



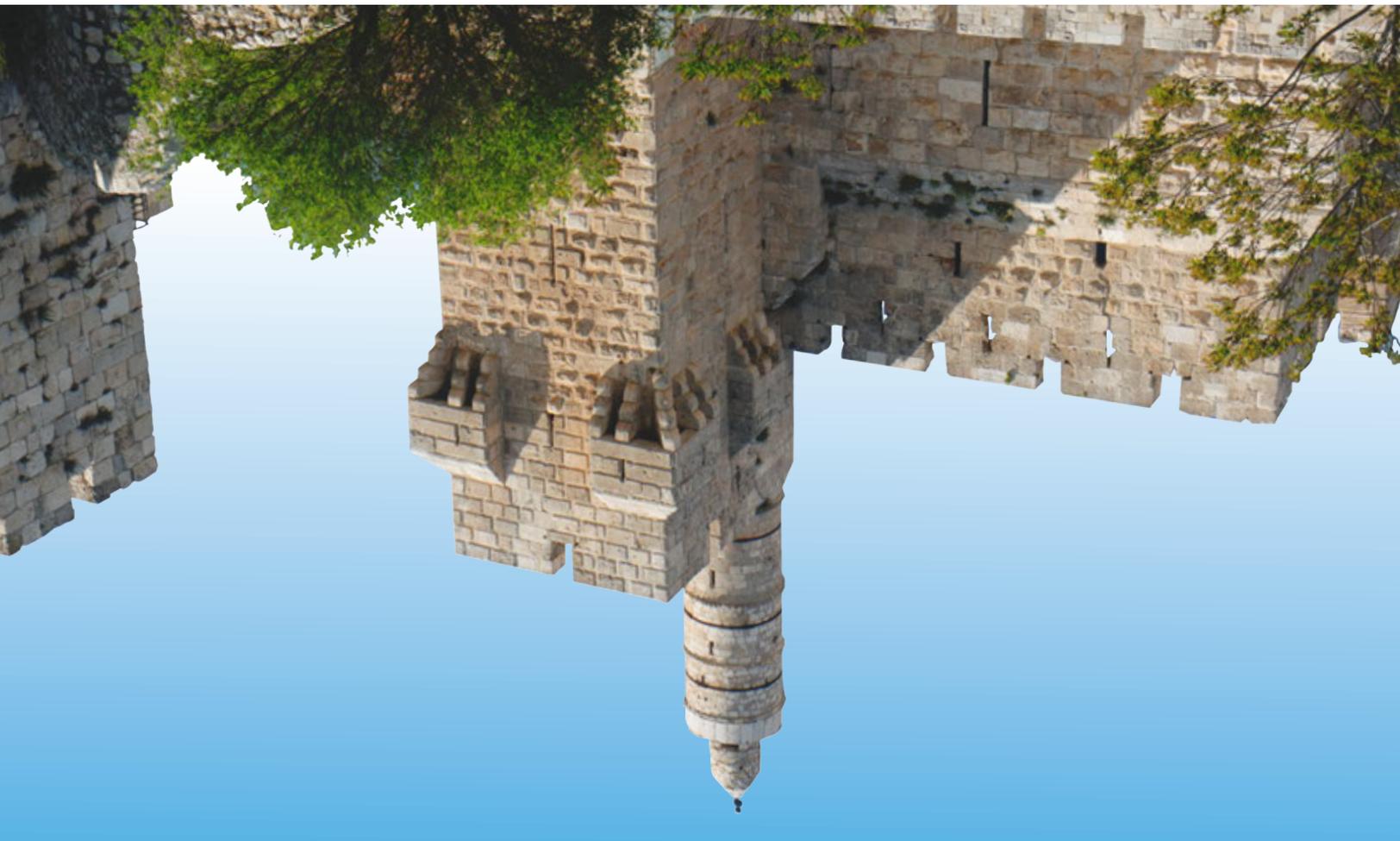
# THE DAVID PROJECT

EDUCATING VOICES  
FOR ISRAEL



## A Burning Campus?

Rethinking Israel Advocacy at America's Universities and Colleges





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# **A Burning Campus? Rethinking Israel Advocacy at America's Universities and Colleges**

## **Introduction**

As the professional leaders of an organization that works to support Israel on campus, we are often asked by other Israel supporters if the pro-Israel community is winning or losing the battle on campus for Israel. Our answer is it depends on which battle you are talking about.

