

Brandeis University

Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies

**Israel Face to Face:
Evaluation of the Israel Fellows Program**

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for Modern Jewish Studies

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Executive Summary

The Israel Fellows Program (IFP), a collaboration of Hillel International: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life (Hillel) and the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), was piloted on six campuses in 2003. Since then, it has grown to 75 Fellows serving almost 100 campuses throughout North America. The goal of IFP is to promote engagement with Israel through the placement of young adult Fellows on college campuses. The Fellows foster Israel engagement in two ways: (1) by conveying an authentic narrative of Israeli culture and society to students through one-on-one encounters; and (2) by working with students to transmit the appreciation of Israel and its people through their peer networks. Hillel and JAFI contracted with the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) to evaluate the IFP. The first phase of the research focused on program implementation within the context of the IFP's theory of change (Chertok & Koren, 2014). This final report presents findings in each of the following areas:

- The extent of the Fellows' penetration on campus, particularly beyond the most affiliated and Jewishly engaged students,
- The relationship between students' interactions with Fellows and students' attitudes and behaviors toward Israel, and
- The differences distinguishing campuses with Fellows from those without a Fellow.

Methodology

CMJS administered an online survey in the 2016 spring semester to Jewish undergraduates from 44 campuses in the United States: 29 had Fellows in 2015-16 and the remaining 15 did not. The sample was drawn from the Birthright Israel application

database and included students who went on the trip and individuals who applied but did not participate. The survey asked students about their participation in Jewish organizations and Israel-related activities and their connection and attitudes toward Israel. Students were also asked whether their campus had a Fellow, and, if so, whether they had ever interacted with the Fellow. The survey had a 23% response rate yielding more than 4,300 responses.

Findings

Fellows reach a substantial and diverse proportion of the Jewish population on campus. Almost one-third (29%) of all students on IFP campuses reported that they had interacted with a Fellow during the 2015-16 academic year. Students from across the denominational spectrum reported interacting with a Fellow, including more than one-fifth of students who described themselves as secular, culturally Jewish, or "just Jewish"—groups that might be expected to be the most difficult to reach. Fellows were in contact with very similar portions of students with no formal Jewish education, Sunday school, and Hebrew school backgrounds. Although students with two Jewish parents were significantly more likely to report interacting with a Fellow, almost one quarter (23%) of students raised by intermarried parents reported contact with a Fellow. Fellows also reached substantial numbers of students coming from Hebrew and Russian-speaking homes.

Interaction with a Fellow also appears to have an impact on a number of different measures.

As compared with students who did not have contact with a Fellow, a significantly greater percentage of students who interacted with a Fellow felt connected to Israel, were interested in studying in Israel, were more likely to be involved in multiple Israel-related activities on campus, and received more news about Israel through social media. Feelings of connection to Israel were not only more prevalent among those students who had contact with a Fellow, but were stronger as well.

The findings also suggest that the IFP strategy of using students to extend the influence of Fellows has had some successes. Jewish students on campuses with Fellows, compared to those without Fellows, attended more Israel-related events and demonstrated greater awareness of Israel groups on campus. Despite the presence of other Israel-related advocacy groups, there is a clear association between high rates of student participation in Israel-related activities and campuses that host a Fellow.

At the same time, we could find no significant association between campuses with a Fellow and student use of social media to track news of Israel or student feeling of connection to Israel. We hypothesize that the authenticity of Fellows' personal stories of Israel are not easily transferable through the social networks of students. It is possible that more can be done to communicate the compelling nature of the Fellows' personal narratives to students with whom they will not have direct contact, for example, through social media or through the use of Israeli or American-Israeli students as additional personal ambassadors.

Valued as an important resource by Hillel staff, the IFP has demonstrated notable successes in reaching Jewish students and increasing their engagement with Israel. At the same time, the program's reach can be extended further, in particular beyond those with whom the Fellows directly interact.

Introduction

Building the relationship between Jewish young adults and Israel has become an important communal priority. The last decade was marked by the dramatic expansion of Israel experience programs for undergraduates and the increased availability of Israel groups, programs, and activities on college campuses (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016). Birthright Israel, MASA, and other travel programs have brought hundreds of thousands of young adults to Israel. Campus Hillels and a host of other organizations have expanded their programmatic offerings related to Israel. At the same time, there is little agreement on what should comprise the goals, methods, and content of Israel education for young adults (Horowitz, 2012; Zakai, 2014). Commentators and organizations concerned with engaging this population have variously focused on establishing a baseline of factual knowledge regarding Israel, increasing understanding of the full complexity of the state of Israel and Israeli society (Kopelowitz & Grant, 2012), or most recently creating a sense of “enchantment with Israel” (Valdary, 2016).

The Israel Fellows Program (IFP), a collaboration of Hillel International: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life (Hillel) and the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), developed as a new strategy for enhancing multiple aspects of Israel engagement on college campuses. The IFP brings Israeli young adults ages 24-30, graduates of the IDF and Israeli universities, to North American college campuses in order to engage students in face-to-face conversations about Israel and its people. The presence of an Israel Fellow (Fellow) is intended to make Israel real, personal, and immediate for undergraduates. Fellows, like other *shlichim* (emissaries) are

seen as a “living link to Israel” (Schenker, 1966, p. 105).

The IFP was launched as a pilot program in September 2003 on six American campuses: Rutgers University, University of Maryland, University of Florida, University of Texas, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and University of California Davis. Since then, the program has grown steadily in the number of Fellows and campuses served. During the 2015-16 academic year, approximately 75 Fellows served almost 100 campuses in North America, including large state universities (University of Michigan, Penn State University, and University of Wisconsin) and private universities (Johns Hopkins, Washington University, and Yale) of all sizes. Fellows at regional Hillels (North Carolina Hillel and San Francisco Hillel) served multiple campuses.

