients are privileged to make informed decisions and that they would be unable to do so if doctors were to breach the patient’s trust, even in a situation where the doctor feels that it is morally correct to do so. In addition, even if the physician was justified in lying, these ethicists believe that the patient-physician relationship would deteriorate too much and that no single situation should cause such harm to the relationship that is at the core of all healthcare.

However, while medical ethicists argue whether truth should be withheld from normal patients, many ethicists agree that when dealing with patients with cognitive defects, physicians can lie or withhold information.

For whatever field we all decide to pursue, we will be tested with challenges to our moral character and code. I hope that we are ready when these tests are thrown our way.
By Rabbi Jeremy Wieder

Editor’s Note: The following is an edited transcription of a speech given by Rabbi Jeremy Wieder in the Glueck Beit Midrash on Tuesday, Nov. 26.

In last week’s parsha we read how Avraham Avinu said to the Beiri Heit (Hittites): Gev eToshav Anshki Imnakhem — A stranger and resident I am amongst you. Rav Soloveitchik famously commented about this: “Avraham lived among various people of divergent faiths. When he negotiated with the sons of Heth (of the Hittites) for a burial plot for his wife Sarah, he defined his status: ‘I am a stranger (immigrant) and a resident among you’ (Gen 23:4). He was basically declaring that the sectarian faith he was propounding did not preclude his commitment to further the welfare of the general society,” (Reflections of the Rav II, pp.74-75).

Perhaps the greatest challenge any ben or bas-Torah in our community faces is attempting to navigate the balance of Gev eToshav — when are we part of the broader society and when are we apart. And when we speak of this dilemma, I am not speaking about issues of halakhah. Halakhah by its nature is mostly clear and immutable. It may change in its application to a different reality, and perhaps even shift slowly, almost imperceptibly, over very long periods of time. There may be a shift from one approach to another within the halakhic tradition based upon changing circumstances, but fundamentally halakhah is immutable and, at least in broad strokes, clear.

Instead, what I speak of here are what we would term “Torah values,” what might best be described as the broader picture that the details of halakhah paint. If the various halakhkos consist of all of the trees in the forest, then “Torah values” would be what one sees when stepping back and gazing at the bigger picture; it is not merely a collection of individual trees, but a magnificent, verdant forest — the intertwining of the branches of various trees, as well as the magnificent rays of light that shine through the gaps.

In a somewhat famous teshuva, the Noda beYehudah (R. Ezekiel Landau of Prague) was asked about a Jew who had become wealthy and had acquired significant landholdings including wild forests and had expressed an interest in hunting for sport, inquiring of the Noda beYehudah regarding its permissibility. After initially dismissing the relevance of a few possible halakhic prohibitions, the Noda beYehudah states: “I am extremely puzzled over the essence of the matter, as we do not find hunting men except for Nimrod and Esau; this is not the manner of the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

He expresses his astonishment that any Jew would even consider hunting. Who hunts? Esau and Nimrod. But what is the prohibition? Apparently, this Jew couldn’t see the forest for his own forest.

The Yerushalmi tells the story of Shimon b. Shetah who used to earn his living by working with flax, a very unpleasant profession. His students came to him and suggested that he shouldn’t have to work so hard. They suggested that they would buy him a donkey, and he could be the equivalent in those days of a contemporary短-haul driver. He assented and they went and bought him a donkey. When they returned with the donkey they informed him that not only would he not have to work hard, he wouldn’t have to work at all because apparently the donkey they had bought came with a precious diamond hanging on its neck. Shimon b. Shetah asked them, “Did the donkey’s owner know?” They answered in the negative, at which point he

A Torah Jew should not, in his or her core, be a card-carrying Democrat or Republican; he or she should view him or herself as a member of the party of the Ribbono shel Olam.

I want to be explicitly clear here about two points, both of whose essence I have tried to hammer into my students over the last several years:

1) Determining what are “Torah values” is not always a simple matter. Of course in many areas the broad strokes are fairly clear — about this we should not deceive ourselves — but there are situations where there is genuine ambiguity. Take, for example, the Torah’s attitude towards capital punishment. The Torah prescribes the death penalty for many aveirot (sins) and the peshat (simple-sense) reading of Torah [Scripture] does not even give any principled reservations. And yet R. Akiva and R. Tarfon (mMakkot 1:10) asserted that had they been around during the historical era during which the death penalty was still administrable, they would have ensured that nobody was ever executed (utilizing arcane procedural technicalities) — it is unclear, though, whether their opposition was philosophical or only practical, i.e. concern for convicting the innocent.

