

EVERY VOICE COUNTS

JEWISH
ROCHESTER'S
2019 REGIONAL
SURVEY

COLLEGE CAMPUS-BASED EXPERIENCES

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Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester

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**“Every Voice Counts” was designed, fielded, and analyzed by
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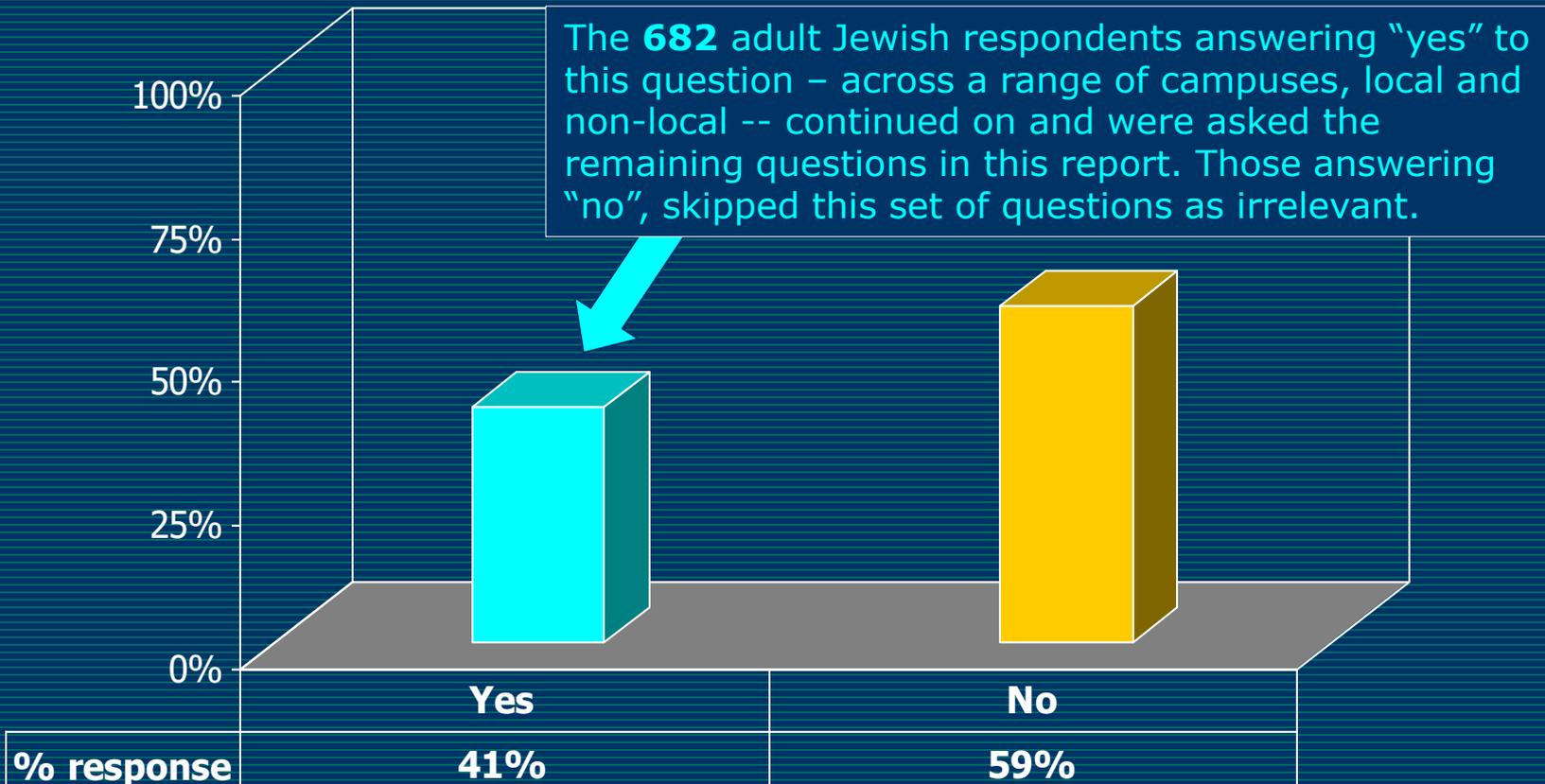
“This project was truly a labor of love from the three of us to the Jewish community we love. Although none of us were born or raised here, it is the community that became our home . . . where each of us have lived, raised our children, worked professionally, and volunteered for the past 40 years.” -- **Judy, Janet & Jocelyn**

Survey data tells us stories.

Drawn from our sample of 2,395 Jewish adult participants, here's what we learned about the **experiences of the 682 respondents who – directly or indirectly – have spent time on a college or university campus recently.**

[Note that this is a companion report that parallels, supplements and complements the three focused reports that explore in depth the specific issues of anti-Semitism, Israel, and Safety & Security. This report examines all three of these topics within the campus context.]

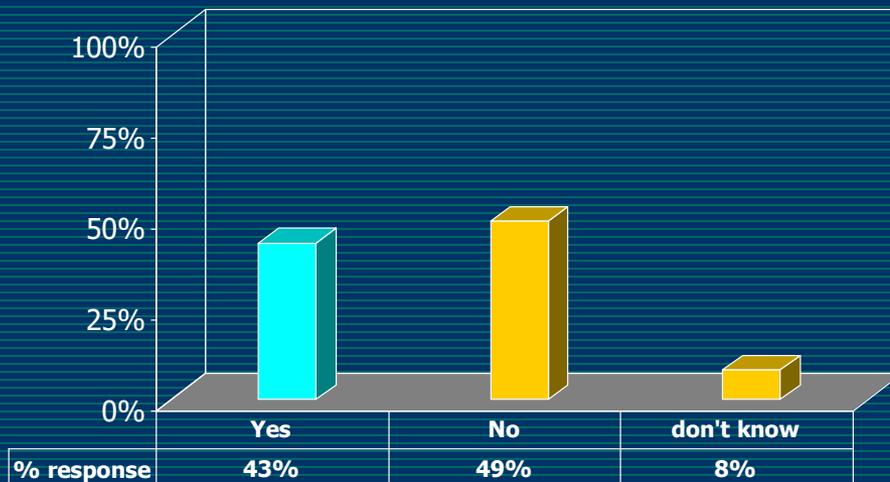
Many college and university campuses -- both across the US and abroad -- have become settings where sentiments have grown increasingly hostile towards Israel, and in some cases, towards Jews. **Have you, a family member, or a close friend, spent time on a college or university campus recently** -- whether as an undergraduate or graduate student, faculty member, administrator, or employee?