From the start, JAFI and Hillel envisioned the IFP as a replicable model for promoting Israel engagement on diverse college campuses. The organizations invited the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) to conduct a multi-phase study of the program’s implementation and impact. The first phase of the study, already completed, focused on implementation and explored the experiences of current Fellows, Hillel professionals, and students on eight single-campus and two metro-level Hillels, representing the full spectrum of IFP campuses (Chertok & Koren, 2014). The findings of that study stressed the importance of authentic person-to-person encounters with Fellows and emphasized that that type of personal contact could not be replicated with the use of American staff, even those with extensive ties

to Israel. In summer 2014 an online survey was conducted with all full-time Hillel Executive Directors on American campuses. The findings of that survey indicated that Hillel executives viewed their Fellows as central players in all aspects of programming related to Israel, in driving the Birthright Israel agenda, and in garnering support from diverse elements of the campus in the face of anti-Israel activity.

The present report presents the findings of the final phase of the CMJS study of the IFP. The study explores the extent of the reach of Fellows on campuses and considers the ways in which direct contact with a Fellow, or the presence of one on campus, might be associated with students' positive attitudes and behaviors related to Israel.

Research Strategy

The present report is based on the findings of a survey of Jewish undergraduates at 46 colleges and universities in the United States. The schools selected for this study were not a random sample of American universities but were purposely sampled on the basis of a number of characteristics including: estimated size of the Jewish student body; diversity with respect to geography, public/private status, selectivity; and prior evidence of moderate to high levels of anti-Israel hostility or antisemitism.

Of the schools selected for study, 29 had a Fellow during the 2015-16 academic year. Two of the schools included in the survey were excluded from analysis since they had a Fellow for only one semester of the 2015-16 year. The remaining 15 schools did not have a Fellow during the 2015-16 academic year.

The survey was administered online and the invitation was sent to all US applicants to Birthright Israel¹ who, based on the information they provided at the time of their application, were expected to be undergraduates at one of the selected universities in 2015-16. The sample included individuals who went on the trip and individuals who applied but did not participate. The complete survey is presented in the Technical Appendices. Overall, 19,516 students were invited to participate in the survey. Respondents were given a \$5 Amazon.com gift card upon completion of the survey. Email invitations to participate in the survey were initially sent on March 14, 2016 and were followed by four reminders. The survey was closed on April 25, 2016. The overall response rate (AAPOR RR2) was 22.5% with a total of 4,010 completed and 350 partial responses.

¹ Birthright Israel is a free, 10-day trip to Israel for Jewish young adults ages 18 to 26 that aims to strengthen Jewish identity, Jewish peoplehood and connection to Israel among Jews around the world (Saxe & Chazan, 2008).

Findings

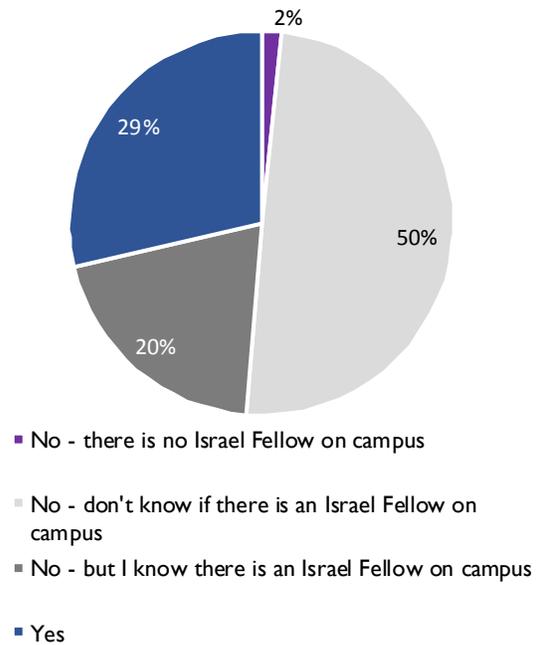
Who Does and Does Not Interact with Fellows?

Fundamental to the theory of change of the IFP is the belief that developing a relationship with a Fellow is central to North American undergraduates engaging more closely with Israel. On IFP campuses, it is expected that the Fellow will embody Israel for the students and “normalize” discourse on Israel by moving the conversation beyond the conflict and headlines and toward a fuller appreciation of contemporary Israeli society. Fellows use their life stories and personal perspectives to convey authenticity and expose students to a richer understanding of Israel and Israeli society.

Reflecting the importance of personal contact in the work of Fellows, we start with an exploration of their reach on their respective campuses and the characteristics of undergraduates with whom they have and have not had contact. This analysis focuses on the survey responses of undergraduates attending schools that had a Fellow during the 2015-16 academic year.

As shown in Figure 1, almost one-third (29%) of Jewish students reported having interacted with the Fellow on their campus and an additional 20% were aware of the Fellow but had not interacted with him/her. Other students either did not know if a Fellow was present on their campus (50%) or were certain one was not (2%). Reaching 29% of students is a substantial accomplishment especially when considering the number of direct, one-on-one contacts that this portion represents. For example, at a large Midwestern

Figure 1: Student interaction with and awareness of Fellows²



school in the sample, 29% represents over 1,000 students having contact with a Fellow. At a mid-size southern university, the share may represent almost 500 students and at a private university on the east coast, 1,800 students.³

It is also important to note that in 2015-16 Fellows reached the full diversity of Jewish students on campus. The same portion (29%) of female and male undergraduates reported contact with a Fellow. In addition, students from across the denominational spectrum reported interacting with a Fellow, including more than one-fifth of students who described themselves as “just Jewish” (22%) or secular (28%), individuals that one might

² In this and following figures, numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding.

