

THE MAURICE AND MARILYN COHEN FUND
FOR DOCTORAL DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIPS:
Fifty Years of Enriching the Field of Jewish Studies

IMPACT EVALUATION

Submitted to the Foundation for Jewish Culture by Tobin Belzer PhD
August 2010

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IMPACT EVALUATION: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Evaluation Overview

In the fifty years since it was founded, the Foundation for Jewish Culture has awarded doctoral dissertation fellowships to 616 scholars. This study was designed to evaluate the impact of the Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Fund for Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships in Jewish Studies on both the recipients and on the field of Jewish studies more broadly. The research was conducted over the course of approximately five months, from March 2010 to July 2010. The data collection process included qualitative interviews, an online survey and exploratory research. The research findings provide a snap shot of the Fellowship's impact on individuals and the field of Jewish studies. Fellow's contributions to American Jewish culture are also identified.

The Fellowship

The one-year Fellowships are dissertation completion grants awarded to scholars who intend to pursue careers in Jewish studies in the United States. An academic advisory panel of distinguished scholars review proposals, and a scholarship committee of Foundation board members oversee the parameters of the award. Approximately 35 doctoral candidates typically apply annually, and 4 – 5 Fellowships are awarded. Although the Fellowship is meant to fund recipients' final year in graduate school, just 25% of interview and survey respondents completed their dissertation during the year of the Fellowship.

Fellowships have been awarded to students attending the leading Jewish studies programs in the country. From 2000 – 2009, 72% of the 96 Fellowship were awarded to students at eight universities. In recent years, the Fellowship's academic advisors and board members have been strategically expanding the reach of the grant to reflect changes in the field. When the Fellowship began, most were awarded to male scholars from universities in the Northeast who were based in history or Jewish studies departments. As the field has diversified, so have the recipients. There is now gender equity among recipients, and there has been growing diversity in terms of recipients' geographic location. There has also been a slight increase in the number of Fellowships awarded to graduate students whose work in Jewish studies is outside of the traditionally acknowledged areas of rabbinics, bible, Talmud and Jewish history.

Impact on the Field

The Foundation has been extremely successful at supporting individuals who have gone on to pursue careers in Jewish studies in the United States: of the 93 Fellowships awarded between 2000-2009, 78% of recipients work in academia. Among research respondents, approximately 72% of Fellows continue to focus their scholarship and teaching on Jewish studies. Another 18% devotes at least half of their time to scholarship and teaching in Jewish studies. 2000-2009 Fellows occupy positions at every academic level: from endowed chairs to postdoctoral fellows.

Fellowship recipients have emerged as top scholars in the field of Jewish studies. Among them are chairs of Jewish studies departments and programs, and directors of Jewish studies centers and institutes. Beneficiaries of the Fellowship work at universities across North America. Of

the 180 academic institutions with Jewish studies programs and departments identified by the AJS, 87 (48%) have at least one faculty member who received the Fellowship. Of those, 34 departments have two or more faculty members who received the Fellowship.

Fellows have been widely published. 86% of interview and survey respondents have published, or are in the process of publishing part or all of their dissertations as manuscripts and scholarly journal articles. Every respondent has published in the field of Jewish studies. Fellows have received widespread recognition for their scholarship.

Benefits to Scholars

The Fellowship has both practical and psychological benefits to the recipients. The funding afforded Fellows more time to focus on their graduate work. Many felt they benefited from the prestige of the Fellowship. They characterized the past recipients as a “who’s who” of the field. Both well-established and emerging scholars spoke about the positive experience of being identified as part of an elite cadre of Jewish studies scholars.

Many recipients felt that the funding was critical to their pursuit of an academic career. 81% credited the Fellowship with helping them attain a faculty position and 74% said it helped them obtain additional funding. A number of respondents noted that although Fellowship was the best funding opportunity available in Jewish studies, the amount did not allow them to devote full-time to their writing.¹ Approximately 82% of all respondents said they received other funding in addition to the Fellowship.

Influence Beyond the Academy

The impact of Jewish studies scholarship resonates far beyond the academy. Scholarship effects Jewish communal organizations’ policy making and Jewish philanthropists’ funding decisions. Visual and performing arts have been informed by research and theory. Scholars influence the thinking of college students and adult learners.

Scholars’ perspectives are brought to mainstream culture in numerous ways. Fellows’ writing has been published in both the popular and Jewish press. 81% of survey respondents indicated that they have had articles published secular publications and 85% have been published in Jewish publications. Another 25% said they blog on Jewish topics. Scholars are consultants and advisors to Jewish organizations. 38% of survey respondents indicated that they have offered policy advice to Jewish communal leaders and conducted research for Jewish organizations.

Fellows’ scholarship reaches broad audiences through lectures, conferences, and adult education classes. Respondents mentioned giving public lectures organized through universities, Hillel chapters, local synagogues and national and local Jewish organizations. Every survey respondent indicated that they speak to non-academic audiences. 83% have taught adult education classes and 43% have organized community-oriented conferences on topics related to Jewish studies. By supporting Jewish studies professors, the Foundation is having an

¹ From the late 1990s to 2007 Fellowships were awarded for \$10,000. Since 2007, the amount of the Fellowship has been increased to \$16,000.

indirect impact on the lives of thousands of students of Jewish studies at colleges and universities across North America.

Funding opportunities for doctoral candidates in Jewish studies.

Despite the broad impact of Jewish studies scholarship, funding in the field remains limited. When the Fellowship was established in 1960, funding for doctoral candidate's dissertation writing year was not guaranteed. This remains the case today. Graduate students must compete for a small number of fellowships from their home departments and universities. They can also apply for national dissertation fellowships in Jewish studies, of which there are four. Other grants in Jewish studies offer limited support and are narrow in scope. There are six dissertation completion fellowships available to Jewish studies scholars, which are also open to students in multiple fields. These fellowships are highly competitive, with thousands of applicants each year. Graduate students in Jewish studies have received these grants in the past, but funding is not awarded to Jewish studies scholarship every year. The Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Fund for Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships is the only dissertation completion Fellowship in Jewish studies.

Conclusion

The findings of this research indicated that the Fellowship has had a significant impact on both individuals and the field of Jewish studies. The Foundation has funded a cadre of high quality, talented scholars who have made substantial contributions to the field. The impact of the Fellowship is illustrated by the high percentage of recipients who remain in the field, the significant number of Jewish studies programs that have recipients among the faculty, and the academic and mainstream acclaim recipients have received for their scholarship.

The Fellowship has enhanced several aspects of recipients' career development. The majority of respondents indicated that the Fellowship helped them gain credibility and self-confidence as scholars. Publications and awards resulting from Fellowship supported research also helped develop the careers of the recipients. Many credited the Fellowship with helping them to secure faculty positions.