[N=682 Jewish adult respondents with recent campus-based experiences]

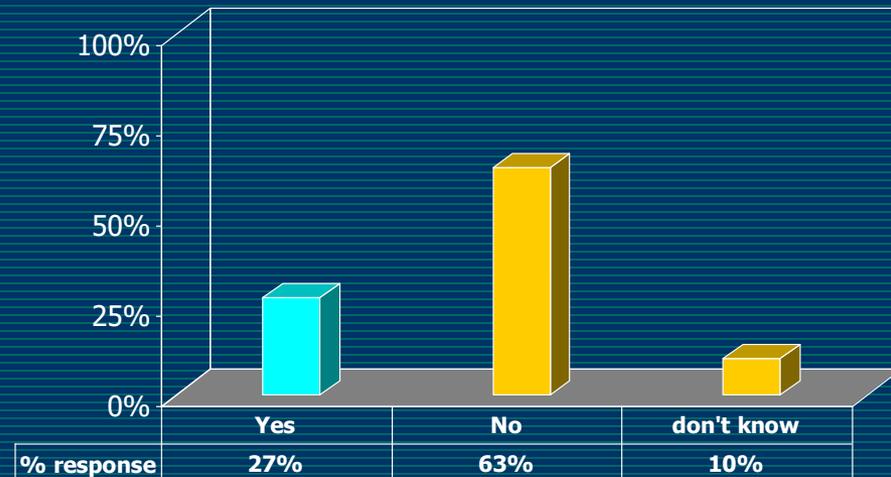
Have you -- or they -- been participating in any programming, or taken advantage of any connectivity and support, provided by either Hillel on campus or Chabad on campus?

...Hillel on campus?



Observation: On campus, 43% had linked in some way to Hillel, and 27% had linked to Chabad.

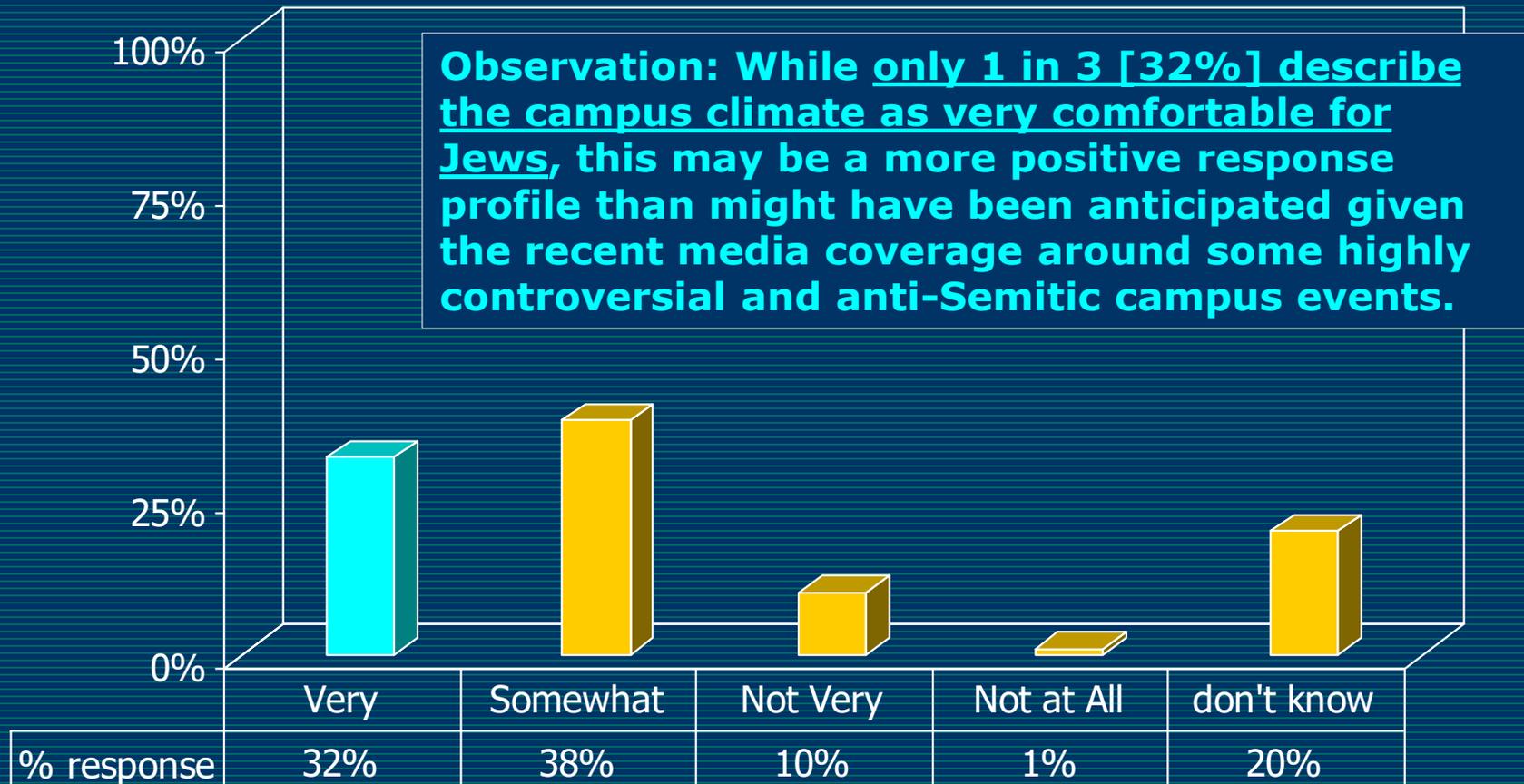
...Chabad on campus?



Observation: Correlating these responses, 19% had linked to both, while nearly half (49%) had linked to neither organization.

How comfortable have you [or they] felt the campus climate to be towards Jews recently?

(Respondents were allowed to choose **multiple** responses)



How comfortable have you [or they] felt the campus climate to be towards Jews recently?

	% Feeling Very Comfortable
Connected in some way with Hillel	40%
Connected in some way with Chabad	45%
Connected in some way with both	48%
Connected in some way with neither	26%

Connectivity clearly helps.