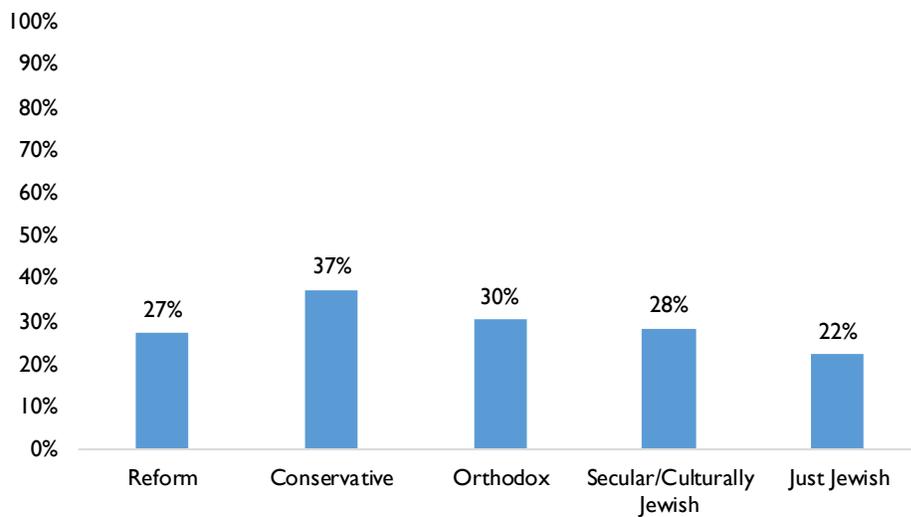
³ These estimates are based on Hillel estimates of Jewish students on campus.

expect to be more difficult to reach (Figure 2). Although a significantly higher portion of students who identified as Conservative (37%) were in contact with their campus Fellow, substantial portions of students who identified as Orthodox (30%) and Reform (27%) also reported interactions with a Fellow.

In 2015-16 Fellows also reached students with a variety of Jewish educational backgrounds,

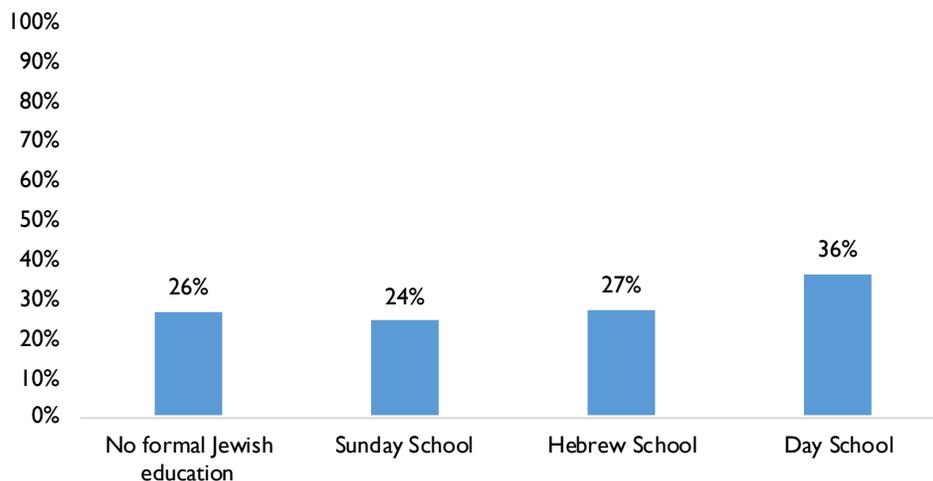
including more than one-quarter (26%) of those who received no formal Jewish education—again, a group of students who would be expected to be most difficult to reach (Figure 3). At the same time, students with a day school education were significantly more likely to be reached by Fellows, as compared with students who had only a Sunday school education.

Figure 2: Interaction with Fellow by denomination



($p < .001$)

Figure 3: Interaction with Fellow by most intense form of Jewish education



($p < .001$)

According to the Pew Research Center’s *Portrait of American Jewry* (2013), young adults raised by intermarried parents represent half of their generational cohort of Jews. The current analysis compared the rates of contact with Fellows for students raised by one or two Jewish parents (Figure 4). One would anticipate greater reach among students with two Jewish parents, and, indeed, the percentage of this group who had contact with a Fellow (31%), was significantly higher than that among students with only one Jewish parent. Nonetheless, almost one quarter (23%) of students raised by intermarried parents reported contact with a Fellow.

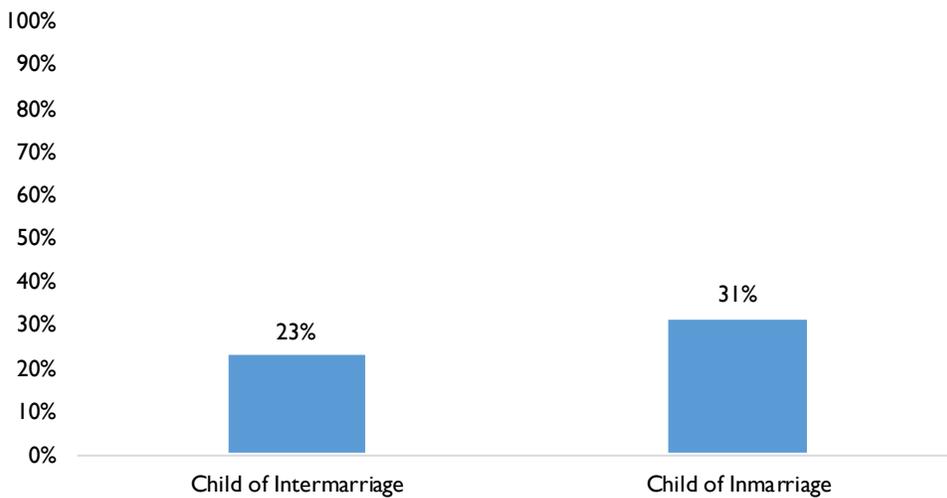
Fellows appear to have reached a significantly larger portion of students who were raised in Hebrew-speaking homes (Figure 5). Over half (57%) of students who said that Hebrew was spoken in their childhood homes reported contact with a Fellow, as compared with 27% of students where this was not the case. Among students who came from homes where Russian was spoken, 31% had spoken

to a Fellow. This percentage was not significantly different from the rate of contact for students from non-Russian speaking households.