The Fellowship has become a keystone in the field. It has been critical to the growth of Jewish studies and is widely recognized for identifying and supporting the next generation of influential scholars.

Recommendations

The Foundation for Jewish Culture should continue to:

- Offer generous fellowships to enable emerging Jewish studies scholar's expeditious dissertation completion
- Broaden the scope of topics by awarding Fellowships to scholars outside of traditionally recognized disciplines within Jewish studies
- Award Fellowships to scholars from diverse geographic areas
- Actively showcase current and former Fellows' accomplishments

The Foundation for Jewish Culture should:

Focus on maintaining connections with Fellows

Many Fellows noted that they receive Foundation emails, and some indicated that they have served on committees and reviewed applications. Though almost every Fellow expressed tremendous gratitude to the Foundation, few are actively engaged. Increasing the available avenues for alumni involvement would improve the Foundation's return on investment. Also, Fellows expressed concern about their perception of the Foundation's waning interest in scholarship. Engaging alumni more actively would convey the Foundation's continued commitment to fostering American Jewish culture by supporting Jewish studies scholarship.

Facilitate relationships among Fellows

Fellows mentioned the prestige of the Fellowship. They appreciated being identified as a member of an impressive group of scholars, but noted that the benefits were primarily financial. There was a strong interest among Fellows for networking opportunities. A directory of Fellow's academic positions and areas of scholarly research, along with their contact information should be made available to Fellows. This information could be kept as a database, searchable by geographic region, academic discipline and research interests. Also, Fellows could be gathered each year at the Association for Jewish Studies annual meeting to facilitate ongoing networking and showcase current Fellows.

Provide practical training to help scholars secure and thrive in academic positions.

Many skills needed to be successful in academia are not included in graduate training. Fellows expressed an interest in practical skill building workshops for emerging scholars. Workshops about navigating the academic job market, publishing, pedagogical training and work/life balance would contribute to Fellows' career development and in turn, increase their positive impact on the field.

Consider adding a small service requirement to the Fellowship

Consider requiring recipients to present their work in a communal forum at least once during their Fellowship period. This will add to the visibility of the Fellowship and proactively bridge the academic and communal arenas. It will also encourage Fellows to think of themselves as engaged scholars. A Fellows' speaker's bureau could be created, or Fellows could be connected with existing bureaus. Alumni could be given micro-grants to organize events focused on the relevance of academic work to American Jewish culture.

Engage Fellows in fundraising activities

Fellows' contribution to Jewish studies and American Jewish culture could be more actively touted for fundraising purposes. Junior and senior Fellows could present their scholarship at fundraising events. Such events have been organized in the past, but could be held more frequently. Additionally, alumni themselves should be cultivated as potential donors to support the future of the Fellowship.

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Evaluation Overview

In the fifty years since it was founded, the Foundation for Jewish Culture has awarded doctoral dissertation fellowships to 616 scholars. This study was designed to evaluate the impact of the Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Fund for Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships in Jewish Studies on both the recipients and on the field of Jewish studies more broadly.

The research was conducted over the course of approximately five months, from March 2010 to July 2010. The data collection process included qualitative interviews, an online survey and exploratory research. Twenty interviews were conducted with former grantees. To situate the current state of the Fellowship within the context of the organization's history, interviews were also conducted with five key stakeholders who have served the Foundation in professional and volunteer capacities. To expand upon data collected through the interview process, an online survey was disseminated to approximately 70 individuals who were awarded the fellowship between 2000-2010. The response rate to the survey was a 44% (N=31).

76% of the 51 interview and survey respondents were awarded the Fellowship within the past decade. The remaining respondents received the Fellowship in the 1990s (1), 1980s (3), 1970s (7), and 1960s (1). 59% of survey and interview respondents are men and 41% are women.

Both interviews and surveys explored the following areas:

- The extent to which respondents feel the funding has affected their career trajectories
- Respondents' impressions of the impact of the Fellowship on the field of Jewish studies
- Their perceptions of the relationship between scholarship and Jewish culture in contemporary American life

Additionally, information was gathered 2000-2009 Fellows' current positions. The number of Fellows who currently teach in Jewish studies programs and departments in North America was also calculated. Finally, a resource scan was conducted to contextualize the Fellowship within the landscape of funding opportunities available to emerging scholars of Jewish studies.

The research findings provide a snap shot of the Fellowship's impact on individuals and the field of Jewish studies. Fellow's contributions to American Jewish culture are also identified.

Background

In 1960, the Council of Jewish Federations (the precursor to the United Jewish Communities) established the National Foundation for Jewish Culture (which has since been renamed the Foundation for Jewish Culture). When it was founded, a primary focus of the Foundation was to support American organizations responsible for preserving Jewish culture after the destruction of European Jewish institutions during the Holocaust. During the Foundation's first twenty years, Jewish culture was cultivated with a focus on scholarship. Through its support of research, libraries, archives and scholarships, the Foundation nurtured the fledgling field of Jewish studies.

One of the Foundation's earliest actions was the establishment of the doctoral dissertation fellowship. With it, the Foundation sought to help emerging scholars of Jewish studies by offering financial assistance to help them expeditiously complete their doctoral work and enter the academic job market.

When the Fellowship was established, the field of Jewish studies in the United States was in its formative stages. Jewish studies was established as an academic discipline in American liberal arts colleges following WWII, but the field did not begin to flourish until the 1960s. An emerging liberal consciousness about the value of studying topics and texts outside of the Western canon emerged, and with it came an interest in area studies (such as African American, Latin American, and women's studies, as well as Jewish studies). The field grew from 12 positions in Jewish studies in 1945 to 60 by 1965 (Sarna, 329). The Association for Jewish Studies (AJS), a scholarly and professional organization for the field, was formed in 1969 with 47 members. By that time, the Foundation had already supported the work of 117 emerging scholars.

Since the establishment of Jewish studies as an academic discipline, concerns have persisted about the field's legitimacy. There has been ongoing debate about whether or not scholars, who are ensconced in Jewish communal life, can truly maintain intellectual objectivity while simultaneously addressing the concerns of the Jewish community. Some have argued that to achieve academic respectability, scholars should not identify too closely with the Jewish community. Others believe that Jewish studies scholars have a responsibility to the Jewish community to act as Jewish leaders.

The NFJC was at the center of this tension in the late 1960s, as the initial funder of the *AJS Review*, the first academic journal of the Association for Jewish Studies. The AJS later refused to accept additional funding from the Foundation because of misgivings about the appearance of communal influence on Jewish studies scholarship. At the time, those concerns were deemed legitimate by the AJS board. In 1978, the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), the federation of American scholarly organizations in the humanities, would not accept the AJS as a member organization because of concerns that the AJS represented a limited, 'ethnic' point of view (Loveland, 12). It was not until seven years later, that the AJS was

accepted into the American Council of Learned Societies (Loveland, 12).