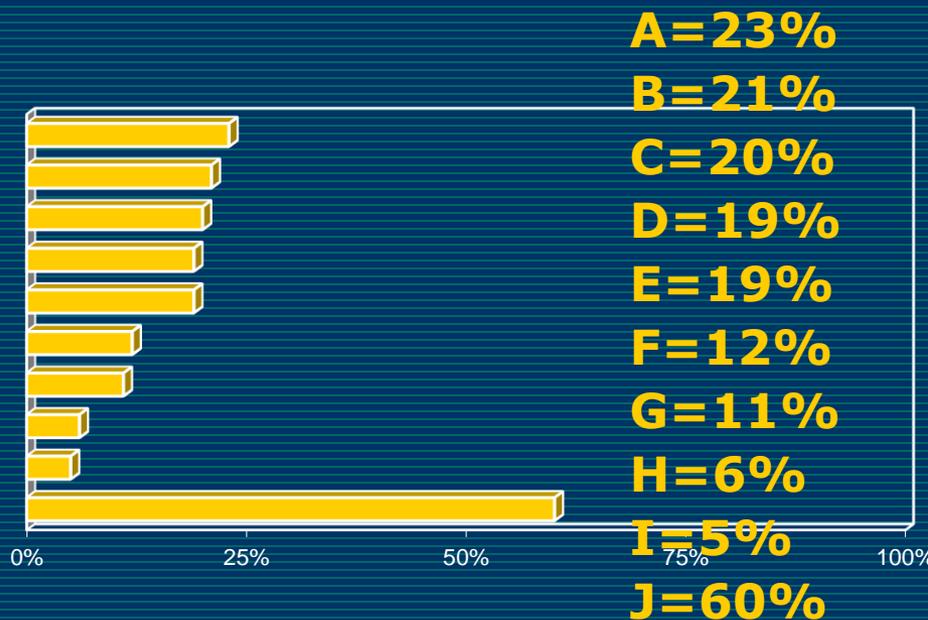
Observation:

While an overall 32% said they'd felt very comfortable on campus, that number improves to 40% via connection with Hillel, improves to 45% via connection with Chabad, and improves to 48% via connection to both.

In contrast, the percentage feeling very comfortable drops to 26% for those connected with neither of these organizations.

Which of the following situations, if any, have you [or they] experienced or observed on campus recently?

- A. Anti-Israel and/or anti-Semitic speakers or professors supported and permitted to express their views
- B. Informal conversations supporting BDS / the de-legitimization of Israel's right to exist
- C. Organized protests and programs supporting BDS / the de-legitimization of Israel's right to exist
- D. Personal unkindness or insensitivity -- comments, taunts, or worse -- expressing anti-Semitism and/or anti-Israel attitudes
- E. Anti-Israel and/or anti-Semitic organizations permitted to convene on campus
- F. Anti-Israel and/or anti-Semitic writings in school-sponsored publications
- G. Pro-Israel speakers heckled, or not permitted to express their views
- H. Pro-Israel speakers cancelled
- I. Pro-Israel writings blocked from school-sponsored publications
- J. None of the above



Observation: While 60% encountered none of these situations, 40% encountered at least one of them, and most who did so encountered several (3.4 on average).

If you [or they] have experienced or observed any of the above situations, on which campus(es) did that occur?

- University of Rochester
- Brockport
- MCC
- RIT
- Osher Continuing Education at RIT
- Eastman (UR)
- Warner (UR)

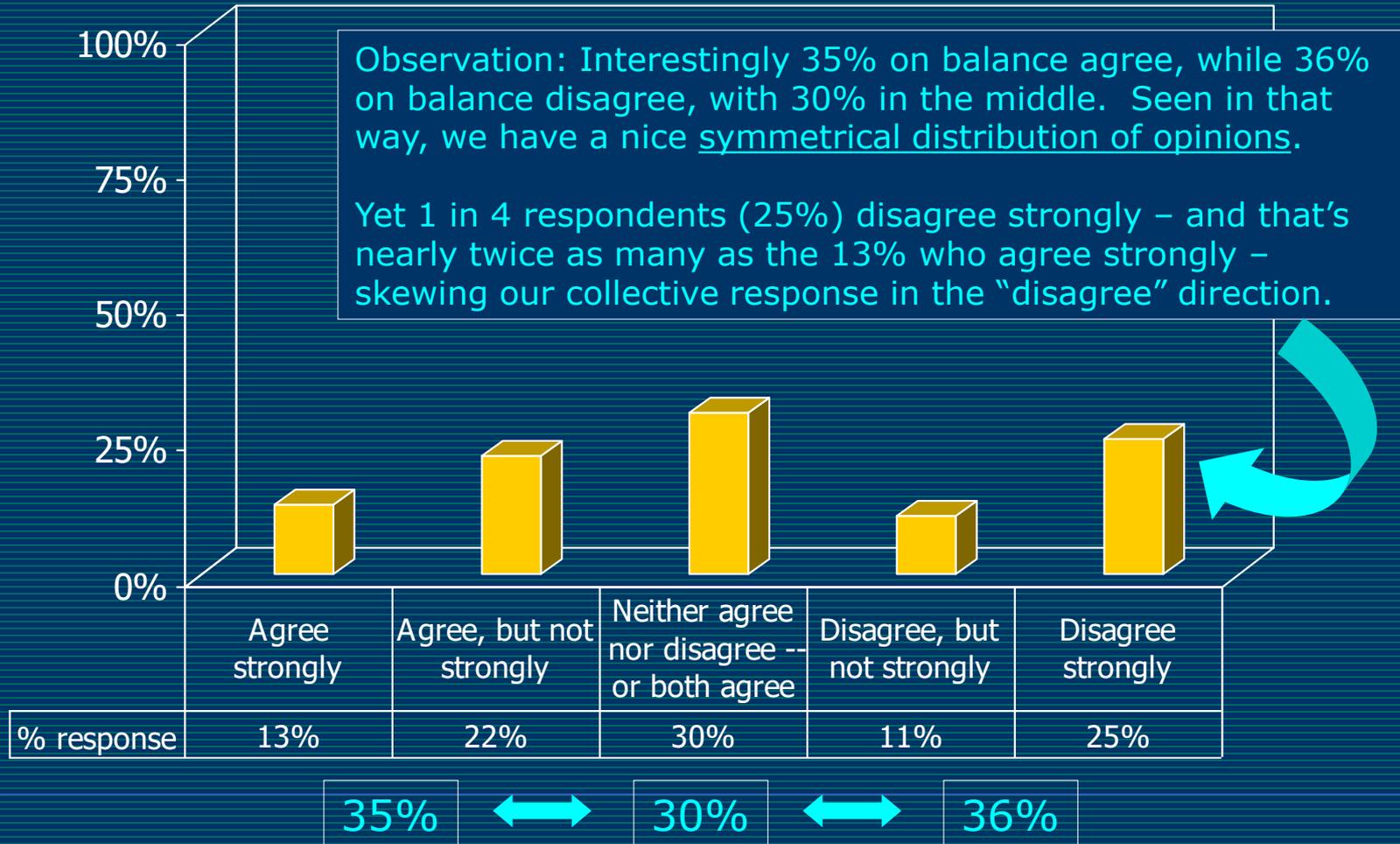
- Hobart & William Smith
- Cornell
- Ithaca College