Students who reported being involved in Hillel were much more likely to be in contact with a Fellow (Figure 6), which is to be expected given the physical placement of Fellows within Hillel buildings/offices. Most students who reported being “very much involved” with Hillel (72%) also indicated that they had contact with a Fellow. However, even among students who reported no involvement in Hillel, almost one tenth (9%) indicated having had contact with a Fellow.

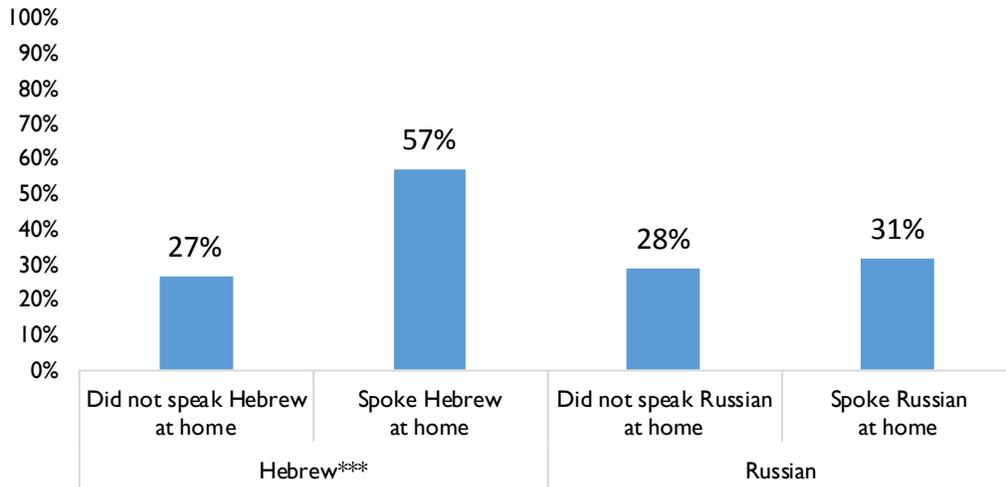
Fellows seem to have connected with a substantial number and diverse group of students from varying denominational, educational, and family backgrounds. The data indicate that Fellows were more likely to be in contact with students with greater childhood/young adult Jewish involvement —those with denomination affiliations, with more Jewish education, and more participation in Hillel.

Figure 4: Interaction with Fellow by parental marriage type



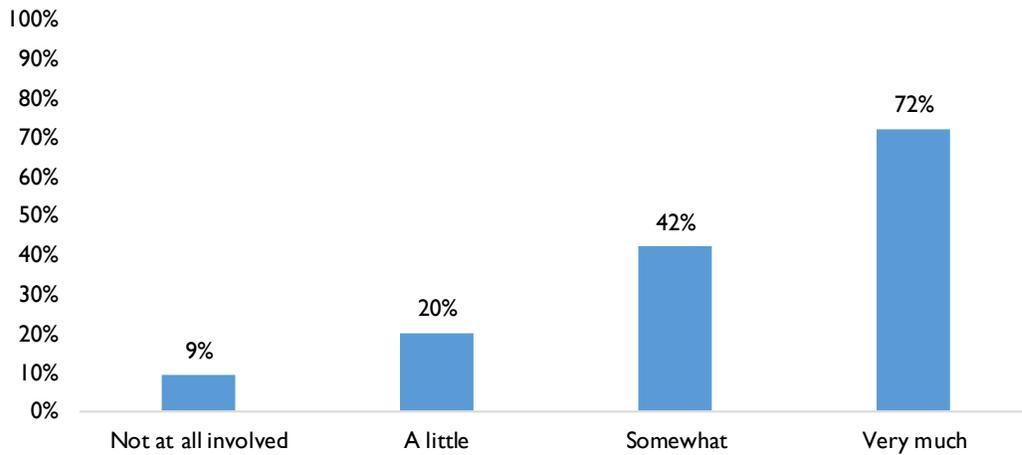
(p<.001)

Figure 5: Interaction with Fellow by language spoken in home



***($p < .001$)

Figure 6: Interaction with Fellow by Hillel involvement



In addition, students from Hebrew-speaking households had more contact with Fellows than did those from English-speaking households. These differences are to be expected. The unique success of the IFP may be that Fellows also appear to have had considerable reach into undergraduate populations that are less likely to be engaged in campus Jewish life, including those with little or no Jewish educational background, no denominational affiliation, and those raised in intermarried homes. Even though only a small number of 2015-16 Fellows came from Russian-speaking homes, they succeeded in reaching a substantial portion of this subgroup of Jewish undergraduates.

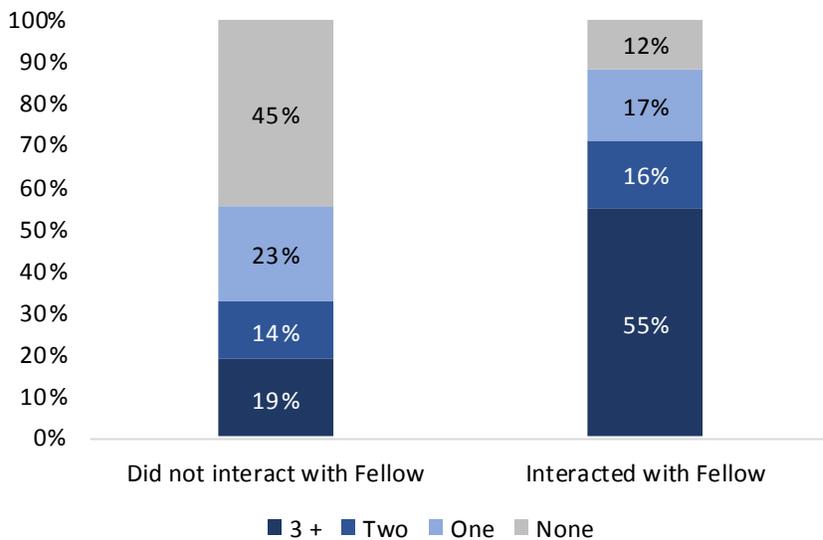
What Forms of Israel Engagement are Associated with Contact with Fellows?