During the 1980s, there was substantial expansion of programs and departments, and a significant number of endowed chairs were created (Loveland, 12). In the mid-1980s, a taskforce was assembled to assess the impact of the Fellowship, which by that time had been awarded more than 350 scholars. Esteemed Jewish studies scholar Dr. Robert Chazan, who was a recipient of the Fellowship in 1965, chaired the taskforce. The committee determined that the Fellowship remained a critical intervention in the early careers of young scholars. By then, the award had been firmly established as a significant acknowledgement of scholarly promise. During the first two decades of the Fellowship, the distinguished panel of academics that reviewed applications awarded Fellowships to many individuals who emerged as leaders in the field. The taskforce determined that the benefit of the Fellowship went beyond its monetary value, yet they identified the need to raise the level of financial support.

The fellowship had been primarily funded through the Foundation's annual operating budget, with some grants underwritten by Hadassah. Based on the taskforce's recommendation, a fundraising campaign for an endowment was launched. A critical factor in the success of the campaign was a matching grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), which was the first grant given by the NEH to an organization to support the development of Jewish studies. Recognition of Jewish studies as a legitimate area of intellectual inquiry by the United States government was a significant boon to the field. It also advanced the Foundation's fundraising efforts. Maurice Cohen, who was on the Foundation's board, along with his son Lewis, gave the final significant gift to fulfill the matching grant. Consequently, the Fellowship was named the Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Fund for Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships in Jewish Studies.

The field of Jewish studies has continued to expand, and today, there has never been more depth and breadth to the field. Scholars are approaching the study of Jewish topics from diverse disciplines, moving the field to become increasingly interdisciplinary. They are examining Jewish studies through the lenses of ethnomusicology; media and film studies; Diaspora studies; cultural and secular studies; gender; Israel studies; Holocaust studies; Yiddish; and Sephardic studies. Jewish studies programs are thriving at universities that do not have significant populations of Jewish students. According to the AJS Directory of Endowed Chairs in Jewish Studies, there are currently 230 positions at 84 universities and colleges. The number of PhDs earned among AJS members between 2000-2008 has almost doubled 1990s (Cohen and Veinstein, 3).

The growth of the field has slowed as a result of the current economic climate. Private funding, which sustains many Jewish studies programs, has decreased. Substantial gifts continue, but are less common. For example, Stanford University recently received funding for the Jim Joseph Chair in Education and Jewish Studies. Yet the Koret Foundation, which provided funding for endowed academic appointments at a number of universities, no longer offers such support.

While there are a growing number of graduate students earning doctorates in Jewish studies, there are few jobs available. Hiring for positions in Jewish studies programs, along with other programs in the humanities, has been affected by the economy. A December 2008 survey of 200 higher education institutions by The Chronicle of Higher Education and Moody's Investors Services found that 5% have imposed a total hiring freeze, and an additional 43% have imposed a partial freeze (Cohen). Between December 2008 and February 2009, at least two-dozen colleges canceled or postponed faculty searches in religion and philosophy, departments where professors of Jewish studies frequently reside. In 2008, at least four searches for Jewish studies positions were cancelled as a direct result of the Bernard Madoff scandal. A prominent professor in the field noted that when prospective students approach him, he feels compelled to warn them about the lack of job prospects in the field. He explained: "Anyone who wants to study with me gets the talk about how tough it is." "People are training for jobs that don't exist," another Fellow asserted.

Despite widespread economic challenges, the Foundation maintains its commitment to investing in individuals in order to "nurture a vibrant and enduring Jewish identity, culture, and community" ("Mission"). Since the 1980s, the Foundation has broadened its focus by supporting programs and initiatives based in the arts and humanities. The Foundation now supports individual artists and musicians, and advocates for Jewish culture expression through music, literature, film and theater. This shift has caused concern among some interview respondents, who perceive it as the Foundation's deprioritization of scholarship.

Despite these concerns, Jewish studies scholarship continues to be central to Foundation's mission. In addition to the Fellowship, the Musher Subvention Prize is awarded biannually for the publication of an outstanding first book in Jewish studies. Launched in 2008, the Jewish Studies Expansion Program is a postdoctoral fellowship aimed at providing greater opportunities for Jewish learning and engagement at universities with underfunded Jewish studies programs. The Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Fund for Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships in Jewish Studies remains one of the Foundation's signature programs and continues to be the most substantial funding opportunity for dissertation completion in Jewish studies.

The Fellowship

The requirements of the granting process have been refined over the years. The one-year Fellowships are dissertation completion grants awarded to scholars who intend to pursue careers in Jewish studies in the United States. The application process includes submission of GRE scores, transcripts, a dissertation prospectus with bibliography, and a thesis status letter. Requirements include proficiency in a Jewish language, U.S. residency, and demonstration of significant graduate-level coursework in Jewish studies. An academic advisory panel of distinguished scholars review proposals, and a scholarship committee of Foundation board members oversee the parameters of the award. Approximately 35 doctoral candidates typically apply for the Fellowship annually.²

Each year, the amount of the award, as well as the number of fellowships given, is determined by the availability of funding. From the late 1990s to 2007, 10 – 12 Fellowships of \$10,000 were awarded each year. Since 2007, fewer awards have been granted for a larger sum: 4 – 5 Fellowships of \$16,000 are now awarded annually. The amount of the Fellowship was increased in recognition of the rising cost of living. Additionally, this change is result of the current economic climate, which led to a severe reduction in the size of the Fellowship's endowment. In 2009, the Fellowship was funded thanks to a challenge grant from the American Academy of Jewish Research.

In recent years, the Fellowship's academic advisors and board members have been strategically expanding the reach of the grant to reflect changes in the field. When the Fellowship began, most were awarded to male scholars from universities in the Northeast who were based in history or Jewish studies departments. As the field has diversified, so have the recipients. There is now gender equity among recipients, and there has been growing diversity in terms of recipients' geographic location.