On the other hand:

2) When the Torah’s perspective is clear and clearly in conflict with some other value system, there is only one acceptable choice for an owed hashem (servant of God): he or she chooses Torah. One cannot be poseh al shetel ha-se’efim (stand on both sides of the divide) — you choose to identify as one thing or another, but kiluyim (admixtures) are prohibited according to the Torah. Choosing the non-Torah value system is fundamentally a form of ideological idolatry. In its essence, it entails fashioning God in the image of humans, rather than humans being formed in the image of God. One gets to choose the altar on which one worships, but one should be honest about which altar that is.

Within these foreign challenges there are two different kinds — the first and more obvious, which I do not wish to focus on, are the “hot-button” issues. These are crucial issues in our community and it is essential that our approach in these areas be formed and informed by the Torah and its values — and so often they are not; but they are not what I wish to focus on now.

There is another kind of challenge, in which we adopt the values of surrounding society — and we typically do so unthinkingly. Some of these values are reflected in the way that we live our lives, and others are reflected in the positions we adopt and advocate for, or at least profess to believe in.

One example of this would be the materialism and consumerism which defines so much of our society. If you are not sure about this, recall that after the events of 9/11, then-President Bush told our country that the way to respond was to go shopping. Of course, what he really saying was “carry on as normal,” but the fact that a significant part of the way one would define “normal” was “shopping,” was telling of what so much of our culture has become. You can go to the mall because you need a number of different things and you have all of these stores in close proximity so it is a more efficient use of your time, or you can go there to hang out all day and shop for the things you never

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In the Shadow of Technicolor

By Josh Leichter

It’s an experience we’ve all had at least once or twice in our lives. The posters of upcoming films lining the walls as we walk down to the counter to buy a ticket to a movie. The smells of freshly popped popcorn and buttery flavoring waft in the air as the hissing of the excited bubbles of a just-poured Coca-Cola vibrate in our ears. We line the concession stand to pay the 12-dollar fee for its delectable treats, choosing from an assortment of candies and chocolates that seem plucked out of a fantastical candy garden ala Willy Wonka. The seats are not the most comfortable, ranging from an old red velvet to a cracking faux-leather that sometimes becomes the focus of theater-goers just like us. If the theater is fancy, the seats may recline in echelon, providing an added level of comfort for those films that are on the longer side.

To some, the inconvenience of paying such high ticket prices and having to venture out on the subway to go to the theater to watch a movie that will be on Blu-Ray (if people still use those?) or a streaming service in a few months just doesn’t seem worth it anymore. And they ask themselves: why should it be worth it? I know people that only go to the movies for the big tentpole features like the latest Marvel or Star Wars movie, and they aren’t wrong. There are kinds of movies that demand to be seen on the largest screen possible, with upgrades like IMAX, Dolby Cinema, to enhance the experience and help the theaters earn a few extra bucks at the same time. But in my mind, there is a beauty in going to the theater to see those period pieces and dramas that don’t demand a fancy screen.

At the end of the day, as the credits roll and the lights slowly brighten the theater, it’s just us and the movie.

To me, there is nothing more exciting than when those lights that line the sides of the walls dim ever so slightly and the picture roars to life, exploding into a thousand different colors and pixels that come together with the greatest brushstrokes of masters like Spielberg, Scorcese and Tarantino to paint a picture of life. It’s that idea that the movies can allow us to go from laughing to crying to cheering to a somber melancholy with each special viewing — or when they are at their finest, all in the same picture — that makes going to the theater such an enjoyable experience. When I find myself returning two or three times a year to see a familiar actor tackle a new role, each one a radical departure from the last, it feels like I am catching up with an old friend and no time has passed. For these reasons, I find myself drawn back to the theaters, going very frequently and devouring the latest movies that are offered. It is because movies tap into our hearts and our minds so well that we find ourselves thinking about them for days after that first viewing, and why we find ourselves watching them again for repeat viewings and showing them to our friends and loved ones for the first time. We try to transmit these stories and these experiences that we get by sitting on those occasionally uncomfortable seats with our over-priced snacks and our phones turned off. Because when we go to the movies and sit under the reflection of those glowing Technicolor pictures, that’s all that matters. At the end of the day, as the credits roll and the lights slowly brighten the theater, it’s just us and the movie. And I wouldn’t have it any other way.
By Zach Greenberg