In this section we consider the connection between student contact with Fellows and a variety of Israel engagement activities and

attitudes. Comparisons are drawn between attitudes and behaviors of students who did and did not report interacting with their campus Fellow during the 2015-16 academic year.

The survey asked about six different types of Israel-related activities which students might have attended over the course of the 2015-16 academic year. These included celebrations and social gatherings, cultural events, lectures, fundraisers for Israeli causes, rallies and demonstrations in support of Israel, and Hebrew language groups. Students were also given the option of indicating participation in another form of Israel-related activity. A total of the number of types of events attended was computed for each student. As shown in Figure 7, over half (55%), of students who interacted with a Fellow also participated in three or more activities, compared to 19% of undergraduates who did not have contact with a Fellow. Alternatively, only 12% of those

Figure 7: Participation in Israel activities by interaction with Fellow



who interacted with a Fellow participated in no Israel-related events, compared to 45% of those who did not have contact with a Fellow.

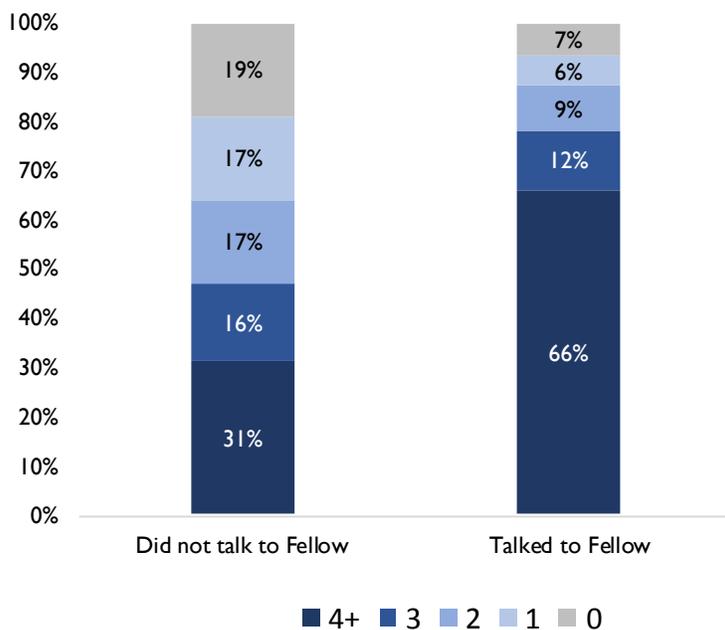
The survey also asked about knowledge of nine Israel-related groups that are active on college campuses. These groups included the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA), Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), J Street, TAMID, Stand With Us, the Alternative Information Center (AIC), and Campus Watch/Middle East Forum. A score for each student was computed by counting the number of groups they reported recognizing. As shown in Figure 8, students who interacted with a Fellow were much more likely to have heard of multiple groups compared to those who did not have contact with a Fellow. Two-thirds (66%) of undergraduates who had contact with a Fellow reported knowing of four or more groups, more than double the

portion (31%) of students who did not interact with a Fellow.

Students often rely on social media as their preferred method for tracking news about topics of interest. The survey asked how often during the past month students' Facebook, Twitter, or other social media feeds included stories about Israel. This method is one way of gauging the importance of following news about Israel. Contact with a Fellow was significantly associated with viewing stories about Israel (Figure 9). Sixty-one percent of students who had contact with a Fellow also reported that their social media "often" included stories about Israel as compared with 44% of students who did not interact with a Fellow.

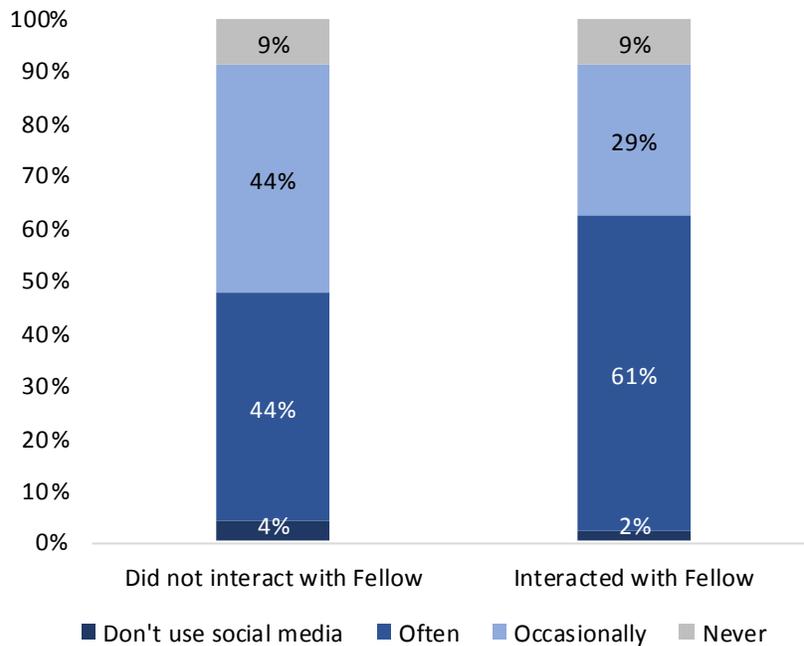
Study abroad has become a common method for students to explore their interests in different international locations. According to the Institute of International Education

Figure 8: Familiarity with campus Israel groups by interaction with Fellow



$p < .001$

Figure 9: Frequency of stories or mentions of Israel on students' social media accounts



