



# Houston Hillel

Strategic Plan

2022-2024

# History

Jewish life for Houston's college students began in 1915 with the establishment of Rice University's Menorah Society. The October 1916 issue of the Rice Thresher observes, "Judging from the fact that the membership is twice as large as it has previously been, a most successful year is promised, toward which every member is ready to strive; an effort which can culminate in nothing less than success."

Similar to changes at many college campuses, in 1940 Rice University's Menorah Society transitioned into a B'nai B'rith Hillel Counselorship with Rabbi Robert Kahn of Congregation Beth Israel as its first director.

Hillel began at the University of Houston in 1946 and grew tremendously during the post-war years. In the late 1950s the Houston Jewish community contributed toward the construction of the A.D. Bruce Religion Center, and upon its completion in 1961 Houston Hillel established an office and student lounge on the University of Houston campus.

Hillel foundations at Rice University and the University of Houston formally united in August 1975. In 1979 Rabbi Shaul Osadchey arrived as Houston Hillel's first full-time executive director.

Houston Hillel purchased its facility near Rice University in 1997. Today the A.D. Bruce Religion Center facility serves as a student lounge, while Houston Hillel's building near Rice hosts diverse student groups and is often utilized by the Houston Jewish community as a meeting facility.

More than twenty-five years ago Houston Hillel's work with graduate students expanded to include young professionals. "Jewston" continues as Houston's only engagement opportunity for Jewish twentysomethings that includes rabbinical support and professional staff solely dedicated and specifically trained to work with this important cohort. No other organization in the area provides similar programs or services to Jewish graduate students and young professionals.

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON HILLEL SOCIETY BUDGET

1)	Actual amount spent in 1953	\$ 440.49
2)	Actual amount spent in 1954	357.88
3)	Actual amount spent in 1955 ( January through October)	381.28
4)	Estimate of expenditures for November and December:	
	<u>November:</u>	
	Post Cards	\$ 5.00
	National Dues	5.86
	Religious Group Council dues	4.50
	Culturals	6.75
	<u>December:</u>	
	Socials	7.50
	TOTAL OF TWO MONTHS	\$ 29.61
5)	Budget request for 1956	
	Postage and Express	\$ 30.00
	Stationery and Office Supplies	30.00
	Religious and Interfaith	60.00
	Cultural	125.00
	Social	150.00
	Publicity, Publications, Public Relations	30.00
	Leadership Institutions	75.00
	TOTAL REQUESTED	\$ 500.00
6)	We have already recieved \$75.00 on this request	

University of Houston Hillel Society 1956 Budget

# Houston Hillel

## Mission

Houston Hillel enriches the lives of Jewish undergraduates, graduate students and young professionals so that they may enrich the Houston Jewish community, the Jewish people and the world.

## Vision

We envision a world where every undergraduate student, graduate student and young professional is inspired to make an enduring commitment to Jewish life, learning and Israel.

Houston Hillel offers Jewish college students and young professionals an inclusive, pluralistic and egalitarian environment in which they connect to Jewish life, learning and Israel. We facilitate our participants' Jewish journeys by connecting them socially, culturally, and spiritually to Judaism and each other.

Houston Hillel also connects young Jewish adults with the larger Houston Jewish community. Not only do our participants engage with the community through tikkun olam, but also, Houston Hillel's Board of Directors provides an entry point for our alumni to become Jewish community leaders.

### Pluralistic

- Welcomes everyone, and eliminates barriers to participation through free events that never require an RSVP.
- Embraces LGBTQ students and those from interfaith backgrounds.

### Far-reaching

- Engages students on more than a dozen campuses, including medical and law schools, some as far as ninety miles away.
- Provides an open and warm environment in which participants take a Jewish journey by connecting socially, culturally, and spiritually to Judaism and each other.

### Transformative

- Prepares students for entry into the wider world with a strong, deeply rooted Jewish identity, and commitment to social justice and Israel.
- Ensures that young Jewish adults maintain their connection to Judaism and the Jewish community during college and young professional life.

### Nurturing

- Creates a Jewish family and network for undergraduate and graduate students.
- Enjoys a dedicated staff specifically trained to engage with students and young professionals.

# Overview

## Excellence Accelerator

In 2016 Hillel International chose Houston Hillel as a participant in the Excellence Accelerator, an eighteen month intensive process that focused on capacity and operational excellence in four key areas: lay leadership and governance, development, fiscal health, and measurement and data. The Excellence Accelerator's goal was to position Houston Hillel to raise and effectively utilize larger amounts of capital in order to achieve excellence - to have a measurable impact on the majority of Jewish students on campus and to be able to sustain this work over the long term.

As a result of Houston Hillel's participation in the Excellence Accelerator, our organization achieved the following outcomes.

### Lay Leadership and Governance

1. Establishment of functioning committees
2. Restructuring of the board
3. Focus on succession

### Development

1. Standardization of donor data and consistent donor management
2. Regular wealth screening and creation of prospect lists
3. Creation and implementation of detailed development and stewardship plans
4. Creation of a Case Statement for supporting Houston Hillel

### Fiscal Health

1. Review of financial controls
2. Examination of insurance coverage and regulatory compliance
3. Implementation of cash flow and budgetary controls

### Measurement and Data

1. Student tracking
2. Methods for sharing data and data interpretation with key stakeholders

The Excellence Accelerator helped Houston Hillel's leadership position the organization to achieve fiscal security and operational excellence.