Entering my junior year of high school at Torah Academy of Bergen County in Teaneck, I always thought, “Why would I want to go YU if it’s the same thing as high school?” I was convinced that I did not want to live in the “bubble” of the Modern Orthodox world after high school — until Purim of 2015, when a few friends and I ventured to the famous “YU Purim Chagigah.” I was inspired by the amazing music, epic dancing, and how much fun and shtick was going on that night.

Then it hit me. Yes it’s true, YU may be the same thing as high school, but who says that high school ever had to end?

In TABC, I was on all of the “joke” and “nebby” teams. I was on Varsity Wrestling, captain of the chess team, captain of the track team, and president of the Israeli Day Parade Committee. Generally, no one really paid much attention towards those extra curriculars, but I put them on the radar. I constantly hung up funny fliers, ordered sick t-shirts/jerseys, created a warm atmosphere for people on my team, and pushed off some great shtick. For example, I cut one student who had been accepted into Princeton from the Chess team. I then hung up posters of that student all around school exclaiming, “Got into Princeton. Couldn’t make Chess. We’re exclusive.”

Coming into YU, I knew that I wanted to be involved with extra-curriculars just like I was in high school. On my first day of YU, in the Post-Pesach program, I reached out to the captain of the Cross Country team, Jon Greenberg, and inquired if I could join the team. I had my own personal tryout a few days later where I qualified for the team becoming the first Post-Pesach student to join an NCAA team.

In my Sophomore year, I joined the student council as Sophomore Representative. I helped out with the planning of a few major events, such as the Yoms events and organizing the Avengers: Endgame movie night. This year, I decided to take my experiences further and was elected as the Vice President of Clubs.

I think this role is fitting for me towards those extra curriculars, and definitely for clubs on campus. I am part of dozens of clubs, including being the head of the Chess Club, VP of YU Democrats, on the board of the MCU (Marvel Cinematic Universe) Club, writer for The Commentator, Lighting Engineer for YCDS, YUPAC, and Model UN to name a few. I also am a Resident Advisor and a Student Ambassador.

So far this year, I have found success with my goals. This past September, Elka Wiesenberg (VP of Clubs at Stern) and I organized the Panopoly Trivia Night. It was a lot of fun, and over 150 students participated. I am in the works of running a private showing of Star Wars Episode IX which I hope to be very enjoyable. In addition to the things that have already happened, I have lots more exciting ideas in development.

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Seize the Moment

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From the TAC President's Desk

Lighting Candles of the Past and the Future: A Pre-Chanukah Message

By Bella Adler

“The Hill” — St. Louis, Missouri’s long-established Italian neighborhood — is the last place I expected to find Chanukah inspiration. While home for Thanksgiving with my family, we trekked to The Hill and meandered through its shops, many of which were already decorated for the holidays. Essential oils and natural aromas filled the sidewalk air as we entered a soap store. Upon entry, a buzz filled the room. Salespeople were explaining the historic St. Louis story of the company. The storefront was filled with hundreds of handmade soaps with dozens of scents, shapes and colors to choose from, while the back housed the factory in which the soaps were made. Immediately catching my eye was a Hebrew phrase carved into a light wooden plank, hanging above the registry. It read, in Hebrew letters, no English: “Dah lifnei mi atah omed.” To find this traditional Jewish reminder that we are always standing before God in a soap shop confused me immensely. Why is this here — in St. Louis? Is it an Italian neighborhood? In a soap store? With Christmas ornamentations in the front window?

As we began to shmooze with the store owner, we quickly realized that we both lived on Kibbutz Hatzerim, spoke a good broken Hebrew, and learned all the rules of Kashrut from our grandmothers. He explained that his great-grandfather escaped France during the Inquisition, ran to a small city in Italy, and came to St. Louis for the 1904 World’s Fair, working as a barber. The phrase, “know before whom you stand” has become the family’s motto. But not according to its traditional meaning.

