

Director's Message



SOPHIE NEEDELMAN BLOCH
Director, Hillels of Memphis

There is something magical about the start of a new school year. As the 2019-2020 academic year approached in August, I found myself experiencing the butterflies of excitement and apprehension that are uniquely attributed to entering a new cycle of study, planning, and community building on a college campus. This feeling isn't new to me,

having worked at the Hillel at University of California, San Diego for four years (and having gone through undergrad myself!). However, having taken up the helm as Director of Hillels of Memphis this summer my usual pre-school-year excitement was amplified by the exhilaration of acclimating to the larger Memphis Jewish community. Since then, the Hillel student leadership and I have hit the ground running help Jewish life thrive on campuses all across Memphis.

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Hillel Supports Jewish Students at U of M Law School



BAILEY EHRENPREIS
Founder, JLSA

My name is Bailey Ehrenpreis and I am a third-year law student at the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law. Last year, I founded the Jewish Law Student Association (JLSA) at the law school. There was a JLSA at the law school many years ago, but it had since gone dormant and needed revitalization. My desire to build a cultural and educational Jewish student group at the law school stemmed from my experiences in undergrad. I went to the University of Maryland, where about 20% of the

student body — approximately 6,500 students — was Jewish. At UMD, getting involved with Jewish organizations around campus was seamless. There were student groups that covered all aspects of Jewish life and culture. There were cultural centers like Hillel and Chabad. There were politically affiliated groups, such as Terps for Israel and J Street UMD. There was something to get involved with for every Jew, from every religious denomination, and from every political association. Jewish students who came from out-of-state could find clubs and friend groups to celebrate the holidays with.

This was not the case when I came to law school. I recognize that UMD is specially situated to cater to Jews at the university. Unlike at UMD, the University of Memphis does not have a significant Jewish population. This is especially true when you come to the law school, where the class sizes range from 100-150 students. Even though I knew that I could not replicate what was at UMD, I wanted to start something where Jews at the law school could feel represented and comfortable.

JLSA at the University of Memphis seeks to include all Jews at the law school, and make them feel more comfortable during their three grueling years of legal study. With the help of Hillel, we seek to advocate for Jewish interests on campus, bring Jewish-related programming and speakers to the school, and connect students to local Jewish families for holidays, amongst other things. Originally, I am from Baltimore, so at UMD, I could drive the 45 minutes back

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BIG JEWISH QUESTIONS:
NAVIGATING COLLEGE
THROUGH A JEWISH LENS

Jewish Learning Fellowship

A 10-week subsidized
Hillels of Memphis course
@ Rhodes and U of M
Spring 2020

apply online:
hillelsofmemphis.org/JLF

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At the University of Memphis, we have undergone some building updates including new spill-friendly flooring and an upgraded security system to ensure that the Jewish students who access the space are both comfortable and safe no matter when they are at Hillel. Students attended High Holiday services and home hos-

pitality in the broader Memphis Jewish community, building the key connections to our greater Jewish community that will surely carry on after they graduate. We also host weekly bagel brunches and enjoyed a gorgeous Shabbat dinner in the Sukkah during Sukkot.

Jewish life is thriving at the University of Memphis, and the growth in student engagement will only continue over the course of this school year. I look forward to my continued work on campus, partnering with Hillel Student President Will Cohen, and getting to know students over one cup of coffee or bagel at a time. 🌟



Law School CONTINUED FROM FRONT

to my house for holiday meals or synagogue services. Now, being so far away from home, I realize how hard it is to adapt to a new environment while still observing the Jewish holidays and traditions. Most importantly, JLSA allows Jewish law students to socialize with each other and connect to other Jewish young professionals from the community.

I recognize that the Jewish community in Memphis is small and tightly knit, so giving Jewish law students a vehicle to become more involved and more comfortable during their law school experience is vital in so many ways. We look forward to what the future of JLSA brings and JLSA's partnership with Hillels of Memphis, and welcome any and all ideas, suggestions, or events that JLSA can get involved with. 🌟



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