We are winning one battle but losing the other.

Some in the pro-Israel community think we are losing the campus battle because, no matter what we do, they still hear the horror stories; from apartheid week to mock check points to blatant acts of harassment against Jewish students. They take these stories as evidence that nothing has improved and may have gotten even worse. They are both right and wrong.

Others, mainly professionals in pro-Israel organizations on campus, think we are winning the battle because not a single effort to boycott Israel at a significant university has come to fruition. They cite polls showing that the vast majority of students don't buy the argument that Israel is an apartheid state. They are both right and wrong.

The optimists are right that the pro-Israel community is winning the de-legitimization battle on campus. There are few signs that we are losing ground on the fundamental question of Israel's legitimacy as a Jewish state. The fact that bad stuff happens on campus does not mean that these anti-Israel activities are accomplishing their goals. In many ways they are not.

The pessimists are right that there is nevertheless something amiss on the college campus. Israel is less popular among students than it is among the population at large. While the majority of students may not buy into the notion that Israel is an apartheid state or that the country has no right to exist, many do have serious questions about Israel's peaceful intentions and about its human rights record. In this sense things have gotten worse.

The pro-Israel community's battle in much of the rest of the world, where Israel is mostly unpopular, is to halt efforts to turn Israel into an international pariah akin to apartheid South Africa. Our battle in the U.S., however, where Israel is mostly popular, is to maintain long-term two party support. It's not good enough that we stop the U.S. from becoming anti-Israel. We have to make sure the U.S. remains pro-Israel, which is a much taller task.

Our primary task on campus is not to fight the anti-Israel voices, but it is to build pro-Israel support. It is not to counter the negative, but to promote the positive. It is not to teach young people how to debate, but how to make friends.

The David Project is not alone in making these observations. AIPAC has a successful track record in building campus ties to future members of Congress and campus leaders. Other organizations can bring a similar approach to a wide spectrum of campus leaders and constituencies. In publishing this white paper, “A Burning Campus? Rethinking Israel Advocacy at America’s Universities and Colleges,” we hope to capture a growing consensus among numerous organizations in the pro-Israel community about the real problem and the best solutions. In outlining a strategy, we hope others will join forces with us in building stronger ties to faculty, training and educating student leaders, and promoting a positive program of change.

In so doing, we believe that American leaders, both Jewish and non-Jewish, will more likely see the value in the U.S.-Israel relationship, and, when they take the helm, will be much more likely to continue two-party support.

*David Bernstein, Executive Director, The David Project*

*Todd Young, Director of Education, The David Project*

## Foreword

I have a problem; truth is, we, as lovers of the Jewish people, of the universities, and of truth, have a problem. I frequently meet young Jewish students and hear strikingly similar tales of anguish. They feel harassed, oppressed, rejected, disrespected. And why? Because they declared themselves to be “pro-Israel” on campus.

A few years ago, at McGill, my home university, I met with about 25 students at the Hillel House. I requested an update regarding the “Israel situation” on campus. The first student to respond answered as if I had asked “what is it like to be pro-Israel on campus.” Others followed. One student after another shared depressing tales of being bullied by professors, insulted by roommates, shut down by supposed friends, for supporting Israel. Unintentionally, I had convened a group therapy session for Zionists Anonymous. “You are being robbed of the joy of learning in a multicultural environment.” I told them. “You should feel relaxed, open, ready to explore intellectually, ideologically, politically. If you don’t spend some time in university questioning your core ideals, your basic assumptions, your long-held political beliefs, you are wasting your time and your parents’ money. Yet it is impossible to learn and to question when you are in a defensive crouch.”

It hurts me, as someone who has decided to spend his career on campus, and someone devoted to the educational process, to read this report, detailing a systematic bias on my intellectual home turf. I resent the totalitarian anti-Zionism that has both students and professors violating core ideals in their zeal to bash Israel. Too many scholars, despite being professionally pre-disposed to resist simplifying slogans, to acknowledge complexity, suddenly turn reductionist, crude, one-dimensional, when it comes to Israel. Too many teachers, despite their commitment to opening up the world to their students through open-minded inquiry, turn the lecturer’s podium into a political propaganda platform, committing academic malpractice, when it comes to Israel. And too many students, despite opposing sexism, fighting homophobia, championing freedom, turn a blind eye to these defining principles when it comes to Israel.