To him, it stands for a much deeper concept: all our actions, our words, our influences, have consequences. Whether we are building up or building down — in the present, or the future. It is not about the past. It is not about the future. It is what we are doing right now. It’s all about the present moment.

When you step into a soap shop, you can make a stamp in a country’s history. When you serve a customer, you have the power to change their life. It’s not just about the soap that we make — it’s about the people we serve.

I too find this dichotomy in my daily life. As young adults we each stand for our personal values while simultaneously being contributors to a community. We are first and foremost individuals with rich relationships with an intrinsic moral system.

Yet, when we allow ourselves to be defined by what people think, we lose our capacity for authenticity and courage.” Brown is also balancing a dichotomy of interpersonal relationships with an intrinsic moral system.

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Yankees Offseason To-Do List

By Chana Weinberg

As gray slash covers New York City, the New York Yankees’ front office staff are trading their parkas for shorts at the Major League Baseball Winter Meetings in San Diego. The Winter Meetings is an annual conference where MLB franchises, players and agents — as well as baseball job seekers and media members — flock to a hotel in a “warm weather state” to discuss various baseball-related topics.

Though job fairs and writers’ meetings are interesting, for most fans the main event of the Meetings are the swirling rumors: “This team is trading their best player!” “That free agent is about to be signed!”

For teams, however, the Meetings are important because of the trades and transactions that are actually completed. As I am not yet a member of the Yankees front office and am just a fan stuck in slushy NYC, I want to start my own rumors and propose my own transactions. The following is what Chana Weinberg would do if she was the general manager of the Yankees. These are not predictions. Rather, this is what should be done, what needs to be done, for the Yankees to finally get past the AL Championship Series and win the World Series.

The Yankees’ top priorities this winter are to acquire a backup catcher, one or two left-handed bats with power, a front-end starting pitcher and a backup infielder. This must all be done without reaching too far into their deep cache of quality minor league pitchers and while maintaining the flexibility to have a World Series-quality team for years to come.

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YANKEES, continued from Page 16

Opinions

Backup Catcher: Re-sign Austin Romine

With the departure of Austin Romine to free agency, the Yankees have depleted most of their organizational catching depth. Therefore, I propose they either re-sign Romine or trade for a good defensive catcher with a quality bat. Kyle Higashioka is already in the organization but gives minimal offensive contribution, so Romine, who showed his ability to hit last season, is a good option to come back and contribute.

What complicates this is that Romine is rumored to be looking for a starting catcher job, not a backup position. If this is indeed the case, the Yankees should sign Tyler Flowers, a comparable free agent. Or they can trade for Phillies’ backup Andrew Knapp by sending them cash considerations and a minor league arm not in their top ten prospect list. With all that said, the simplest solution would be to just re-sign Romine, who is already familiar with the Yankees pitching staff, to a two-year $4.5 million deal.

Left-Handed Power Bat: Trade for Josh Bell

In a recent article for The Athletic, former general manager Jim Bowden proposed that the Yankees trade for Josh Bell, the all-star first baseman of the rebuilding Pittsburgh Pirates. In this trade, Bowden has the Yankees give up Miguel Andújar (the 2018 Rookie of the Year runner-up), Luke Voit and a minor league pitcher. I am not in the business of predicting if these deals will happen, but I do think it would be a worthwhile trade — consider the Yankee lineup with Aaron Judge, Gary Sanchez, Josh Bell and Giancarlo Stanton: that’s a lot of home runs. Trading both Voit and Andújar some-

This is what should be done, what needs to get done, for the Yankees to finally get past the AL Championship Series and win the World Series.

what depletes the Yankees’ infield depth, but with the versatile DJ LeMahieu and the Tyler Wade–Thairo Estrada combination, they should be good to go. The Yankees should also re-sign Brett Gardner to have another strong lefty option in their lineup. Gardner has the right kind of power for Yankee Stadium, with its “short porch” in right field, and that would be helpful.

