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# NEWS

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## **National Survey of American Jewish College Students Shows High Rate of Anti-Semitism on Campuses**

*HARTFORD, Conn., February 23, 2015* – More than half of 1,157 self-identified Jewish students at 55 campuses nationwide who took part in an online survey reported having been subjected to or having witnessed anti-Semitism on their campuses, according to a new report issued jointly by Trinity College (Hartford, Connecticut) and the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law (Washington, D.C.).

[The National Demographic Survey of American Jewish College Students](#), which covered a variety of topics, was conducted in spring 2014 by a research team from Trinity College. Of the 1,157 students in the sample, 54 percent reported instances of anti-Semitism on campus during the first six months of the 2013-2014 academic year. The data provide a snapshot of the types, context, and location of anti-Semitism as experienced by a large national sample of Jewish students at university and four-year college campuses.

The rates of victimization for students with different social characteristics – such as type of campus, year of study, academic major, demographics, religiosity, or politics – ranged from a low of 44 percent to a high of 73 percent. There was only a slight variation in the rates across the regions of the United States, strongly suggesting that anti-Semitism on campus is a nationwide problem.

The Trinity College researchers who led the team conducting the survey were Barry Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, public policy and law professors and the authors of other well-known national social surveys, including the American Religion Identification Survey (ARIS) series. Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law (LDB) President Kenneth L. Marcus, former head of the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights and author of a forthcoming volume on *The Definition of Anti-Semitism* (Oxford University Press, 2015), provided recommendations on the report.

Kosmin and Keysar pointed out that, historically, the most likely targets of anti-Semitism in the general population have been Orthodox Jewish males, who tend to be easily identified by perpetrators. However, this tendency does not seem to be the case on college campuses. Conservative and Reform Jewish students are more likely than Orthodox students to report being victims. Membership in a Jewish campus organization also raises the likelihood of a student reporting anti-Semitism.

According to Kosmin, “The patterns and high rates of anti-Semitism that were reported were surprising. Rather than being localized to a few campuses or restricted to politically active or religious students, this problem is widespread. Jewish students are subjected to both traditional prejudice and the new political anti-Semitism.”

(more)

Another finding was that female students were more likely than males to report anti-Semitism. “Jewish women seem to feel more vulnerable on campus, with 59 percent of female students versus 51 percent of males telling us that they have personally witnessed or experienced anti-Semitism,” said Keysar. “This gender gap is alarming and needs to be further explored,” she added.

Kosmin and Keysar observed that while anti-Semitism is often linked to anti-Zionism, this survey was undertaken in the spring of 2014, before the summer 2014 conflict in Gaza that led to a worldwide flare-up in anti-Semitism.

Numbers of participating students voiced concern that their experiences of anti-Semitism made for an uncomfortable campus climate. In his foreword for the report, Marcus wrote, “We hear frequently from college students who find that their experiences of anti-Semitism are not taken seriously. A decade ago, Jewish college students spoke of the vindication that they felt when the U.S. Civil Rights Commission gave voice to their concerns,” added Marcus, who, as then-staff director, drafted the Commission’s announcement that campus anti-Semitism had become a “serious problem” at many universities around the country. “This report should provide a similar vindication, since it indicates that the scope of this problem is greater than most observers had realized.”

The report includes recommendations for colleges, universities, and Jewish community organizations to remedy this situation. A follow-up study could examine incidents of anti-Semitism in more detail with the aim of better understanding the problem and enhancing tolerance on U.S. campuses.

“Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, every federally funded institution of higher learning has an obligation to ensure equal educational opportunity for its students. Kosmin and Keysar’s eye-opening findings should awaken authorities to the need to address campus anti-Semitism much more aggressively, comprehensively, and effectively than they are now doing. Moreover, this report should guide more thoughtful, research-based responses to this problem,” recommended Marcus.

The National Demographic Survey of American Jewish College Students and the 2014 Anti-Semitism Report were supported by funding grants from the Pears Foundation, U.K.; Posen Foundation, Switzerland; Zachs Foundation and Mendelson Foundation, Connecticut; and the Jim Joseph Foundation, The Mark Bloome Fund of the Tides Foundation, and the Helen Diller Family Foundation, California.

Read the Anti-Semitism Report [here](#). **Contact Barry Kosmin at [barry.kosmin@trincoll.edu](mailto:barry.kosmin@trincoll.edu) or (860) 297-2388 and Ariela Keysar at [ariela.keysar@trincoll.edu](mailto:ariela.keysar@trincoll.edu) or (201) 784-5724.**

*Founded in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1823, Trinity College ([www.trincoll.edu](http://www.trincoll.edu)) is an independent, nonsectarian liberal arts college with more than 2,200 students from 44 states and 62 countries. It is home to the eighth-oldest chapter of Phi Beta Kappa in the United States. The faculty and alumni include recipients of the Pulitzer Prize, the MacArthur award, Guggenheims, Rockefellers and other national academic awards. Trinity students integrate meaningful academic and leadership experience at all levels on the College’s celebrated campus, in the capital city of Hartford, and in communities all over the world.*

*The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law (LDB) is a non-profit organization designed to protect the civil and human rights of the Jewish people, and promote justice for all. Specifically, LDB combats anti-Semitism on college and university campuses through legal advocacy, public policy education and research. It is not affiliated with the Massachusetts University, the Kentucky law school, or any of the other institutions that share the name and honor the memory of the late U.S. Supreme Court justice.*