It is easy to be overwhelmed. We are fighting forces that are rooted in the intellectual, political, and social revolutions of the 1960s. We are opposing trends that have wormed their ways into the way professors teach, the way students think, the way the university functions. But we have had victories – and there are counter-trends in our favor. One thing we need to start learning in this age of consumer protection is for all of us – students, tuition-paying parents, proud and often donation-giving alumni, to demand universities provide the best “product” possible – which includes open classrooms, fair syllabi, thoughtful and thought-provoking professors, a safe campus environment psychologically not just physically.

I am therefore grateful to The David Project for this thoughtful, subtle analysis and strategic plan. The great strength of this plan is that it fights the haters with love – of truth; it combats the simplifiers with subtlety; it counters the hypocrites with integrity. This document understands the complex ecosystem that is the modern American campus. It resists the “Sky-is-falling” tendency to claim that every campus is burning. It understands that fighting “their” exaggerations with “our” exaggerations is a losing strategy, that we need to be thoughtful, nimble, respectful, subtle. And it cautions that this problem, which has been building for decades, will not be solved overnight.

This document, both as diagnosis and prescription, can empower students to fight an epidemic of ignorance, self-righteousness, distortion, and bigotry. It can point the way to coalitions that need to be forged, arguments that need to be made, groundwork that needs to be laid. But, ultimately, in politics as in scholarship, there are no easy recipes. Campus activists should use this as a launching pad, understanding that their mission impossible – should they choose to accept it – is to learn what they can from this document, do their best, and then help in updating future versions of this plan, as we initiate an ongoing dialogue about how best to fight this scourge.

But fighting, countering, defending is not enough. Most important, we need to sing a new song of Zion, one this is affirmative not defensive, one that is expansive not pinched, one that does not allow Israel's critics to rob us of the joy, fulfillment, and challenge of dreaming and building an ideal Jewish state, from up close and from afar. We need to take Israel and Zionism personally, forging individual and communal links to the Jewish state in theory and in practice, using the reality of Israel and the dream of Zionism as a way of developing ground values and meaningful frameworks for living, as Jews, as pro-Israel activists, as students, and as human beings.

*Gil Troy, Professor of History, McGill University*

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### **Special Thanks to**

**David Dabscheck**, for his ideas that inspired this white paper.

**Jonathan Kessler**, for setting the course for a positive relationship building strategy on campus.

## Section 1: Executive Summary and Background

1. **The worst years of recent Palestinian violence against Israel (2000-2004) saw a dramatic increase in negativity toward Israel on American college campuses.**<sup>1</sup> It became clear to many that the anti-Israel campaign had more influence and impact and was better organized than most observers had perhaps previously thought, and that in some ways pro-Israel advocates were largely unprepared to respond to the stepped-up activism.
2. This was coupled with a realization that **the parameters of opinion on Israel on many key campuses may have shifted over the past generation in concert with a growing hostility toward the Jewish state in Europe and the most influential institutions of the global left.**
3. A range of organizations focused solely or in part on dealing with the problem of anti-Israelism on the campus were founded in response. These included faculty-focused organizations, like Scholars for Peace in the Middle East, and student-focused organizations, like The David Project, both founded in 2002.<sup>2</sup>
4. A network was thus created of pro-Israel, campus-focused organizations, with a mix of strengths and capabilities and supported to at least some extent by established Jewish organizations. Up until recently, however, **there has been little agreement about what the exact situation is for Israel on campus or how best to improve it.**
5. Additionally, **there has not to date been an attempt to conceptualize the campus specific situation for Israel in the United States or craft an overarching strategy for how to deal with it.**
6. **A conceptual framework for understanding the situation for Israel on American campuses and a strategy for improving it is thus necessary.** The goal of this document is to fill this gap in order to assist the leadership and staff of the pro-Israel campus network and the wider Jewish community in developing a set of generally agreed upon principles.
7. The strength of this network is to at least some extent based on the practical independence of the individual organizations that comprise it. Tactical disagreements will no doubt persist. **To maximize our impact, however, the network should strive to come to a shared understanding of the lay of the land.**

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1 As one example of this, the student group Students for Justice in Palestine was first founded at the University of California, Berkeley in 2001. It subsequently grew to include dozens of chapters around the country, and these chapters are in turn usually the lead anti-Israel activists on campus.