Front Line Starting Pitcher: Sign Stephen Gerrit Cole

When Gerrit Cole put on his Boras Corp. hat at the conclusion of the World Series, it was clear that a bidding war for his super-pitching would shortly commence. The Yankees seem to be involved in this bidding war, but again, I am not in the school of predicting what the Yankees will do. They have also reportedly met with 2019 World Series MVP Stephen Strasburg, the second best starter on the open market. The Yankees need to sign one of these pitchers. After losing to the Astros again this year, the Yankees need to stockpile power pitching at the top of their rotation — in addition to having a strong bullpen — to have a better chance of advancing in the postseason. But who to pay? And how much?

As GM of the Yankees, I am ready to spend big. But for which pitcher? Strasburg allowed more runs than Cole, who topped the league in run prevention. Another factor to consider is how the pitcher will play in Yankee Stadium and in the small AL East division ballparks. The rate at which Strasburg gets ground balls is higher than Cole’s rate, which is important in the home run friendly parks. That being said, Cole strikes out more batters per nine innings. You also have to consider who will be better on the back end of the deal, when you will inevitably be overspending on the pitcher who is not as good as he was when he signed the contract. Considering the number of teams willing to spend, ultimately it will all come down to where the pitcher wants to go — the two California natives will need to be convinced to switch coasts. I will offer Cole a seven-year $252 million contract to play for the Yankees. Imagine a Yankees rotation with Cole, Severino and Paxton as the top three.

The Yankees current roster is very talented. The mere possibility that they will get a full season’s worth of play from Aaron Judge, Giancarlo Stanton and Luis Severino is enough to give confidence that they will be able to win another 100 games in 2020. But nothing is guaranteed, and that is why in past years the Yankees have become experts at adding value at the margins. The transaction proposals here are only the big splashes; as GM, I would recommend strengthening a middle-infield utility bat and adding options at the back of their rotation to help the team get through the long, six month season. Another aspect to consider is payroll, how much a player should be paid and the continual change in the ways teams value different types of players, but that is a matter for another article.

Eventually, the Winter Meetings will end and most of the rumored transactions will not occur. There will still be time to improve rosters before the season begins, but the Yankees will have to re-acquire their parkas and transact from a distance. If, by the end of the offseason, they have followed some of my advice, the 2020 season will be thrilling. Then again, I’m just a fan in slushy NYC.
Resume Building: Getting to Know Yourself

By Efraim Weiner

When creating a resume, one brainstorms their work experiences and education to create bullet points detailing their skills — often overly-relying on a thesaurus to embellish relatively mundane tasks. Secretarial experience becomes "initiated correspondences between the CEO and perspective clients," while a gap year spent in Israel might translate to, "meticulously analyzed and verbally debated ancient Babylonian legal texts." These bullet points might make for a superficial display of your talents and skills, but they do little to answer the dreaded interview question, "tell me a little bit about yourself.

To answer this question successfully and thoughtfully, it is important that one creates their own personal philosophy.

To understand what a personal philosophy is, it is important to first understand what it is not. A personal philosophy is not derived from Ted talks, business podcasts, or Tony Robbins shouting mantras at you. Nor is a personal philosophy just about tips on how to get rich quick or brain tricks to think quicker and more efficiently. This isn't to say that these self-help guides and motivational speeches are worthless — certainly many have valuable insights and knowledge that one can apply to various day to day situations. However, these advice-givers have created and perfected their own unique personal philosophy, so mimicking and idolizing their way of life does little to develop one's own self.

In order to cultivate a personal philosophy, a person should examine their day starting from the very beginning to the very end. The goal is to find commonality in life's mundane and seemingly disconnected activities. When one defines for themselves why they do what they do, and who they are as a person, these tasks start to link up and make sense — dictating one's next choice.

Psychologist Angela Duckworth, in her book "Grit," examines the coaching career of Pete Carroll. Originally a college football coach, Carroll entered the NFL but saw only mediocre success, and was eventually fired as head coach of the New England Patriots. During this low point, Carroll examined his life philosophy and what his ultimate goals were. In 2010, he returned to the NFL as head coach of the Seattle Seahawks and guided the team to a Super Bowl championship just three years later. He credits his renewed success to his philosophy of "doing things better than they were done before." This mantra of Carroll's dictated all aspects of his life and coaching philosophy. Whether it was the players' meal plan, the music the team listened to, or the time frame for his practices, everything was calculated. When one defines their personal philosophy, success and achievement can become immanent.