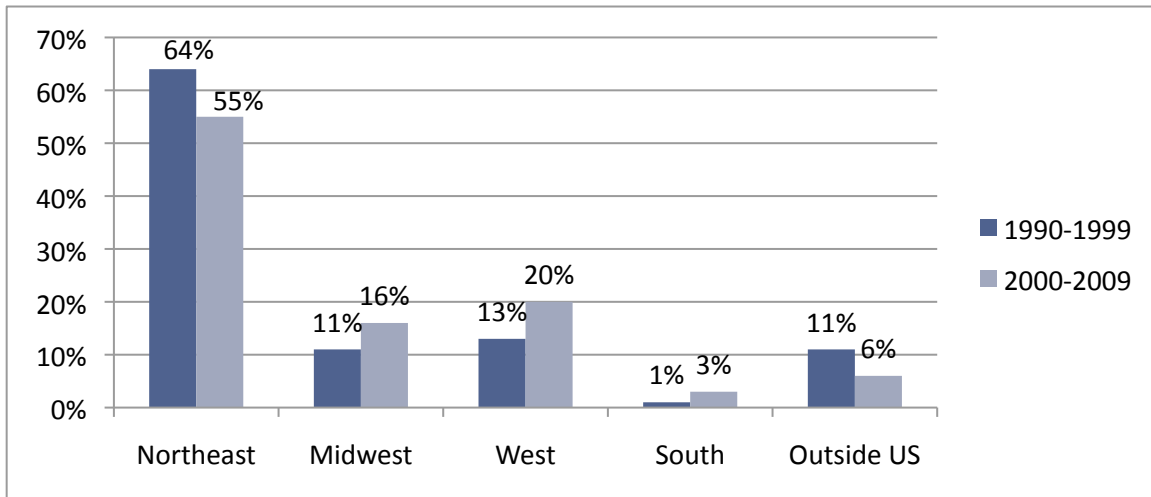
There has also been a slight increase in the number of Fellowships awarded to graduate students whose work in Jewish studies is outside of the traditionally acknowledged areas of rabbinics, bible, Talmud and Jewish history. In the past decade, a small number of graduate students in literature, anthropology, Middle East studies and religious studies have been awarded Fellowships. According to a 2008 survey of 488 members of the AJS, history and Jewish studies remain the two most prevalent fields of graduate study (Cohen and Veinstein, 9). Interdisciplinary scholarship is becoming increasingly common. 30% of survey respondents' dissertation research was interdisciplinary. For example, one Fellow's work is grounded in rhetoric and Jewish studies. Another earned a PhD in political science, with a focus on Israel. Still another studied Yiddish studies and post-colonial theory.

Throughout the life of the Fellowship, the majority of recipients have studied at universities in

² The number of applicants has declined within the past five years. Between 1997 and 2005, there were an average of 56 applicants per year. Since 2006, an average of 35 individuals have applied annually.

the Northeast. This remains the case today. However, the percent of scholars from universities outside the Northeast has increased. As Figure 1 illustrates, a growing number of Fellowships are awarded to scholars studying in the Midwest, West, and South. This is the result of the Academic Advisory Committee’s concerted effort to expand the geographic scope of the Fellowship. Also, this shift reflects expansion in the field: Jewish studies scholars are being trained at a growing number of universities.

Figure 1: Geographic Location of Grants Awarded by Decade



Fellowships have been awarded to students attending the leading Jewish studies programs in the country. From 2000 – 2009, 72% of the 96 Fellowship were awarded to students at eight universities [Figure 2]. The other 28% of grants were awarded to students from 15 universities.

Figure 2: Universities with the highest number of 2000-2009 recipients

University	Number of Recipients
Columbia University	16
New York University	11
University of Michigan	10
Stanford University	9
University of California, Berkeley	7
Jewish Theological Seminary	6
Harvard University	5
Yale University	5

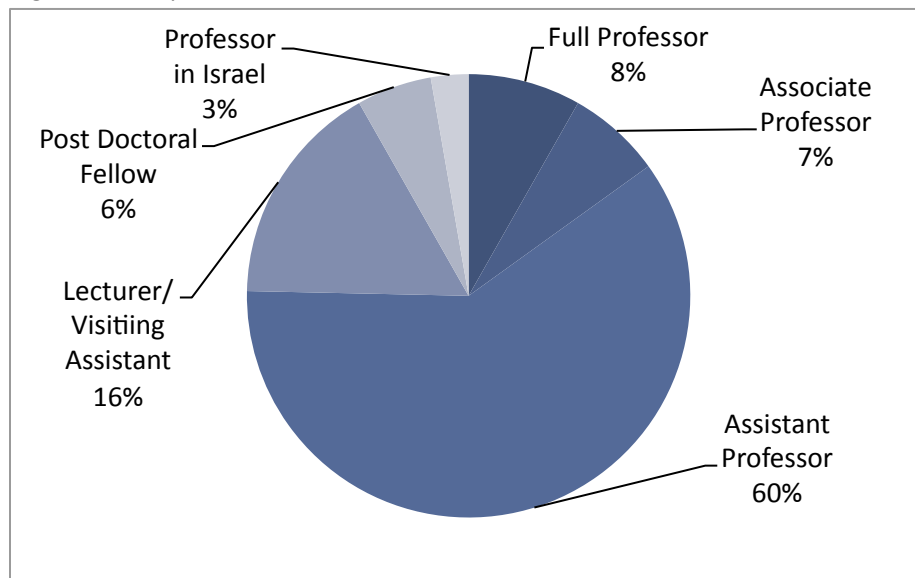
Although a limited number of universities are training the majority of recipients, the Fellowship is widely recognized throughout the field. Respondents commented that the Fellowship is likely not as well-known outside of Jewish studies, but did not find that assertion problematic. A Fellow explained: “If people are so disconnect that they don’t know about it, they are probably too far outside the realm of someone who is connected enough to get it.”

Although the Fellowship is meant to fund recipients' final year in graduate school, just 25% of interview and survey respondents completed their dissertation during the year of the Fellowship. For many, the writing simply took longer than they anticipated: most completed their graduate work the following year. For a few, having a child during the Fellowship year delayed their completion. At least two respondents deferred submitting their dissertations for a year, anticipating that the job market would improve. Some respondents were awarded the Fellowship before it was designated as completion funds, so they did not intend to complete their work during their Fellowship year. One respondent never completed his doctorate. Four of the six 2009 Fellows are continuing to complete their degrees.

Impact on the Field

The Foundation has been extremely successful at supporting individuals who have gone on to pursue careers in Jewish studies in the United States: of the 93 Fellowships awarded between 2000-2009, 78% of recipients work in academia.³ All but two recipients teach at universities in North America. The other two are professors in Israel. Among research respondents, approximately 72% of Fellows continue to focus their scholarship and teaching on Jewish studies. Another 18% devotes at least half of their time to scholarship and teaching in Jewish studies. 2000-2009 Fellows occupy positions at every academic level [Figure 3]. Most (60%) have entry level positions as assistant professors. Among the nine Fellows who do not work in academia, four work in the field of Jewish education in other capacities. For example, one Fellow is the dean of Jewish life at a Jewish day school. Another is the educational director at a museum of Jewish history. Two more Fellows work in Jewish organizations. Only five Fellows work in fields completely unrelated to Jewish studies.

Figure 3: Recipients' Current Academic Positions



Beneficiaries of the Fellowship work at universities across North America. Of the 180 academic institutions with Jewish studies programs and departments identified by the AJS, 87 (48%) have at least one faculty member who received the Fellowship. Of those, 34 departments have two or more faculty members who received the Fellowship.