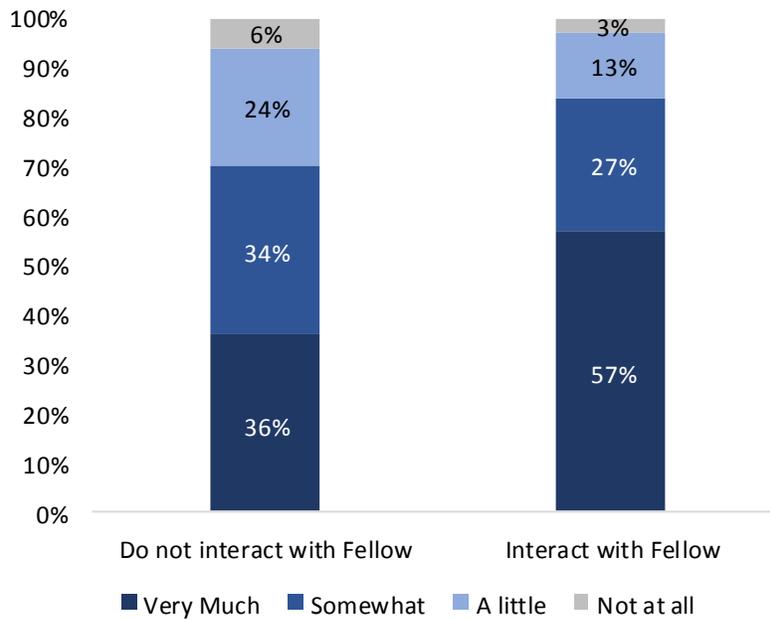
($p < .05$)

(2015), one-in-ten American students will study abroad before they graduate. One potential way that Fellows can heighten student interest in Israel is to encourage them to spend a semester studying at an Israeli university or college. The survey asked students about their intention to study abroad. Students who indicated that they had not already studied abroad but were planning to do so were asked in what country they planned to study. Only 2% of students who had no contact with a Fellow expressed interest in studying in Israel. This is very similar to the portion (2.1%) of all undergraduates in the United States who reported studying in the Middle East during the 2013-14 school year (Institute of International Education, 2015). The level of interest in studying in Israel among students who had contact with a Fellow, although still

circumscribed (6%), translates into a threefold increase, as compared with students who did not interact with a Fellow.

Perhaps the most comprehensive measure of the association between contact with a Fellow and Israel engagement is the emotional attachment of students to Israel. The survey asked students to indicate their level of connection to Israel on a four-point scale from “not at all” to “very much.” As shown in Figure 10, students who interacted with a Fellow were significantly more likely to feel strongly attached to Israel as compared with those who had no contact with a Fellow. Over half (57%) of students who talked with a Fellow also expressed that they felt “very much” connected to Israel, as compared with 36% of students who did not have contact with a Fellow.

Figure 10: Connection to Israel by interaction with Fellow



$p < .05$

The findings above suggest that contact with a Fellow is strongly associated with a variety of positive attitudes and behaviors related to Israel. Undergraduates who interacted with a Fellow had a stronger attachment to Israel, greater interest in studying in Israel, more involvement in Israel activities on campus, and a demonstrated interest in keeping up with news about Israel. It is possible that some of this association represents a self-selection bias among students who choose to meet with a Fellow—that those who enter college with more involvement in Jewish life and Israel are more apt to reach out to the Fellow on their campuses. However, the diversity of students interacting with Fellows—“just Jewish” students, the unaffiliated, students with intermarried parents, and those with no or minimal background of Jewish education—lends

support to the conclusion that Fellows contribute significantly to the Israel engagement of students. Students with these Jewish identifications and backgrounds are typically unengaged and were identified as a target of Hillel’s strategic plan in 2007 (Koren, Saxe, & Fleisch, 2016).

In the implementation study (Chertok & Koren, 2014), we heard from Fellows about the tension between spending their limited time cultivating personal contacts with students and the creation of larger scale programs. Although both are clearly needed, the findings of this study suggest that the importance of one-to-one contact cannot be overestimated.

What Forms of Israel Engagement are Associated with the Presence of a Fellow on Campus?

As noted in our earlier report on the IFP theory of change (Chertok & Koren, 2014), forming relationships with individual students is the first step in a strategy to influence the larger campus community and, in particular, Jewish students who do not come into direct contact with the Fellow. In a cascading model of intervention, Fellows aim to leverage relationships with individual students to reach their peer networks. This section explores the differences in students' attitudes and behaviors on campuses that did and did not have a Fellow in the 2015-16 academic year.

The findings of our implementation study suggest that Hillel, JAFI and local Hillels were similarly motivated to place Fellows on campuses that were experiencing higher levels of discord about Israel. The current survey asked students the extent to which they felt that there was a hostile environment toward Israel on their campus, with six response options ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” A school-level variable was computed by averaging together the responses to this item for all respondents on a given campus. Analysis of this variable shows that on campuses with Fellows, students did, in fact, report significantly higher levels of hostility toward Israel (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Hostile environment toward Israel on campuses with and without a Fellow