- SUNY Geneseo
- SUNY Binghamton
- SUNY Albany
- SUNY Buffalo
- SUNY New Paltz

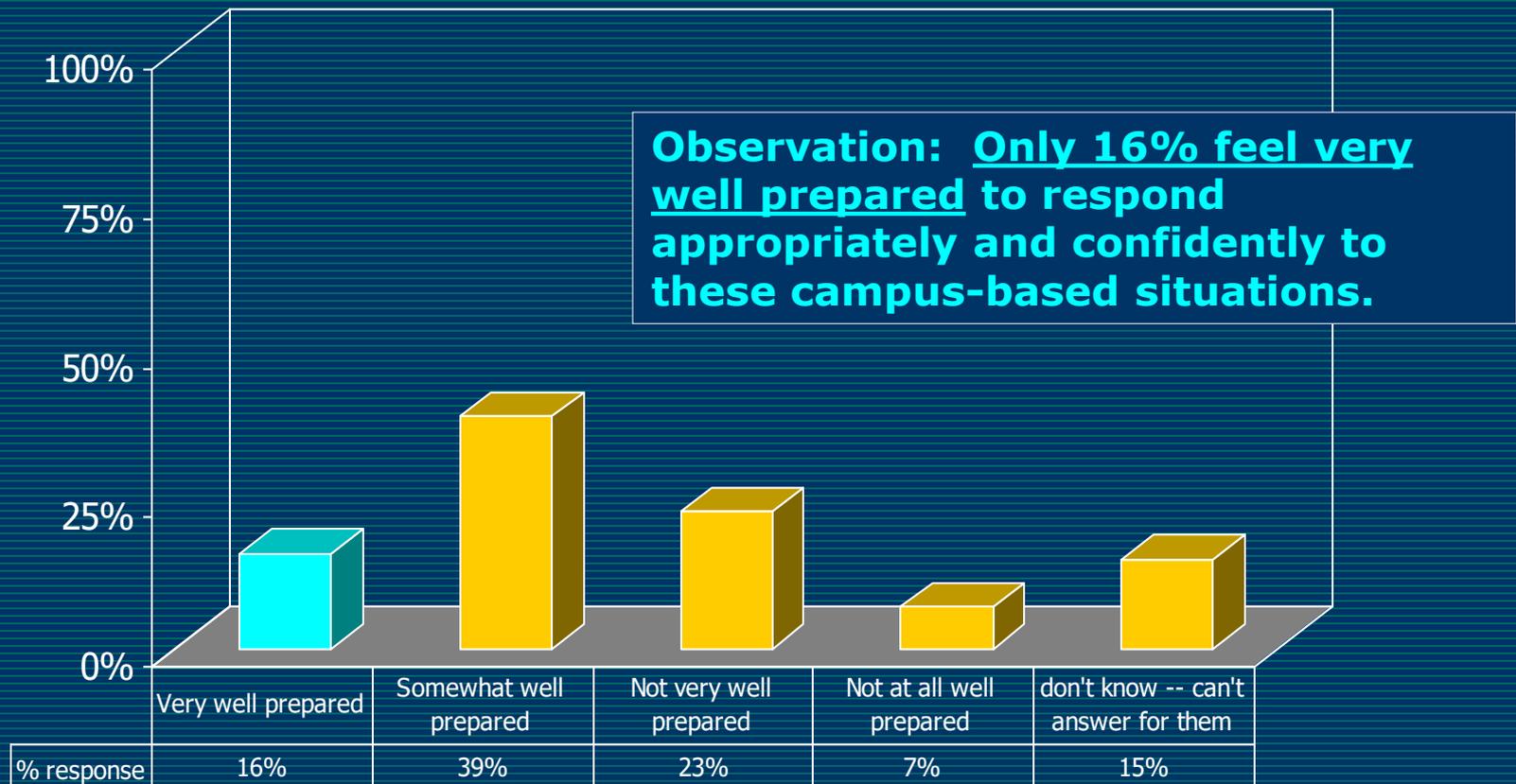
**Observations:
Clearly these issues
are widespread and
not confined to some
limited set of schools.**

- UCLA
- UC Berkeley
- College of the Atlantic in Maine
- Brandeis
- University of Virginia
- Goucher College
- The Ohio State University
- Temple University
- American University
- University of Michigan
- Columbia University
- NYU
- Harvard
- Princeton
- Boston University
- Tufts
- Vassar
- University of Maryland
- Cal State Long Beach
- UVM
- Northwestern
- McGill University
- York University in Toronto
- Stanford
- Miami
- George Mason
- University of Delaware
- Dickinson
- Oberlin
- Bentley
- Duke
- Medgar Evers Community College
- NYC College of Technology

Some people who believe strongly in free speech believe that, on principle, even perspectives that may be anti-Semitic, anti-Israel, sympathetic towards Palestinians, supportive of BDS, etc. must never be stifled, especially on college campuses. Do you agree or disagree?



How well-prepared today do you -- or they -- feel to respond appropriately and confidently to campus-based situations related to anti-Israel / anti-Semitism / pro BDS / the delegitimization of Israel?



[Excerpted from our Focused Report on Campus-based Experiences:]

What could Rochester's Jewish community do to better prepare you [or them] to respond appropriately and confidently to such situations?