Fellowship recipients have emerged as top scholars in the field of Jewish studies. Among them are chairs of Jewish studies departments and programs, and directors of Jewish studies centers and institutes. They teach at some of the leading Jewish studies programs in the country. They

³ Seven former Fellows could not be located.

hold high-level positions in the administration of the Jewish Theological Seminary and Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Fellows have also served as officers of both AJS and the American Academy of Jewish Religion (AAJR). Three Fellowship recipients served as president of the AJS between 1986-1991 and 1995-1997. Currently, two of the four officers and five of the eight executive committee members of the AAJR are Fellowship recipients.

Fellows have been widely published. 86% of interview and survey respondents have published, or are in the process of publishing part or all of their dissertations as manuscripts and scholarly journal articles. Every respondent has published in the field of Jewish studies. Fellows have received widespread recognition for their scholarship, including:

- AJS's Jordan Schnitzer Book Award
- American Academy for Jewish Research's Baron Book Prize
- American Jewish Historical Society's Saul Viener Book Prize
- American Historical Association's Morris D. Forkosch Award

Fellows' dissertations and subsequent work have been supported by: the Foundation for Jewish Culture's Musher Subvention Prize and AJS's Cahnman Foundation Subvention Grant, as well as subventions from the Koret Foundation and the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation. Many Fellows also received dissertation funding from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture and the Wexner Graduate Fellowship.

Five Fellows have been honored with the Marshall Sklare Award of the Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry. A 1994 Fellow was one of the first to receive AJS's new Legacy Heritage Jewish Studies Project, which supports Jewish studies faculty who design dynamic and inventive outreach events with a broad appeal. Two Fellows were named among *The Jewish Daily Forward's* fifty most influential American Jews.

Benefits to Scholars

The Fellowship has both practical and psychological benefits to the recipients. The funding afforded Fellows more time to focus on their graduate work. Many recipients asserted that their progress toward completion would have been considerably slower if they had not received the Fellowship. Without it, some said they would have worked as teaching assistants and adjunct lectures. Others mentioned the probability that they would have taken on non-academic part-time jobs. Some said they simply would have "struggled," "lived in poverty", or "taken on considerable debt." Others said they would have relied on family members – parents and spouses – to support them.

Many recipients felt that the funding was critical to their pursuit of an academic career. 81% credited the Fellowship with helping them attain a faculty position and 74% said it helped them obtain additional funding. A Fellow, who is now a tenured professor at a private university in the Northeast, described the impact of the grant, with these words: "I would have had to leave graduate school and find a job and would have almost certainly been unable to pursue a career

in scholarship and academe.” He continued: “It was absolutely critical to my career and I would most certainly not be where I am now without it.” “It was a lifesaver,” an endowed chair of Jewish history asserted. He explained: “I had to work full time. I went to a temp agency and got a job as a typist for an engineering firm. It was so depressing to not be able to do my [dissertation] work. [The Fellowship] changed everything ...I’m forever in debt to the Foundation.”

A number of respondents noted that although Fellowship was the best funding opportunity available in Jewish studies, the amount did not allow them to devote full-time to their writing.⁴ Approximately 82% of all respondents said they received other funding in addition to the Fellowship. Some were fortunate to receive support from their universities for tuition and fees. Many combined the Fellowship with other external grants. Many others were not able to subsist on the Funding without additional income from a part-time job. “The stipend isn’t in line with the reality of what it costs to live,” a Fellow (who received \$10,000 from the Foundation) asserted.

[The Fellowship] was absolutely critical to my career and I would most certainly not be where I am now without it.
– Tenured professor

Many felt they benefited from the prestige of the Fellowship. They characterized the past recipients as a “who’s who” of the field. Both well-established and emerging scholars spoke about the positive experience of being identified as part of an elite cadre of Jewish studies scholars. “Just look at the list of past recipients ...it’s a personal honor to be on that list of people who have had tremendous influence. [The Fellowship] has created a legacy,” explained a recipient from 2007. “It put me in a group of top scholars in the eyes of established scholars,” a 1978 recipient who is now a leader in the field explained. Another, who is an endowed chair said: “A lifetime of scholarly involvement was propelled by the Foundation’s support in a critical and nascent period in my career.” An assistant professor asserted: “Without question, it helped me when I was looking for a job ...the Fellowship has a reputation for funding quality people who are up and coming.”

For some, the Fellowship prompted them to ground their work more primarily in Jewish studies. A scholar who was trained in comparative literature was working on research that included both African American and Jewish material. Receiving the Fellowship was his “first step toward refiguring [his] specialization as Jewish studies.” Today, he is an endowed chair of Yiddish literature, language, and culture. An assistant professor of

A lifetime of scholarly involvement was propelled by the Foundation’s support in a critical and nascent period in my career.
– Jewish studies endowed chair

⁴ From the late 1990s to 2007 Fellowships were awarded for \$10,000. Since 2007, the amount of the Fellowship has been increased to \$16,000.

history was doing work in both Jewish and Russian studies, but felt that she was “mainly in the Russian studies orbit.” She was gratified to be recognized by more than one audience, and credits the Fellowship with helping her obtain a post-doctoral fellowship in Jewish studies.

Every survey respondent reported that the Fellowship gave him or her more credibility as a scholar. 97% of survey respondents indicated the Fellowship increased their self-confidence to a great extent or to some extent. Recognition from scholars outside of their university gave recipients a sense of validation. An assistant professor said that her credibility as a scholar was enhanced because external funding is more competitive. Another recipient expressed a sentiment that many others articulated: “It was tremendously affirming, and made me feel like I had great academic promise and capability.” Still another noted the significance of the Fellowship’s timing. “As a graduate student and even now, you have a lot of self doubt because you spend a lot of time by yourself. Before [receiving the Fellowship] only a small group of professors had assessed my work ...it was a vote of confidence in my scholarship from other scholars who deemed me worth investing in.”

Three respondents noted that the application process was itself helpful. Applying for the Fellowship helped a recipient, who is now an associate professor, strengthen her focus and articulate her project more clearly. An assistant professor was challenged by the application process, which he said “required learning how to translate my work into a language that is accessible and interesting for non-specialists.”

Every respondent expressed gratitude to the Foundation. Many said they would be happy to “give back” to the Foundation in some way. Some have already served on committees, and others have reviewed grant proposals. Fellows also indirectly support the Foundation by encouraging their graduate students to apply, and submitting letters of recommendation on their behalf. Many Fellows said they have no other contact with the Foundation than reading the organization’s emails, but indicated a strong interest in networking opportunities with other Fellows.