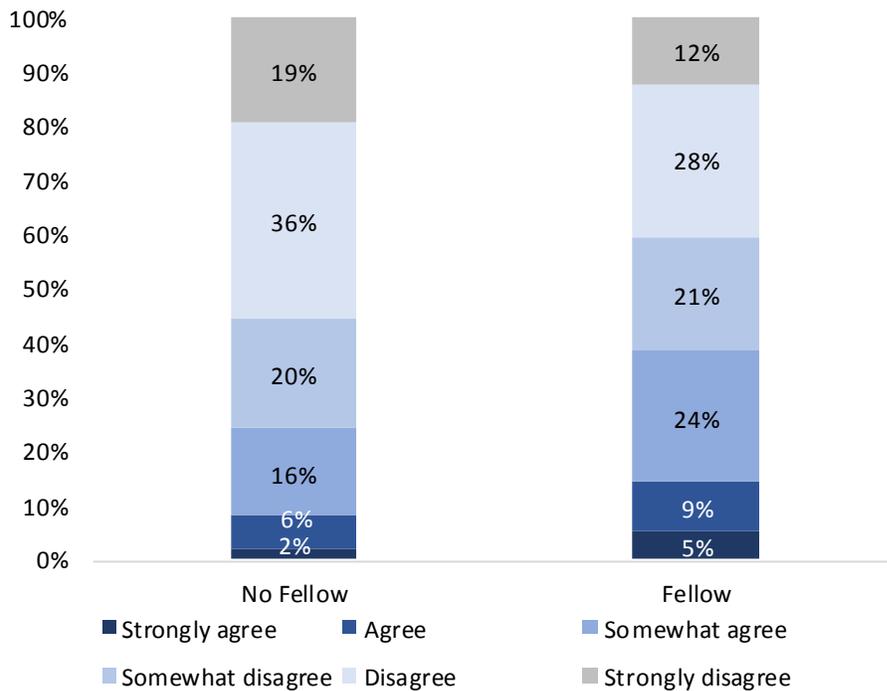
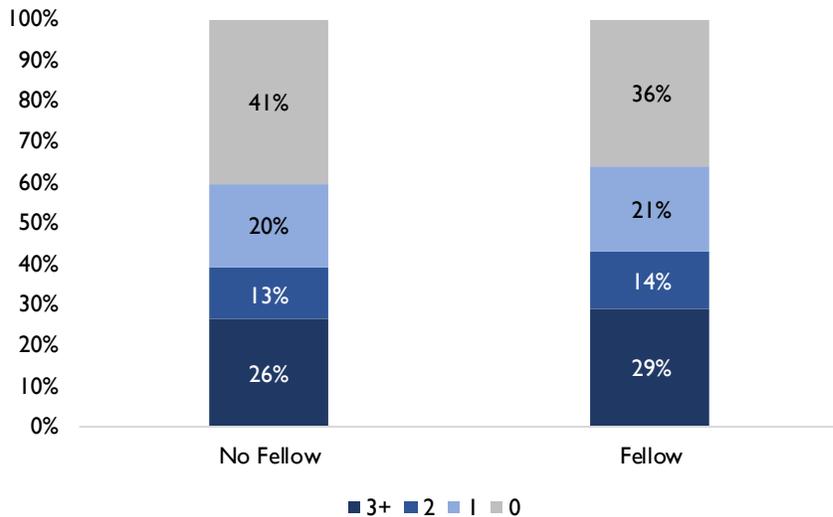


Figure 12: Participation in Israel-related activities on campuses with and without a Fellow



$p < .05$

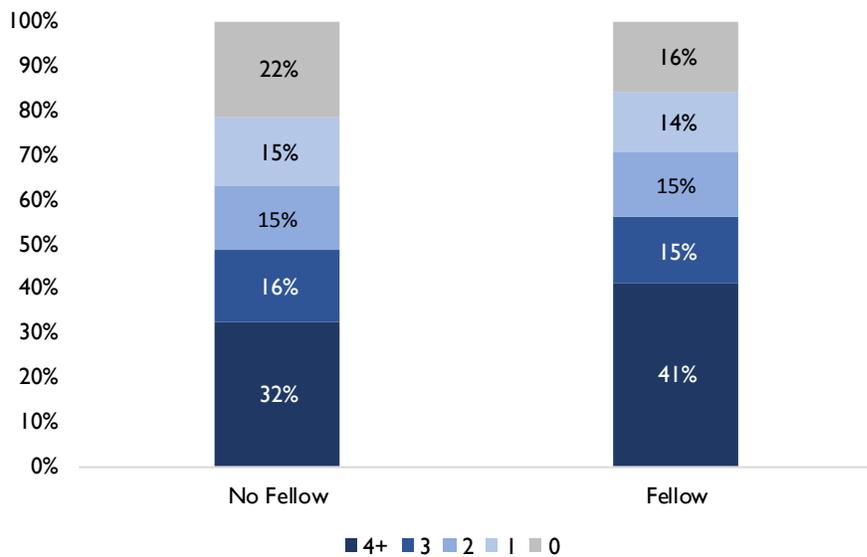
The presence of Fellows on campuses with an anti-Israel environment makes it difficult to determine the ways in which various factors influence student outcomes. To determine the relative influence of various dynamics, the current study utilized regression analysis. Although this statistical approach does not allow us to make claims of causation, it does allow us to determine if the presence of a Fellow is still associated with desired student attitudes and behaviors after controlling for school-level characteristics (such as campus average level of hostility to Israel) and individual characteristics (such as Birthright participation). Full details of these analyses are presented in the Technical Appendices.

The survey asked about student involvement over the course of the 2015-16 academic year in seven different types of Israel-related activities. Students on campuses with a Fellow reported participation in more Israel-related

events (Figure 12). Regression analysis indicated that participation in more Israel-related events is connected to being Orthodox, a Birthright participant, or child of in-marriage. However, even when controlling for these individual variables, being on a campus with a Fellow is still significantly related to participation in more Israel-related events.

The survey also asked students to indicate the Israel-related groups with which they are familiar. As shown in Figure 13, students on campuses that have a Fellow are significantly more likely to know about more groups as compared with students on campuses that do not have a Fellow. This finding holds even when controlling for average level of perceived hostility toward Israel on campus, Birthright participation, parental marriage type, and denominational identity.

Figure 13: Familiarity with Israel-related groups on campuses with and without a Fellow



Almost half of students on campuses that either do or do not have a Fellow report that their social media feeds “often” carry stories related to Israel. No significant difference was found between these two types of campuses on this variable. The presence of a Fellow on campus also does not appear to affect the overall intent to study in Israel. On both types of campuses, 3% of students surveyed intend to study abroad in Israel.