6 Emerging Themes:

- [1] It's all about **empowering** them with **EDUCATION**.
- [2] More **proactive educational preparedness** in various forms – talking points, fact-sheets, speakers, videos, role-play, etc. Simple, powerful, credible, and widely available.
- [3] Education and preparation should **begin early**, long before our teens head off to college campuses. Utilize Hebrew schools, youth groups, JCC, camps, etc. alongside targeted programming. Make a range of resources available on the Federation website.
- [4] That education must be **fact-based** and strongly **substantiated**. It needs to stand up to the scrutiny of formidable adversaries and cannot be flimsy or superficial.
- [5] And yet that education must be fair and balanced. **Acknowledge and tolerate various perspectives**, on all sides of these difficult issues. Our survey participants collectively claim a **full spectrum of opinions**, and all seek affirmation and validation in whatever our Jewish community officially puts forth. Allow for both **complexity and nuance**.
- [6] Case in point: Many respondents objected strongly to our survey's describing BDS as the de-legitimization of Israel. Those with sympathy for Palestinians resent being branded as anti-Israel and/or anti-Semitic. **Accommodate – and welcome – dissent as another form of diversity & inclusion.**

[Excerpted from our Focused Report on Campus-based Experiences:]

What could Rochester's Jewish community do to better prepare you [or them] to respond appropriately and confidently to such situations?

- *My son -- a recent Cornell grad -- could definitely use some help in knowing how best to respond to those situations. They can't only happen via Hillel, however, because many students, including my son, don't necessarily connect with Hillel. I wonder if he'd read a "how-to-respond" guide to help react to the ignorant, misguided, or outright hateful things we might encounter in and around college campuses and college towns? Does Federation have -- or could we create -- something like that?*
- *Offer talking points in programs, or even as separate mailings, establish on-line learning sessions and more events*
- *Again, provide education, along with a sense of security.*
- *Education about Israel and exposure of the lies and half-truths that they are putting forth.*
- *It all goes back to educating our young people about recent Jewish History, especially the Holocaust, anti-Semitism, the background of the creation of the modern State of Israel, peace offers that have been refused by the Arab States and Palestinians over time, etc. That BDS is anti-Semitic since there are no similar attempts to de-legitimize other countries in the same manner - such as Russia in Ukraine, Turkey in Cyprus, China in Tibet, etc.*
- *Educate about facts and approaches for positive and constructive dialogue*
- *Again more education, more awareness, more dialog*
- *Strong education that started before their campus experiences. Day school, strong temples, and programs (such as the ones offered through a Jerusalem U).*
- *Education and open discussion*
- *Provide talking points or some literature to help us answer specific objections or questions.*

[Excerpted from our Focused Report on Campus-based Experiences:]

What could Rochester's Jewish community do to better prepare you [or them] to respond appropriately and confidently to such situations?

- *Education that shows both sides, treat people and students as smart. That means know all sides of an issue.*
- *Please teach me about all of these terms because it's all very confusing.*
- *More programs like the one sponsored by the Cohens, with people that really know how to answer the questions.*
- *Forums, lectures.*
- *I quote a late friend of mine who was an active member of the Rochester Jewish community and a member of Temple Beth El before moving away to take a position as a professor of education and Judaic studies elsewhere: "Jewish kids are arriving at college unprepared for academic discussion about the Middle East because of years of systematic brainwashing by their temples, summer camps, and other mainline Jewish organizations."*
- *Informational and educational sessions.*
- *Provide education on how to respond.*
- *Encourage students to connect to their Hillel, which (working with Hillel International) will be best prepared to support them in that particular context.*
- *Again, speakers who can provide background material on the subject are always helpful.*
- *Incorporate into formal Jewish education and intentionally/ purposefully into informal education.*
- *Promotion / curation of online resources to read more about these issues on demand.*
- *The Rochester Jewish Community should have a presence on all area campuses, not just UR, RIT and Geneseo, and provide information and guidance to the Jewish students, faculty and staff.*
- *At least recognized Jewish Holidays even if it is not a public school eg. Nazareth, St. John's etc*
- *We need to work on how administrators at our local universities deal with issues.*
- *Send literature to high school students and their families that conveys concisely how to deal with this.*
- *Prepare bullet points on these issues.*

[Excerpted from our Focused Report on Campus-based Experiences:]

What could Rochester's Jewish community do to better prepare you [or them] to respond appropriately and confidently to such situations?

- Ensure that they are raised with a strong and deep understanding of what it means to be Jewish. I have nine grandchildren, they all have a deep Jewish education through 12th grade. Three have spent a full "break" year in Israel. The four college graduates are all thoroughly aware of what it means to be Jewish in their professional and career lives.*
- Provide opportunities for learning.*
- I could use a set of talking points, an elevator speech, if you will. There is so much to say, it is such a long and complicated history, I get myself tied up in knots and go in circles when trying to discuss.*
- Does anyone actually know how to best respond to this? I don't know.*
- Perhaps there could be a designated person to talk to about incidents.*
- Publish talking points showing how delegitimization has been used before, even against the US between 1776 and 1812 and during the 1860s.*
- Education and more education.*
- Teen programs focused on anti-BDS.*
- Maintain awareness of activities and presentations that present unbalanced, inaccurate information about Israel and Jewish people. Be prepared to offer fact-based information to counter false claims. Provide literature, and other materials as needed.*
- More information on BDS*
- I need to educate myself about Israel and the positions of the anti-Israel wing of the left.*
- Publish advice / talking points.*
- Learning sessions with qualified experts in this field.*
- Sensitivity training and being exposed to courses or seminars likely coordinated through ADL.*

[Excerpted from our Focused Report on Campus-based Experiences:]

What could Rochester's Jewish community do to better prepare you [or them] to respond appropriately and confidently to such situations?

- *Helpful strategies could be made available to the community.*
- *Classes for people which outline why the BDS movement is incorrect and facts that show it.*
- *There needs to be some sort of partnership at the top. Minority opinions can't win in the face of illogical, mob-mentality attacks. Minority opinions are absolutely stifled and punished on campus, by fellow students and professors. It's a scary situation, and as policies continue to slip and the culture becomes increasingly hostile, it becomes less safe to express a dissenting opinion. Silence, of course, is taken as agreement with the majority. You can't fight this with logic, because it's not a conflict taking place in the realm of rational debate and fact finding. The solutions need to come from the top - college officials cracking down on anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic discrimination.*
- *Jewish High School education should ALWAYS include in depth information about these issues and how best to respond to situations students might encounter in college including role-playing scenarios. This can also be a part of youth group programming for older high school students.*
- *Anti-Israel sentiments abound, with good reason, but it is unfair to just pick on Israel. Anti-semitism should not be tolerated.*
- *Keep online information updated with fair talking points outlined.*
- *It would be nice for students on campuses to have an updated fact sheet with supporting relevant topics that are recited by experts on how to respond to these situations.*
- *We need to do a complete about-face, support Iranian Jews, and let the "Isradicals" (the only terrorists truly deserving of the label) meet whatever fate God has in mind for them.*
- *This particular student was not able to get a word in when attacked about her upcoming visit to Israel. She had all the knowledge but was not able to speak. We have to get rid of the hatred...*

[Excerpted from our Focused Report on Campus-based Experiences:]

What could Rochester's Jewish community do to better prepare you [or them] to respond appropriately and confidently to such situations?