Carroll spent years crafting his way of life, encountering both success and failure along the way. Similarly, our personal philosophies may become altered overtime but perhaps we can look at our past decisions to help guide us towards defining our future. As YU students, our mission statements, although probably not fully defined, may contain Jewish values that have dictated our decision of where to study for university and may dictate the career fields we eventually choose. Taking the time to reflect and categorize one's personal philosophy is the only way to figure this out.

Establishing a personal philosophy is no easy task. Some people spend their whole lives in search of something to live for and work towards. However, even the process itself is worthwhile. Explaining to a job recruiter how you approach life — scrutinizing every moment — shows that you are thoughtful, attentive to detail and that you approach tasks differently than other people. Additionally, the most technical and routine aspects of one's profession can become meaningful once you figure out what it is you are working towards. So as you polish that resume for that next job application, take the time to also figure out who you really are.

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Staying Ahead in the Office and Making Your Boss Proud

By Avi Lekowsky

Dozens of applications have been sent in. Your mouth has gone dry from preparing for interviews after interview. You've endured sleepless nights and subway rides for interviews that only elicited the diplomatic yet oh-so-heartwarming emails, "while we have some interesting experience, we will not be moving forward with your application at this time." Finally, you get an offer; the job is yours. While your life may not revolve around finding a job anymore, what are you supposed to do once you start? How do you make a good impression on your boss, hand in the high-quality work and get a full-time offer or promotion down the line? Here are some tips on how to be the best version of yourself when creating your "business" persona in the office.

1. Don't be afraid to ask questions.
   Walking into a new office can be intimidating. Even small things like finding the closest water cooler or vending machine can be enough to make your heart do a somersault, let alone figuring out the harder questions about the job. Most people come into a job not knowing every detail about it and require assistance to get through the day. The most important advice you need to know is not to be afraid of asking questions. People expect you to inquire about the work and the workspace as soon as you step foot in the office, and if you don't do it now, it gets more and more awkward down the line — just imagine asking your boss where the bathroom is after a month of working there! Power through that fear and watch yourself work your way to the top.

2. Collab!
   When you start a job at a large company, it's easy to get funneled into one very specific position that may teach you how to do one thing well, but it's all you can do. This makes it harder to learn new skills that help you advance in your career and allow you to become a more valuable asset to the company. One way to overcome this is to invite people from other departments to collaborate on projects. Working on tasks with other people gives both of you the chance to acquire new talents and spin an assignment in a way that gives it multiple perspectives. Top positions require people to have a vast array of industry expertise and this is a great way to get yourself ahead.

3. Focus!
   The 9-5 grind can be tiring, and an overwhelming workload can make it hard to focus on just one project. Many people rely on background music, noise or podcasts to get things done. There are many great apps to choose from, like Apple's own podcast app or Spotify's robust selection. Additionally, meditation could be an alternative way to help you settle down and pound through some work. Apps like Headspace (free trial available), Happily and Mindfulness Daily help you stay calm in stressful situations. Lastly, it might be helpful to take a quick breather. Give yourself five minutes to take a walk outside, do some yoga or watch a quick Youtube video. Taking your mind off work for a little can make your time spent working more productive.

4. Balance
   Most of us have spent the majority of our lives going to school with the hopes of getting a good job after we graduate. The prospect of a nice paycheck has fueled years of hard work and long nights of studying. With that said, at the end of the day, the work you do is just a means to an end. While hard work and acquiring a livelihood is important, living life is of the utmost importance. So while working hard and pulling those extra hours to impress your boss, be sure to schedule a vacation and make time for family and friends.

Landing a job is a fantastic accomplishment. The chance to prove yourself in a company can be exciting, nerve-wracking or a bit of both. By following these tips, you give yourself the best chance to grow and succeed in this new environment.

Thriving, Not Surviving

By Nathan Hakakian

With the holiday season rapidly approaching, big-box retailers are looking to capitalize on what has been a rough year. The continuous standoff with China, as well as the nonstop rise of Amazon, has left a siz

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Discover the art and science behind every deal

Create impactful business relationships through YU’s Real Estate Network
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