With regards to connection to Israel, the data did not indicate a significant difference between students at schools with and without a Fellow. However, the analysis suggests that individual characteristics and experiences (Birthright participation, being the child of two Jewish parents, and identifying as Orthodox) are significantly associated with connection to Israel. Students at schools that have a higher average perception of hostility to Israel also feel less connected to Israel.

On most campuses, and especially those experiencing hostility toward Israel, there are multiple players, programs, and narratives at work. Israel Fellows are not the only campus professionals tasked with educating about Israel. For example, of the 15 campuses in our sample that did not have a Fellow in the 2015-16 academic year, six had another type of Israel professional on the Hillel staff, and half of the campuses with no Fellow in 2015-16 had a Fellow in the previous three years. Each year, students from schools that do and do not have a Fellow send students on Birthright Israel trips, often with campus organized groups. In the midst of these multiple sources of contact with Israel, it is notable that the presence of a Fellow on campus still significantly contributes to the participation of students in multiple Israel-related activities and familiarity with a greater number of Israel-related groups.

Summary and Recommendations

The IFP is based on a strategy of cascading influence. The core tenet and approach is that exposure to Fellows will help North American Jewish undergraduates engage more closely with Israel. Similar to the theory of change underlying the *mifgashsim* of Birthright Israel (Saxe & Chazan, 2008), the IFP provides undergraduates with an authentic person-to-person encounter with a Fellow and invites them to see Israel through the lens of each Fellow's unique story and experience of growing up and living in Israel.

The findings of the current study suggest that Fellows reach a substantial number of students. Almost one third of students report contact with a Fellow. This is a particularly impressive figure when we consider that on most campuses included in this study, that share represents hundreds of students—even more on larger campuses. It is important to note the amount of time this corresponds to in terms of one-on-one meetings with students. For Fellows assigned to multiple campuses in the same metro area, this is an even more impressive accomplishment.

Fellows are also succeeding at reaching Jewish students from diverse backgrounds. Although undergraduates who had more intense forms of Jewish education or were raised by two Jewish parents are more likely to have contact with a Fellow, the percentage of students with little to no formal Jewish education, no denominational affiliation, or from intermarried homes who do have contact with a Fellow is surprisingly high. Jewish young adults with limited history of Jewish or Israel education or experience may be the individuals most in need of positive engagement with Israel during the formative college years. Recent research on Jewish

millennials suggests that Israel engagement may be particularly important to undergraduates raised in intermarried homes (Sasson et al., 2015).

There is little doubt from the survey as well as the implementation study previously reported, that the association between interaction with a Fellow and Israel involvement is considerable. We see this relationship when comparing individuals who have had contact with Fellows to those who have not. The former participate in more Israel activities, are more familiar with Israel-related groups on campus, have access to more Israel-related posts on their social media sites, and express greater interest in studying abroad in Israel. Perhaps the most important and the strongest association is between contact with a Fellow and higher levels of connection to Israel.

The second element in the IFP strategy is a network approach to extend the influence of Fellows beyond the circle of students with whom they have direct contact. Like ever widening ripples in a pond, it is intended that students who directly interact with the Fellow will reach out to their networks of peers and create the programs and activities that draw in and engage expanding circles of undergraduates with Israel. The current study provides some limited support for the success of this approach. Jewish students on campuses with Fellows, compared to those without Fellows, indicate attendance at more Israel-related events and greater knowledge of Israel groups on campus. At the same time, there is no difference between campuses that do and do not have a Fellow, in student use of social media to track news of Israel or in terms of sense of connection to Israel.

The network aspect of the IFP rests on the assumption that students who interact with a Fellow are able to communicate the authentic and compelling nature of the Fellow's story to other peers who do not have direct contact with the Fellow. Classic social psychological research on the transmission of stories suggests that very quickly narratives, even personal ones, undergo "leveling." In other words, many details, including those that gave meaning and, in the case of the Fellows, authenticity to their message, are left out and do not reappear in future retellings (Allport & Postman, 1947). To return to the metaphor of waves expanding, even ripples diminish quickly in size and fidelity as they move away from the initial point of impact. To address this challenge and to preserve the full impact of the Fellows as the embodiment of Israel, it may be helpful to provide them with methods of and materials for virtual contact (distribution networks for photos, videos, podcasts, or snapchats). For example, before they leave Israel, Fellows might be encouraged to make videos documenting their lives that are then shared on social media and distributed further through the students' networks. Another way to facilitate direct contact with Israelis might be to recruit Israeli or Israeli-American students on campus to seek out students beyond the reach of the Fellow.

The use of a social network approach relies heavily on the skills and knowledge of "lay" influencers. In the case of the IFP, these are students who interact with the Fellow and are encouraged to develop opportunities to relay

their growing knowledge of Israel to their peers. However, research on the use of social networks and indigenous "educators" to promote health behaviors provides two important lessons for this aspect of the program. The first involves the "social risk" that student influencers are being asked to assume. As we have shown, on many IFP campuses, there is a hostile environment toward Israel. Other research has shown that many Jewish students, are uncomfortable talking about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with peers (Saxe et al., 2016). Asking students to reach into their peer networks and engage in informal Israel education may cause them to have concerns about the impact on these social relationships. To encourage students to move beyond these concerns, the research on the use of lay educators suggests addressing the issue directly in training and creating a "community of practice" among students to support their work (Castaneda et al., 2010).

The IFP is an innovative approach to reaching and engaging Jewish undergraduates with Israel. The program has the potential to move students beyond the headlines about Israel and provide them an authentic perspective for a fuller understanding of the complexity of Israel and Israeli society. Fellows are successfully reaching a large number and wide variety of undergraduates. Interactions with Fellows are associated with a variety of positive Israel-related attitudes and behaviors. The next step might be to enhance the range of contacts through the development of the network aspects of the program.

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