- Speakers who are pro-Israel but know the other side.*
- Continue to bring speakers and have educational programs that address these issues in a balanced way.*
- Programs that target young adults.*
- Where can I go to become more educated on this? Don't know.*
- Provide education in Hebrew school on how to handle and be prepared. Being vigilant. Have trainings on how to respond in different situations.*
- The Rochester Jewish community has not been supportive of far less incendiary issues, so I am not too confident contacting the Federation to deal with these potentially adversarial issues.*
- Have the main stream media give it the same detailed coverage as other problems that they choose to focus on.*
- Educate seniors in High School about their Jewish Heritage and Israel before they go away to school.*
- Education, awareness and dialogue.*
- Talk to administration on campuses (UR, RIT).*
- The long history of anti-Israel feeling and aggression toward Israel from its neighbors must be understood. The connection of land and people going back to the time of Abraham must be understood. Current perspective of most people today is of a history that goes back only for as long as they have been alive to see it happen.*
- Workshops or educational programs that examine historical perspectives and help prepare counter arguments.*
- I believe a curriculum regarding this topic should be developed and be part of Hebrew schools and/or youth groups and/or camps. It could also be accessed through Federation, JCC, Chabad, etc.*

[Excerpted from our Focused Report on Campus-based Experiences:]

What could Rochester's Jewish community do to better prepare you [or them] to respond appropriately and confidently to such situations?

- *Have direct programs that are geared to prepare our community. The same way it is done in programs in Israel that American students participate for example in Gap year, or Ambassadors. These programs have specific sessions to teach the students how to deal with these situations. Have speakers and programs.*
- *Raise your children In a Torah based home.*
- *Better educate the public and youth through interfaith programs.*
- *Explain the background, origins, and motivations of the manifestations above.*
- *I think much more could be done to inform people of Israel's role in the world. The more we, and our children, know about the positive contributions (in medicine, agriculture, humanitarian concerns, etc.) Israel has provided at home and abroad, the more we can educate those whose impressions are negative, and often uninformed. Hadassah does a good job reporting such stories, but I'm not sure they reach a broader (non-Jewish) audience.*
- *Pro-active Jewish programming on campus to support and explain Israel — dramatizations of Arab terrorist events in Israel, and examples of UN General Assembly bias. In addition, we should dramatize Arab terrorism in other countries (eg., Afghanistan), including Iranian terrorism, although they're not Arabs. Also, we should promote vigorously a movement for a free Kurdistan. The Kurds are strong potential allies. Why all the bias in favor of Palestinians, and virtual ignorance of the far more valid historical claims of the Kurds?*
- *Jewish students on campus need professional support to have a level playing field with other students who are affiliated with professionals who seem to be using them (the other students) as a vehicle to promote antisemitism, pro BDS, and de-legitimization of Israel. This outside influence is a primary cause for the escalation of hatred and ill will on campuses across the country.*

[Excerpted from our Focused Report on Campus-based Experiences:]

What could Rochester's Jewish community do to better prepare you [or them] to respond appropriately and confidently to such situations?

- Education to shift the discussion from anecdotes and emotionally charged but unsubstantiated rhetoric - to fact based accounts and data.*
- More seminars like the one hosted by Howard Cohen at the JCC*
- Learning opportunities.*
- Trainings, suggested films, video lists, discussions. Offer frequently at different times.*
- Train college students on tactics to address anti-Israel and pro-BDS protests, give them logistical support, offer fact sheets on Israel.*
- Offer literature via mail or email to address the issues and how to answer to the issues.*
- Provide a folder with material to students demonstrating the truth about Israel and how good it is.*
- Talking to teenagers about the subject and what to expect in college.*
- Unfortunately, I have no time to help others be prepared, but I am sure you can find many besides me who will be available for this mission.*
- Speak with administrators on campus to provide workshops to deal with the issues for staff & students.*
- Educational sessions, materials, Q&A's*
- I sent my son Neil Lazarus' video. He has excellent talking points.*
- Have programs and written materials (eg., on Federation or JCC websites) that provide information about how to respond.*
- More speakers from Israel to give a personal perspective.*
- Continue offering classes on handling BDS.*
- Great question. Maybe help people be more secure in their Jewishness?*

[Excerpted from our Focused Report on Campus-based Experiences:]

What could Rochester's Jewish community do to better prepare you [or them] to respond appropriately and confidently to such situations?

- *These groups rely on misinformation and ignorance, and the best way to combat these groups is with facts.*
- *Have seminars on the topic every couple of years*
- *Make the colleges aware that it doesn't pay to allow antisemitism to run amok, like what happened to UR. That's why my children applied to SUNY Binghamton. Why should I pay for them to be in danger for being Jewish?*
- *Again, nuance. I don't necessarily believe in "stifling" discussions. But BDS is fundamentally dishonest and treating it as if it isn't is not appropriate.*
- *Show the accomplishments and good Israel does for its constituents regardless of faith or race.*
- *Through thoughtful education.*
- *My daughter wanted to participate in Hillel but there isn't one at MCC. She was told she could participate at another campus but didn't feel comfortable doing that.*
- *Have more programming around this topic, send out cheat sheets, etc.*
- *More seminars, lectures, training on this topic and how to handle it. Increase knowledge in general community, in local college communities, and probably high school as well.*
- *Provide information about appropriate responses and tactics.*
- *Publishing a handbook with powerful, factual responses to anti-Semitic, anti-Israel and pro-BDS demagoguery and attacks. Conducting educational seminars for the community members on this subject.*
- *Small group discussions for high school students prior to leaving for college and during the college years.*
- *I think the support and information is there if needed.*

[Excerpted from our Focused Report on Campus-based Experiences:]

What could Rochester's Jewish community do to better prepare you [or them] to respond appropriately and confidently to such situations?