Influence Beyond the Academy

The impact of Jewish studies scholarship resonates far beyond the academy. Scholarship effects Jewish communal organizations’ policy making and Jewish philanthropists’ funding decisions. Visual and performing arts have been informed by research and theory. Scholars influence the thinking of college students and adult learners. Conversely, the contemporary social milieu and historical developments along with the concerns and interests of individuals, influence scholarship.

Scholars’ perspectives are brought to mainstream culture in numerous ways. Fellows’ writing has been published in both the popular and Jewish press. 81% of survey respondents indicated that they have had articles published secular publications and 85% have been published in Jewish publications. Another 25% said they blog on Jewish topics. Scholars also contribute

content and consultation to Jewish websites like the Jewish Women’s Archive and MyJewishLearning.com, the most widely visited Jewish website.

The Jewish Book Council has recognized many Fellows’ work. They are recipients of the Everett Family Foundation Jewish Book of the Year Award, the National Jewish Book Award, and the Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature (non-fiction). Fellows have also been awarded the Koret Jewish Book Award.

Some academic books have been widely read by lay audiences. For example, 1978 Fellow Jonathan Sarna’s highly acclaimed book *American Judaism: A History* was selected as the Best Book of 2004 in the religion category by *Publishers Weekly* and was a *Los Angeles Times* bestseller. 1965 Fellow Ezra Mendelsohn’s book *Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars* and 1976 Fellow Jenna Joselit’s *Our Gang: Jewish Crime and the New York Jewish Community, 1900-1940* are among the top ten best selling titles in Jewish studies at Indiana University Press. 1976 Fellow Daniel Matt’s book *The Essential Kabbalah: The Heart of Jewish Mysticism* is number 37 on the Amazon.com’s 100 best sellers in Judaism.

Scholars are consultants and advisors to Jewish organizations. 38% of survey respondents indicated that they have offered policy advice to Jewish communal leaders and conducted research for Jewish organizations. Many Fellows serve on advisory committees. For example, Nathaniel Deutsch (1993 recipient) and Tony Michels (1995 recipient) are on the “faculty” of Reboot, an organization aimed at reaching unaffiliated Jewish young adults through cultural projects and networking. 1995 recipient Mark Rader and 1976 recipient David Biale are on the academic advisory committee of the Posen Foundation. Also, the majority of the prominent scholars on the selection committee of the Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Fund for Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships in Jewish Studies are typically past recipients.

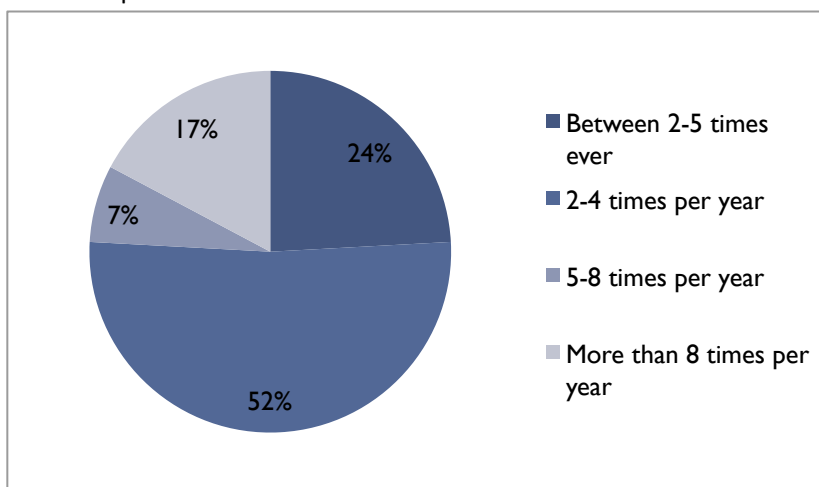
Some Fellows contribute to American Jewish culture by lending their expertise to the arts. They work as historical consultants for Jewish museums and archives. Scholars also serve as consultants on film and fiction projects. 57% of survey respondents said they have advised artists, filmmakers, and/or writers about topics related to Jewish studies. Other scholars draw upon their own research to inform their artistic endeavors. 2003 recipient Galeet Dardashti lectures about her work as a cultural anthropologist on Israeli music and Jewish culture and performs traditional Middle Eastern Jewish music.

Fellows’ scholarship reaches broad audiences through lectures, conferences, and adult education classes. Respondents mentioned giving public lectures organized through universities, Hillel chapters, local synagogues and national and local Jewish organizations. Many are registered with speaker’s bureaus like the American Jewish Historical Society Academic Council Speakers Bureau, The Jewish Theological Seminary Speakers Bureau, and the B’nai B’rith Lecture Bureau. A Fellow, who is a professor of comparative literature, noted that he is frequently invited to speak at synagogues and Jewish cultural events. “My counterparts who focus on other topics don’t have the same access to the general public ...none of my peers get invited to speak at churches,” he asserted, continuing: “most people in comparative

literature don't have resources coming from a community to support their work that I do." Other Fellows too, spoke of their participation in "the synagogue speaking circuit." A Fellow expressed appreciation for the communal support of his scholarship, commenting that he is grateful to have "an audience of educated lay people who want to hear about my work."

Fellows are very familiar with the role of public intellectual. Every survey respondent indicated that they speak to non-academic audiences [Figure 4]. 83% have taught adult education classes and 43% have organized community-oriented conferences on topics related to Jewish studies.

Figure 4: Frequency of survey respondents' speaking about Jewish topics to non-academic audiences



Individual scholars are engaging with Jewish communities to varying extents. One Fellow, who teaches in a small town, mentioned the particular importance of her role as a public Jewish figure in an area where there are few. Other Fellows mentioned that some of their colleagues are less inclined toward that role for whatever reason: because they are uninterested, uncomfortable with that position, or because they are not Jewish. A few Fellows mentioned their apprehension about the potential influence of donors' interests on their scholarship.

Many others commented about the importance of bridging the academic and non-academic arenas. A recipient whose work focuses on Jewish texts and culture in Classical to Late Antiquity expressed the sentiments of many with these words:

I'm certainly looking to reach out into areas of Jewish life beyond the ivory tower. There is potential to influence how people think about what Judaism is, what Jewishness means. Unlike religious leaders, scholars employ all sorts of different methodologies and are influenced by larger thinking like critical theory. People tend to have fixed and often simplified ideas about Jewish texts and the Jewish past. One of the values of scholarship is the ability to show how things are more complicated ... to chip away at some of the

fixed, stale ways of thinking and open up new ways to think about Jewish identity and what it means to be Jewish and practice Jewish ritual.

Another Fellow too, mentioned the power of Jewish studies to engage people who are not interested in participating in religious Jewish life. A Fellow remarked, “With the movement of cultural and intellectual life away from the synagogue, the academy has become increasingly important to Jewish community.” Inside the academy, Jewish studies provides entre to students who are otherwise uninterested in Jewish life on campus. According to a 2006 study of Jewish college students, 55% have minimal or no connection to Jewish student organizations, but 45% of all Jewish undergraduates are likely to take at least one Jewish studies course before they graduate (Sales and Saxe, 12). By supporting Jewish studies professors, the Foundation is having an indirect impact on the lives of thousands of students of Jewish studies at colleges and universities across North America.

