



For Immediate Release

September 3, 2024

Media Contact

alex@tuskstrategies.com

Jewish Organizations Reach Historic Agreement with University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign to Protect Jewish Students

The agreement represents one of the most detailed commitments ever made by a major American university to Jewish college students

CHICAGO, Illinois- After several years of negotiations, Hillel International, Illini Hillel, and the Jewish United Fund Chicago (JUF) are pleased [to announce an agreement](#) with the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) that expresses our shared goal of assuring a safe and welcoming environment for Jewish students and specific actions the university will take towards that goal. The agreement with the Jewish community organizations comes in parallel with the announcement today of a [Resolution Agreement](#) issued by the US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in response to a Title VI complaint filed in 2020 by the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law and Arnold & Porter on behalf of UIUC Jewish students who experienced antisemitism on UIUC's campus.

"I am thankful for the partnership with Hillel, and the Jewish United Federation, over the past several years to combat antisemitism on our campus," said **University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Chancellor Robert Jones**. "We are deeply committed to implementing the Mutual Understandings we are announcing today and to working together to provide a safe and supportive educational environment for our entire Jewish student community and for all students at Illinois."

The historic agreement reached today with the Jewish community organizations re-affirms the University's commitment to the principles set out in its November 2020 [joint statement on antisemitism](#) and contains specific commitments for the safety and inclusion of Jewish students in Urbana-Champaign that go well beyond the terms of the OCR settlement. The agreement includes a declaration from UIUC that the protection offered by the University's nondiscrimination policy extends to harassment or discrimination of Jewish students, including harassment or discrimination based on Jewish students' connections to Israel and Zionism. For

the first time, the University provides detailed examples of discrimination and harassment across protected classes as part of its Nondiscrimination Policy.

These examples specifically include antisemitic discrimination and/or harassment that may violate University policies such as:

- Verbal abuse or use of antisemitic slurs or stereotypes directed at an individual.
- Blaming a student for actions of other individuals of their actual or perceived shared identity, or for policies of a particular country or region that the student is actually or perceived to be from (e.g. blaming a Jewish student for Israel's policies).
- Physical assault, physical force, physical obstruction of an individual's path, intimidation, or stalking.
- Telephonic or social media display of derogatory, demeaning, offensive, or hostile messages or materials.
- Making statements orally or on social media that call for the destruction of a protected classification in whole or in part, whether explicitly or by implication.

Additionally, the University will publish a summary report of bias incidents every month, commit to mandatory antisemitism trainings for administration and students, and hire an individual with demonstrated expertise in campus antisemitism to enhance compliance and recommend changes to University practices and policies.

"Hillel's century-long commitment to the safety of Jewish college students has been demonstrated again by our close collaboration with JUF and other local Jewish organizations to achieve this landmark agreement at the University of Illinois," said **Adam Lehman, Hillel International President and CEO**. "UIUC has agreed to reform its policies and procedures in a pathbreaking manner that can serve as a model for higher education institutions across the country. These critical commitments will make campus safer and more welcoming for Jewish students, and for all students in Urbana-Champaign."

"This agreement will protect Jewish students—both now and in the future—and JUF is proud to have played a role in making it happen," said **Jewish United Fund of Chicago President, Lonnie Nasatir**. "JUF is committed to ensuring that every member of our community can proudly and safely participate in Jewish life, and nowhere is that more important today than on college and university campuses. This agreement is a major step in helping to ensure that every Jewish student at UIUC will feel safe in confidently expressing their Jewish identities, including their Zionism, and participating freely in the Jewish community on campus," Nasatir said. "Jewish United Fund of Chicago and our Illini Hillel will be with them every step of the way."

"We are proud of our campus community for this rejection of antisemitism and to UIUC leadership for their renewed commitment to the safety and security of Jewish students and their values," said **Erez Cohen, Executive Director at Illini Hillel**. "We remain steadfast in our continued commitment to work alongside UIUC during the implementation of their new policies and to help reaffirm their promise to protect the rights of Jewish students on campus."

“The Brandeis Center is gratified that UIUC’s administration began engaging in meaningful discussions with the Jewish community about how to address anti-Semitism on campus after we filed our OCR complaint years ago,” said **Alyza D. Lewin, president of the Brandeis Center**. “Today, as part of this historic agreement, UIUC reaffirmed its commitment to protect all students, including Jewish students for whom Zionism is an integral component of their Jewish identity, from harassment and discrimination. The agreement marks a significant milestone, and will, when implemented, improve the campus climate for Jewish students.”

###

About Hillel International

For over 100 years, the Hillel movement has been uniquely focused on serving all Jewish students, no matter who they are or how they express their Judaism. Today, Hillel is the largest Jewish campus organization in the world, serving more than 180,000 Jewish students each year at 850+ colleges and universities around the world.

About Illini Hillel

Hillel, the foundation for Jewish campus life at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, aims to create a pluralistic environment that both welcomes and engages as many students as possible to explore and celebrate Judaism. The University of Illinois’ Jewish life is incredibly diverse. With nearly 3,000 Jewish students on campus, there is a tremendous breadth of interests and opportunities that can be pursued through Hillel.

About Jewish United Fund Chicago

Jewish United Fund is one of the largest humanitarian organizations in the country. Rooted in the belief in collective action and collective responsibility, JUF provides life-saving services and life-enriching experiences where they are needed most, serving as a lifeline to 500,000 Chicagoans of all faiths and millions of Jews in Israel and across the globe. JUF takes great pride in this, and in the organization’s unique ability to help people—to provide essential health and human services and vital points of community and connection.

About the The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law

The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law is an independent, unaffiliated, nonprofit corporation established to advance the civil and human rights of the Jewish people and promote justice for all. LDB engages in research, and legal advocacy to combat the resurgence of anti-Semitism on college and university campuses, in the workplace, and elsewhere. It empowers students by training them to understand their legal rights and educates administrators and employers on best practices to combat racism and anti-Semitism.