- *Bring the conversation more to the forefront where Anti-BDS is being defended.*
- *More training/practice as to what to do in these situations.*
- *Free speech has a wide range for topics to be discussed. If we had public forums of information it might be better than sending a newsletter. Maybe after Shabbat services a learning lunch could be arranged as an informal sharing of information.*
- *Two of my grandchildren attend universities. Because they are Modern Orthodox and attended a Jewish high school, I know they are well prepared to deal with these situations on campus.*
- *If they would attend, they could learn how to respond. The problem is that the BDS movement is so aligned with liberal values on college campuses that my own children are starting to criticize Israeli policies.*
- *Again, present specific programs, classes, lectures etc. by experts. I'm a (part-time) faculty member at SUNY Brockport. I'm happy that I haven't encountered anti-Semitism there, but that doesn't mean it isn't there. I don't know what the students experience. My sense is there are not a lot of Jewish students at Brockport, nor do I know of any courses in Jewish culture/history/etc.*
- *Prepare young leadership that is equipped with news facts, historical facts, speaking points, and that are trained in public debate.*
- *Talk to USY and other youth groups to help kids prepare.*
- *More community-based education for the family.*
- *Arm me with the facts to counteract these hostile comments.*
- *Have I mentioned the public TV programming that regularly discusses Jewish issues?*

[Excerpted from our Focused Report on Campus-based Experiences:]

What could Rochester's Jewish community do to better prepare you [or them] to respond appropriately and confidently to such situations?

- Be more willing to express the complexity and nuances involved in these issues.*
- Education to address controversies regarding Israel and history of Zionism.*
- Better coordination of community efforts with those on local campuses.*
- Hand out material and post online about how to handle situations with 'what-if' examples.*
- In school groups and school newspapers. Encourage them to engage the rest of the student community. Don't let the anti-Semitic voices be the only ones heard.*
- Provide information, a pamphlet, some lectures addressing the situations.*
- Have engaging, fun programs for high school students.*
- Create a radical positive program that teach the world to accept and love all humans.*
- Again, provide workshops and seminars to train people for such situations.*
- I feel prepared but I do not think my adult children are, nor do I think most people are.*
- More education re: good things about Israel.*
- Get the college professors that are Jewish together to discuss and learn so we have a greater understanding.*
- Start conversations - discussions about how to deal with these issues if they arise.*
- Be more public in their responses. Meet with school officials to discuss these situations.*
- Advocate for open debate, one that does not allow the speaker to conflate or obfuscate the debate. So BDS proponents need to confront the question of whether or not they support the existence of Israel as a state.*
- Send bulletins with suggestions to high school and college students. Also to the younger group who are not still in school*
- I am prepared to do anything except prevent free speech. We have to show that hating Jews and Israel is wrong, but Israel has a right to defend itself and remain a Jewish homeland.*

[Excerpted from our Focused Report on Campus-based Experiences:]

What could Rochester's Jewish community do to better prepare you [or them] to respond appropriately and confidently to such situations?

- *Provide explicit discussion about it. Use resources such as CAMERA and AIPAC to learn how to respond to anti-Israel and anti-Semitic people.*
- *Study why we exist and our purpose in the world.*
- *Booklets and speakers workshops for this and especially for teens before going to college.*
- *If students are subjected to anti-Semitic attacks, support from the greater community and identified contact people within the various college communities who are able to intervene would be useful.*
- *Educate the teens about the situation and how to answer back to accusations.*
- *I'm not sure. It's such a complex and volatile conversation that I'm not sure I'd ever be able to feel adequately prepared.*
- *Helping me to better discern whether something I experienced was genuinely anti-Semitic, and helping me stick up for myself in general.*
- *I think that Rochester's current Jewish leadership has proven wholly incompetent in addressing and educating on these issues. There is no balance on this or any adjacent issues such as Islam. We're too emotionally involved. The Middle East is a curse to us, and no wonder since God never bade us return as was always stipulated by Torah Law.*
- *Seminars; education; guest speakers of variety topics.*
- *In all Jewish institutions of learning , synagogues, and events, this topic should be featured periodically.*
- *I don't believe politics should be practiced on campus, especially in America.*
- *Fact sheets, FAQs, archived webinars for presentations that people can't attend.*
- *By having speakers such as Our Soldiers Speak, Israeli advocates, showing films such as Crossing the Line, teaching them how to stand up to BDS with facts that refute their biases and inaccuracies.*

What could Rochester's Jewish community do to better prepare you [or them] to respond appropriately and confidently to such situations?

The subset of comments assembled on these next three slides share a deep concern about the linkage of BDS and the delegitimization of Israel, stressing that criticizing Israeli politics and policies, and supporting the Palestinian people, is not Anti-Semitic. They call on our Jewish community for nuance, balance, and fairness in addressing such issues.

- *Please stop suggesting that anti-Israel is the same as anti-Semitism. That would be a start.*
- *These questions are simplistically and implicitly conflating anti-Semitism with anti-Israel beliefs. These are not the same. One can easily and rationally be against some of the policies of the State of Israel, which should be protected speech, without being anti-Semitic. There is no place for anti-Semitism on college campuses or elsewhere, but to discuss the rights of Palestinians is completely appropriate, in my view.*
- *Make available to every Jewish household a primer on the issues and one that is fact-based and composed by a group of researchers who may hold different opinions about the issues of Israeli governmental policies and BDS.*
- *Again, I think it is critical to understand both sides of the problem.*
- *Ridiculous to lump anti-Semitic and anti-Israel. It can be equivalent, in which case it's not about Israel.*
- *Being anti-Semitic and sympathetic to Palestinians is not the same. This question makes me feel completely alienated from Jewish community and scared and hesitant to be involved at all.*
- *Bring in a balanced set of speakers to inform the community about the current situation in Israel.*
- *Let us practice with people who disagree in a debate format that is moderated and civil.*
- *Not over-react, and present a full perspective on Israel -- both positive and areas that are problematic.*
- *Please don't treat being "sympathetic towards Palestinians" as if it's at all the same thing as being anti-Israel, let alone anti-Semitic. It's offensive to the vast majority of Jews who still believe in a two-state solution, and it makes me question the objectivity of this entire survey.*

What could Rochester's Jewish community do to better prepare you [or them] to respond appropriately and confidently to such situations?