# Overview

## **An Overview of the Strategic Planning Process**

The creation of Houston Hillel's first strategic plan was the final component of the Excellence Accelerator.

The Strategic Planning Committee began its work in January, 2018, and produced a 2019-2022 Strategic Plan that included three fundamental goals, each with multiple initiatives and performance indicators to measure those initiatives:

**Goal 1: Achieve Excellence in Financial Resource Development and Sustainability**

**Goal 2: Achieve Excellence in Governance and Board Development**

**Goal 3: Achieve Excellence in Jewish Student and Young Professional Life and Programming**

After more than a year of using the Strategic Plan as a tool for measuring Houston Hillel's progress, Houston Hillel's leadership learned that some aspects of the Strategic Plan included unrealistic measures, and that the Strategic Plan should be treated as a living document rather than purely as a set of quantitative goals.

At its November 1, 2021 meeting, Houston Hillel's Board of Directors agreed that the creation of Houston Hillel's next three-year Strategic Plan would include modifications to the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan that would reflect lessons learned during the past few years. The new Strategic Plan would also include an additional area focusing on evaluation of Houston Hillel's facility on Bissonnet.

Houston Hillel's Board of Directors directed Rabbi Kenny Weiss to draft the new Strategic Plan. The Board of Directors also empowered Houston Hillel's Executive Committee to review and approve the new Strategic Plan.



# Goal 1 - Achieve Excellence in Financial Resource Development and Sustainability

## Initiative

Encourage Jewston participants to engage with Houston Hillel as donors.

### Performance Indicator

1. Engage young adults in Houston Hillel's 1812 Campaign (\$18/month for 12 months), remaining sensitive to how solicitation of Jewston participants can reduce participation, and is contrary to Houston Hillel's goal of removing barriers to participation.
2. Transition those Jewston participants who turn 30 to become Houston Hillel donors.

## Initiative

Annually review marketing and development initiatives

### Performance Indicators

1. Adopt marketing and development plans annually.
2. Incorporate planned giving and endowment donations in future development plans.

## Initiative

Monitor donor retention rates

### Performance Indicator

1. Determine year-to-year donor retention rates each quarter and at the end of each fiscal year, striving for 3% increases each year.
2. Examine year-to-year variances and work to analyze factors that create positive or negative variances.

## Initiative

Cultivate new donors

### Performance Indicator

Calculate quarterly and annual year-over-year donor growth and strive for 5% increases each year.

## Initiative

Evaluate the Houston Hillel facility

### Performance Indicator

1. Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of current condition and future maintenance needs.
2. Develop, consider and evaluate available options, including renovation, replacement, and relocation.
3. Assess the options with respect to future fundraising, long-range vision, and community response.
4. Propose a recommendation to the Board for evaluation at its May, 2022 meeting.



## Goal 2 - Achieve Excellence in Governance and Board Responsibility

### Initiative

Monitor board participation in donating to Houston Hillel

#### Performance Indicators

1. 100% board participation annually
2. Determine the percentage of board members who give more than the minimum gift, and strive for an annual increase of the percentage of board members who give more than the minimum gift.

### Initiative

Monitor staff participation in donating to Houston Hillel

#### Performance Indicator

100% staff participation annually.

### Initiative

Foster Governance Committee's work throughout the year with the goal of finding prospective board members with wealth, wisdom and/or work, while striving to build and maintain a board of directors that reflects the diversity of the Jewish community.

#### Performance Indicator

1. Be mindful of taking time at each board meeting to consider prospective board members and potential lay leaders.
2. Encourage board members to bring prospective board members or lay leaders to events or to a board meeting.

### Initiative

Increase board member participation in development

#### Performance Indicator

1. Involve 100% of board members in donor stewardship and prospecting.
2. Involve a segment of board members in donor solicitation.



## Goal 3 - Achieve Excellence in Jewish Student and Young Professional Life and Programming

### Initiative

Hire an additional undergraduate engagement professional to provide for better personalization of student relationships, to more consistently maintain a physical presence at UH and Rice, and to reach out to underserved campuses.

#### Performance Indicators

1. Strive to hire an additional undergraduate engagement professional.
2. Strive to increase engagement breadth and depth by 4% each year.
3. Determine year to year breadth (one or more interactions) and depth (six or more interactions) each month and at the end of each fiscal year, and evaluate year to year variances.
4. Determine those factors that create positive or negative variances (such as Covid) which are not likely to be influenced by engagement efforts.

### Initiative

Offer diverse and on-going programs as well as high-impact programming.

#### Performance Indicator

Survey participants annually with regard to programming. Analyze the survey and use data to plan future programming.

### Initiative

Increase LGBTQ inclusion and equality.

#### Performance Indicators

1. Create an LGBTQ space for Houston's Jewish twenty and thirtysomethings.
2. Work with the Keshet Leadership Program to achieve organizational LGBTQ inclusion and equality.