Funding opportunities for doctoral candidates in Jewish studies.

Despite the broad impact of Jewish studies scholarship, funding in the field remains limited. When the Fellowship was established in 1960, funding for doctoral candidate's dissertation writing year was not guaranteed. This remains the case today. Graduate students must compete for a small number of fellowships from their home departments and universities. They can also apply for national dissertation fellowships in Jewish studies. There are four fellowships in Jewish studies that offer support comparable to the Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Fund for Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships. The International Doctoral Scholarship for Studies Specializing in Jewish Fields from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture is the only other Fellowship that is not limited in scope to a specific topic within Jewish studies. In recent years, the Memorial Foundation has increased the amount of support, but decreased the number of Fellowships awarded. However, the maximum award of \$10,000 remains significantly lower than the \$16,000 awarded through the Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Fellowship.

The other three Fellowships in Jewish studies are limited to specific areas of focus within the field. The Center for Jewish History Graduate Research Fellowship exclusively supports research that utilizes the Center's collections. [See Appendix A for a more complete list of funding opportunities available to doctoral candidates in Jewish studies]. The Claims Conference Academic Fellowships for Advanced Shoah Studies supports research about the Shoah from a variety of disciplines. The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise Fellowship from the Schusterman Israel Scholar Awards is awarded to five graduate and undergraduates whose work focuses on Israel.

Other grants in Jewish studies offer limited support and are narrow in scope. For example, The American Jewish Historical Society awards grants of up to \$6000 to fund research undertaken at the archive. Yivo Institute for Jewish Research awards a number of grants for \$1500-2000, and one for \$7500, all to be used for research conducted in the archives.

There are six dissertation completion fellowships available to Jewish studies scholars, which are also open to students in multiple fields. For example, the Mellon/American Council of Learned Societies awards 65 dissertation completion fellowships to students in humanities and social sciences. The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation awards 28 Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships to scholars of ethical or religious values in fields of the humanities and social sciences. These fellowships are highly competitive, with thousands of applicants each year. Graduate students in Jewish studies have received these grants in the past, but funding is not awarded to Jewish studies scholarship every year. The Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Fund for Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships is the only dissertation completion Fellowship in Jewish studies.

Conclusion

The findings of this research indicated that the Fellowship has had a significant impact on both individuals and the field of Jewish studies. The Foundation has funded a cadre of high quality, talented scholars who have made substantial contributions to the field. The impact of the Fellowship is illustrated by the high percentage of recipients who remain in the field, the significant number of Jewish studies programs that have recipients among the faculty, and the academic and mainstream acclaim recipients have received for their scholarship.

The Fellowship has enhanced several aspects of recipients' career development. The majority of respondents indicated that the Fellowship helped them gain credibility and self-confidence as scholars. Publications and awards resulting from Fellowship supported research also helped develop the careers of the recipients. Many credited the Fellowship with helping them to secure faculty positions.

The Fellowship has become a keystone in the field. It has been critical to the growth of Jewish studies and is widely recognized for identifying and supporting the next generation of influential scholars.

Recommendations

The Foundation for Jewish Culture should continue to:

- Offer generous fellowships to enable emerging Jewish studies scholar's expeditious dissertation completion
- Broaden the scope of topics by awarding Fellowships to scholars outside of traditionally recognized disciplines within Jewish studies
- Award Fellowships to scholars from diverse geographic areas
- Actively showcase current and former Fellows' accomplishments

The Foundation for Jewish Culture should:

Focus on maintaining connections with Fellows

Many Fellows noted that they receive Foundation emails, and some indicated that they have served on committees and reviewed applications. Though almost every Fellow expressed tremendous gratitude to the Foundation, few are actively engaged. Increasing the available avenues for alumni involvement would improve the Foundation's return on investment. Also, Fellows expressed concern about their perception of the Foundation's waning interest in scholarship. Engaging alumni more actively would convey the Foundation's continued commitment to fostering American Jewish culture by supporting Jewish studies scholarship.

Facilitate relationships among Fellows

Fellows mentioned the prestige of the Fellowship. They appreciated being identified as a member of an impressive group of scholars, but noted that the benefits were primarily financial. There was a strong interest among Fellows for networking opportunities. A directory of Fellow's academic positions and areas of scholarly research, along with their contact information should be made available to Fellows. This information could be kept as a database, searchable by geographic region, academic discipline and research interests. Also, Fellows could be gathered each year at the Association for Jewish Studies annual meeting to facilitate ongoing networking and showcase current Fellows.

Provide practical training to help scholars secure and thrive in academic positions.

Many skills needed to be successful in academia are not included in graduate training. Fellows expressed an interest in practical skill building workshops for emerging scholars. Workshops about navigating the academic job market, publishing, pedagogical training and work/life balance would contribute to Fellows' career development and in turn, increase their positive impact on the field.

Consider adding a small service requirement to the Fellowship

Consider requiring recipients to present their work in a communal forum at least once during their Fellowship period. This will add to the visibility of the Fellowship and proactively bridge the academic and communal arenas. It will also encourage Fellows to think of themselves as engaged scholars. A Fellows' speaker's bureau could be created, or Fellows could be connected with existing bureaus. Alumni could be given micro-grants to organize events focused on the relevance of academic work to American Jewish culture.

Engage Fellows in fundraising activities

Fellows' contribution to Jewish studies and American Jewish culture could be more actively touted for fundraising purposes. Junior and senior Fellows could present their scholarship at fundraising events. Such events have been organized in the past, but could be held more frequently. Additionally, alumni themselves should be cultivated as potential donors to support the future of the Fellowship.

Appendix A: Funding opportunities for doctoral candidates in Jewish studies.