- *I think we should be teaching that support of Israel is not necessary for someone to consider Judaism as part of their identity.*
- *Again, not happy with the BDS being folded into anti-Semitism, as I know Israelis who are pro BDS. That said, I think anytime it doesn't create a harmful scenario targeting others, free speech needs to be protected. [But] once it crosses into hate speech or incendiary speech, it is a different story. I would NOT allow a KKK member a platform. I would allow a pro-Palestinian platform. etc.*
- *Welcome those individuals who are not Zionists and who support BDS, and recognize that they are not necessarily anti-Semitic.*
- *Programs along the lines of J-street. Not too right wing and not pro Netanyahu point of view. Acknowledge and include Israel left wing Jewish voices*
- *I don't think it's accurate to conflate criticism of the Israeli occupation with antisemitism. So it really depends what the situation is. If someone supports the Palestinians, I'll respond with support for Israelis.*
- *Most importantly, teach people the difference between ANTI Israel groups (like If Not Now) and groups that simply believe in a two state solution (like J Street). The last question did not allow discussion of that - only pro Israel/Anti-Palestine or anti-Israel groups.*
- *Supporting Palestinians is not remotely related to antisemitism. They are an oppressed people suffering from state violence. Conflating speaking up for a marginalized population with a violent system of prejudice is the logic used by Nazis. You should be ashamed of yourselves, I am certainly ashamed of you. Equating our ethno-religious oppression with the liberation of another oppressed community is horrifying. This is the kind of intentional confusion that leads to hate crimes.*

What could Rochester's Jewish community do to better prepare you [or them] to respond appropriately and confidently to such situations?

- *Perhaps they should feel comfortable also expressing anti-Israel sentiment - or at least criticism. We can't force feed pro-Israel sentiment to smart young adults. That is one reason many Jewish students turn away from Hillel - the issues are not one-dimensional.*
- *Why do we need to respond? Reactive is never as powerful as pro-active. Additionally, freedom of speech is not the freedom to hear just that with which you agree, but must also include that with which you might not.*
- *Please stop saying BDS is anti-Semitic and anti-Israel. And please stop suggesting that sympathizing with Palestinians is antithetical to supporting Israel's existence. I can support the State of Israel while not supporting the current government.*
- *Recognize the validity of the underlying emotion and sentiment which is that regardless of peoples' animus towards Israel we as Jews are uncomfortable with our role as occupiers and subjugators and that we believe in equality and non discrimination and can avoid conflating, how other feel about Israel and how we as Jews behave in our country and elsewhere in terms of equality etc.*
- *Again, anti-Israel is not anti-Jewish. One is a political entity. The other is a cultural and religious tradition.*
- *It's hard because many Jewish young people are concerned that the Palestinians are not treated well by the Israeli government and they consider BDS a non violent form of protest which can effect change. They don't necessarily see BDS as anti-Semitic or an attempt to delegitimize Israel. They want Israel to be more democratic. I think more education about what Israel faces in the region, what they are doing to help Palestinians, and how Israel is attempting to achieve peace, might help in softening the rhetoric. I also think that youth who are wholly supportive of Israel and its policies might find it helpful to understand some of the criticism of Israel and how there can be legitimate criticism of Israel that is not ant-Semitic.*

CONCLUDING SUMMARY

- College and university campuses have clearly become environments where Jewish students, faculty members, and staff have been encountering some challenging and uncomfortable situations. The anecdotal input of our participants confirms what we see portrayed in the media. Their collective experiences span a full spectrum of campuses -- large and small, public and private -- within our region, across the nation, and even in Canada.
- Campuses become less uncomfortable settings for Jews who link in some way to either Chabad and/or Hillel – and least uncomfortable for those who link to both.
- Incidents experienced and witnessed have included Anti-Semitism, BDS, and anti-Israel issues. And yet we encounter once again, as we do in Every Voice Counts' Israel-related and Anti-Semitism-related reports, a small but highly spirited set of voices reminding us that

[a] some of these issues are complicated, nuanced, and not simply right-vs-wrong,

[b] some who support BDS do not necessarily see BDS as de-legitimizing Israel's right to exist, and

[c] one can support and love Israel yet still criticize its government, politics, policies, etc.

CONCLUDING SUMMARY (continued)

- A predominance of voices admit that they do not feel fully comfortable or confident responding to these complicated situations. The Jewish Community clearly needs to create and provide teaching / training / coaching / support that target college campus and the teens heading off to those campuses.
- There is a widespread calling for more education on these difficult issues – interactive coaching sessions, training sessions, fact sheets, films, role-play, etc.– across a range of venues and distributed widely. Such offerings may be provided by Federation directly and/or by partnering with our Jewish community's schools, agencies, organizations, and synagogues. While our community's young people will benefit from such preparedness, so will their older counterparts – even parents and grandparents -- many of whom admit that they themselves feel uncomfortable and unprepared today to deal effectively with such complicated issues.
- But we are reminded by many survey participants and their passionate verbatim comments that these complicated issues deserve to be approached in a fair, respectful, nuanced manner. Again, hearkening back to what we learned in our focused report on Israel, a wide array of programming exploring all sides of these complicated issues, and allowing audiences to decide for themselves what to think and believe, are what most look to our Jewish community to provide as the basis for both credibility and trust.

In the words of one participant: ***Recognize and admit that there are two sides to every fight, and try to end fights. This will require compromising.***

CONCLUDING SUMMARY

(continued)

- Clearly, the post-COVID reality might significantly alter the campus experience at many, if not most, colleges and universities – if not permanently, then at least for the foreseeable future.
- Yet there is no reason to doubt that the need for preparedness before college, and support along the way during college, will remain important. Issues like anti-Semitism, BDS, Palestinian rights, Israel’s right to defend itself from terrorism, etc. are certainly not going away.
- Whether the educational context occurs in person or virtually, we can only assume that campuses will remain centers of intellectual grappling, debate, free speech, political discourse, etc. As long as those campuses remain places where young people have the opportunity to explore and wrestle with a full spectrum of ideas and opinions to determine their own belief systems, our Jewish community will continue to have a critical role in helping to positively shape their emerging values.
- But again, that role will be most successful in its impact -- and our educational outreach most trusted -- if it is intentionally fair, balanced, and respectful.

... questions or comments?

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