

- How many students are active at Hillel?
- What programs does Hillel have?
- Is there a Jewish Studies major/minor? Consult the course catalogue for academic offerings of interest. Check for interdisciplinary courses in departments such as Religion, History, Philosophy, Near East studies, Hebrew language, Archaeology, and Literature.
- Are there weekly Shabbat meals?
- Are there regular religious services? What denominations? When? How well attended are services?
- Is there a full or partial kosher meal plan?
- Are there Jewish fraternities and/or sororities?

To ascertain if the student body and faculty will welcome you as a Jew, make sure you're comfortable with the broader campus culture. This is especially important at small schools with small Jewish populations, as small schools tend to have distinct personalities—and the smaller the school, the more distinct that personality. Visit when school is in session and the campus is fully alive. Do you feel comfortable? Does the school feel welcoming? Do students seem accepting of diverse perspectives?

**Betsy F. Woolf, Esq., Woolf College Consulting, Mamaroneck, New York (HECA, IECA, NACAC, NYSACAC, Board Member, Hillels of Westchester):** Raw numbers of Jewish students on campus don't always tell the full story about how welcoming the student body and faculty will be. To find out, talk to people. If there is a Hillel or a Jewish Student Association on campus, call the director and ask about the Jewish life and atmosphere on campus, as well as the names and contacts of several active Jewish students. Generally, students involved in these organizations will be happy to talk with you. Note that even if these organizations aren't present on campus, that doesn't necessarily mean that a college is unwelcoming to Jewish students; there simply may not be many Jewish students and/or events. If Jewish organizations are active at the school you choose, do get involved—

it will help you make connections and friends.

### In your opinion, what schools offer the greatest quality of Jewish life?

**Janet Rosier:** What constitutes “quality of Jewish life” will vary from student to student: Shabbat services, kosher food, an engaged and vibrant Hillel, a large Jewish population, Jewish courses, Jewish fraternities and sororities, etc. You need to articulate what kind of Jewish experience you want at college and find the school where it can best be actualized.

**Wendy Kahn:** It's impossible for me to pinpoint just a couple of schools, as backgrounds, needs, and preferences of Jewish students vary widely. I can say, though, that schools with dynamic Jewish communities are not limited to those with large numbers of Jewish students. If you're the kind of person who wants to roll up your sleeves and lead, you might look for smaller schools that are actively reaching out to Jewish students by building new Jewish student centers, adding Jewish studies majors and minors, instituting kosher meal plans, and more. And even if *kashrut* is not important to you, when a school creates a major kosher dining option, it's telegraphing its commitment to making Jewish students feel comfortable. (Editor's note: For more on this, see “Unexpected Welcomes,” page 47.)

### What is your prescription for “de-stressing” the admissions process?

**Janet Rosier:** Understand how the admissions system works and be aware of what's in and out of your control. By and large you are in control of your grades, your curriculum, and your test scores. You are not in control of who else from your school or your region is applying to the same college, who is a legacy, who is a recruited athlete, who is an underrepresented minority, or if more females or males are needed this year. Once you let go of what is out of your control and concentrate on what you can control, you can relax, knowing that you have done your job. □

## Admissions 101: COLLEGE CASH

### 1 Scholarships & Grants

- ▶ The **JVS Scholarship Loan Program** of the Jewish Vocational Service Agency offers interest-free, need-based loans up to \$5,000/year to Jewish residents of Metro West New Jersey. [www.jvsnj.org](http://www.jvsnj.org)
  - ▶ The **JCCs of North America Graduate Scholarship Program** offers full-time students majoring in select subjects up to \$20,000 if they agree to work for two years at a JCC after graduation. [www.jccworks.com](http://www.jccworks.com)
  - ▶ The **Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America** offers \$500–\$1,000 grants to high school seniors who are direct descendants of members. [www.jvw.org](http://www.jvw.org)
  - ▶ **Central Scholarship and Loan Referral Service** (UJF and JF&CS of Pittsburgh) offers \$1,000–\$3,000 need-based scholarships to Western Pennsylvania residents. [www.centralscholarship.org](http://www.centralscholarship.org)
  - ▶ The **Dallas Jewish Community Foundation** offers \$300–\$5,000 need-based scholarships primarily to students from the Greater Dallas area. [www.djcf.org](http://www.djcf.org)
  - ▶ The **Jewish Social Service Agency of Metropolitan Washington** offers \$1,000–\$6,000 scholarships and loans to Jewish residents of metropolitan Washington, DC. [www.jssa.org](http://www.jssa.org)
  - ▶ The **Jewish Family Service Association** offers need-based funds up to \$4,000/year to Jewish residents in Greater Cleveland. [www.jfsa-cleveland.org/financialaid.asp](http://www.jfsa-cleveland.org/financialaid.asp)
- ### 2 Lower Cost Loans
- ▶ The **Jewish Educational Loan Fund (JELF)** provides interest-free, need-based “last-dollar” loans to Jewish students from Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. [www.jelf.org](http://www.jelf.org)
  - ▶ Member organizations of the **International Association of Hebrew Free Loans** offer interest-free, need-based loans. [www.freeloan.org/offices](http://www.freeloan.org/offices)