Dissertation Completion		
AAUW Dissertation Completion Fellowships	\$20,000.	Open to applicants in all fields of study. Scholars engaged in science, technology, engineering and math as well as those researching gender issues are especially encouraged to apply.
Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowships, Diversity Fellowships	\$21,000.	20 dissertation fellowships, which provide one year of support for individuals working to complete a dissertation leading to a PhD or SciD. Membership in one or more of the following groups whose underrepresentation in the American professoriate has been severe and longstanding will be considered as positive factors in choosing successful candidates: Alaska Natives, Black/African Americans, Mexican Americans/Chicanas/Chicanos, Native American Indians, Native Pacific Islanders, and Puerto Ricans.
The Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, Dissertation Completion Fellowships	15,000.	10 or more fellowships awarded to natural and social sciences and the humanities that promise to increase understanding of the causes, manifestations, and control of violence, aggression, and dominance.
The Josephine de Karman Trust Fellowship	\$22,000.	Fellowships are open to undergraduates and also graduate students completing their dissertations within one year in any discipline, including international students, who are currently enrolled in a university or college located within the United States. Special consideration will be given to applicants in the humanities.
Mellon/American Council of Learned Societies Dissertation Completion Fellowships	Up to \$33,000.	65 fellowships awarded to student in humanities and social sciences.
Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships	\$23,000.	28 fellowships to scholars of ethical or religious values in all fields of the humanities and social sciences, to help Ph.D. candidates in these fields complete their dissertation work in a timely manner.
Dissertation Research		
American Academy of Religion Selva J. Raj Endowed International Dissertation Research Fellowship and International Dissertation Research Grant	\$5000.	2 fellowships to support AAR student members whose dissertation research requires them to travel outside of the country in which their school or university is located
American Council of Learned Societies Dissertation Fellowships in East European Studies	\$18,000.	Open to scholars of East European studies in all disciplines of the humanities and the social sciences.
American Jewish Historical Society, Pokross/Curhan Family Fund Prize	\$1000.	To help an undergraduate or graduate student to undertake research using the collections held at AJHS/Boston, the Newton Centre home of the American Jewish Historical Society
American Jewish Historical Society, Ruth B. Fein Prize	Up to \$1,000.	To help graduate students undertake research at the American Jewish Historical Society.
American Jewish Historical Society, The Sid and Ruth Lapidus Fellowship	\$6,000.	To help researchers interested in 17 th and 18 th century American Jewish history

The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, Schusterman Israel Scholar Awards	\$15,000.	5 fellowships available to doctoral students who are writing dissertations related to Israel, as well as undergraduates who have already been accepted to graduate programs, and graduate students who have received master's degrees in Middle East related fields who wish to pursue doctorates.
Association for the Sociology of Religion, Joseph H. Fichter Research Grants	\$25,000.	For research on women and religion, gender issues, and feminist perspectives on religion. Dissertation research qualifies for funding. Scholars at the beginning of their careers are particularly encouraged to apply. The applicant pool may be restricted to current ASR members who were also members in 2009.
Center for Jewish History Graduate Research Fellowship	\$14,000.	Supporting original research using the collections at the Center.
Claims Conference Academic Fellowships for Advanced Shoah Studies	Up to \$20,000.	Research focused on the study of the Shoah. Eligible disciplines include history, political science, sociology, religion, Jewish studies and philosophy.
Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad	Travel expenses	Provides support to individual doctoral students who conduct research in other countries, in modern foreign languages and area studies for periods of 6 to 12 months.
Henry Luce Foundation/ACLS Dissertation Fellowships in American Art	\$25,000.	10 fellowships designated for graduate students in a department of art history in the United States in any stage of Ph.D. dissertation research or writing.
The Immigration and Ethnic History Society, George E. Pozzetta Dissertation Award.	\$500.	For doctoral candidates whose research focuses on American immigration, emigration, or ethnic history.
Leo Baeck Institute, New York	\$2000.	For the use of LBI New York resources to aid research projects falling within the field of study served by the LBI, namely the social, communal and intellectual history of German-speaking Jewry.
International Doctoral Scholarship for Studies Specializing in Jewish Fields, Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture	Up to \$10,000.	To help train qualified individuals for careers in Jewish scholarship and research.
National Science Foundation Cultural Anthropology Program Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants (DDRIG) Program	\$20,000.	Supports doctoral dissertation research by anthropology graduate students enrolled at U.S. institutions.
Social Science Research Council International Dissertation Field Research Fellowship	\$18,750.	Up to 75 one-year fellowships to support graduate students in the humanities and social sciences who are enrolled in doctoral programs in the United States and conducting dissertation research outside of the United States.
Woodrow Wilson Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship in Women's Studies	\$3000.	Dissertation research in women's studies (The grant will not be offered in 2011 because of the economic downturn)
YIVO Institute for Jewish Research Professor Bernard Choseed Memorial Fellowship	\$7,500,	Supports original doctoral or post-doctoral research in the field of East European Jewish studies for a period of one to three months of research at the YIVO Library and Archives and a public lecture by the holder.

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research Rose and Isidore Drench Memorial Fellowship	\$2,500.	Supports doctoral or post-doctoral research in American Jewish history, with special consideration given to scholars working on some aspect of the Jewish labor movement for a period of one to three months to conduct research at the YIVO Library and Archives.
YIVO Institute for Jewish Research Vladimir and Pearl Heifetz Memorial Fellowship in Eastern European Jewish Music	\$1,500.	To assist an undergraduate, graduate or post-graduate researcher at the YIVO Archives and Library's music collection.
YIVO Institute for Jewish Research Aleksander and Alicja Hertz Memorial Fellowship	\$1,500.	Supports doctoral or post-doctoral research on Polish-Jewish history in the modern period, particularly Jewish-Polish relations and Jewish contributions to Polish literature and culture for a period of one to three months of research at the YIVO Library and Archives.
YIVO Institute for Jewish Research Vivian Lefsky Hort Memorial Fellowship	\$2,000.	Supports original doctoral or post-doctoral research in the field of Yiddish literature for a period of one to three months of research at the YIVO Library and Archives.
YIVO Institute for Jewish Research Joseph Kremen Memorial Fellowship in Eastern European Jewish Music, Art, and Theater	\$2,000.	To assist a researcher at the YIVO Archives and Library's music, art and theater collections.
YIVO Institute for Jewish Research Abram and Fannie Gottlieb Immerman and Abraham Nathan and Bertha Daskal Weinstein Memorial Fellowship in Eastern European Jewish Studies	\$2000.	To support travel for Ph.D. dissertation research in archives and libraries of the Baltic states, with preference given to research on the Jews of Courland and Latvia.
YIVO Institute for Jewish Research Abraham and Rachela Melezin Fellowship	\$1,500.	Supports doctoral or post-doctoral research on Jewish educational networks in Lithuania, with emphasis on pre-war Vilna and the Vilna region for a period of one to three months of research at the YIVO Library and Archives.
YIVO Institute for Jewish Research Dora and Mayer Tendler Endowed Fellowship in Jewish Studies	\$3,000.	To support graduate research in Jewish Studies, with preference given to research in YIVO collections.
YIVO Institute for Jewish Research Samuel and Flora Weiss Research Fellowship	\$2,500.	Supports research on the destruction of Polish Jewry or on Polish-Jewish relations during the Holocaust period.
YIVO Institute for Jewish Research Natalie and Mendel Racolin Memorial Fellowship	\$1,500.	Supports original doctoral or post-doctoral research in the field of East European Jewish history for one to three months of research at the YIVO Library and Archives.

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