2 Other student-focused organizations include the Israel on Campus Coalition, Hasbara Fellowships, and StandWithUs

## Recognizing the Problem to Find a Solution

8. The central problem is that **pervasive negativity toward Israel on key leading American university and college campuses is likely to erode long-term bipartisan support for the Jewish state.** Campus has a heightened importance for Israel's standing in the United States, as it is able to greatly impact the long-term worldview of a significant percentage of the population, as well as its opinion and political elite. It is further the mainstream venue where anti-Israelism finds the greatest acceptance.
9. **Campus also serves as the most important venue for disseminating anti-Israelism in American society.** Anti-Israelists make effective use of the more widespread acceptance of anti-Israelism to promote their views both on campus itself and in general society.
10. Throughout the report we use the term **“anti-Israelism” to denote a specific form of bigotry targeted against the modern state of Israel. The key belief of anti-Israelism is that Israel is an illegitimate state with no moral claim to past, present, or continued existence under its own definition as a Jewish state.** Anti-Israelism is usually, but not always, combined with longstanding anti-Jewish claims that the Jews are not a people, and therefore do not have the same rights (i.e. self-determination) as other peoples do. An “anti-Israelist” is a believer in anti-Israelism.<sup>3</sup>
11. There is widespread awareness in the Jewish community of anti-Israelism on many key campuses. Concern, however, tends to focus on its most extreme forms, such as efforts to promote boycotts, divestments, and sanctions (BDS) against the Jewish state or to accuse Israel of committing “apartheid.” These **extreme anti-Israel efforts have an impact, but are unlikely to significantly shift campus opinion. Students, faculty, and administration are often put-off by the militant rhetoric of many anti-Israel groups.**
12. **A growing negative feeling about Israel and its impact in the world is a far more significant long-term concern.** This phenomenon derives its power more from longstanding campus trends unrelated specifically to Israel than to the efforts of the most extreme anti-Israelists. To have any chance at success, pro-Israel efforts must be geared toward counteracting these trends by increasing positive sympathy for Israel among the general student population and not necessarily in directly countering the efforts of anti-Israelists.
13. There are more than 4,000 institutions of higher education in the United States and relatively few have an anti-Israel problem. The situation on each campus of concern is also unique. Nevertheless, **broad trends both hamper and create opportunities for Israel advocacy.** They include:
14. **Political apathy and ignorance.** Previous generations of students may have been especially politically engaged during the college years, but this is largely not the case today. Most

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<sup>3</sup> The term “anti-Israelism” may also be used to describe national origin discrimination against persons of Israeli origin, but that is not the sense in which the term is used in this report.

students now view themselves as non-ideological, seeing **strong belief in a particular cause as itself grounds for suspicion.**

- In related terms, **students do not appear to have deeply held views.** Anti-Israelism may therefore be a widespread but thinly-held belief that can be relatively easily discarded in light of a compelling pro-Israel point of view.
  - Jewish students largely share the apathy and ignorance of their non-Jewish peers. These students are not apathetic about Israel per se, but apathetic about Judaism and therefore Israel as well. **Jewish students do not usually become involved in Israel advocacy solely because of an interest in Israel, but because they have a rich Jewish identity of which they see advocacy and affinity for Israel as a natural part.**
  - Since anti-Israelism, as defined here, is not pointed at Jews directly but at the state of Israel, Jewish students can avoid the negative consequences explicit identification with Israel may cause for them by disassociating themselves from Israel.<sup>4</sup> **Willingness to identify oneself with the Jewish state and speak out on its behalf requires strong moral courage and, for Jews, a strong Jewish identity that includes a feeling of connection to Israel.**
15. **Campus predisposition toward radical political views.** Anti-Israelism is an outgrowth of ideological forces on campus that do not relate directly to Israel or Jews. Counteracting those forces requires a strategic vision for both short- and long-term change.
16. **Weakening of humanities and social sciences.** Ideological extremism and a sense of a lack of real-world applicability have contributed to a significant weakening in influence for many of the academic departments that are the strongest centers of anti-Israelism. At the same time, **growth in business-related fields and hard sciences point to new opportunities to promote Israel to receptive audiences.**

### Plan Strategically

17. Current pro-Israel efforts on campus tend to focus on counteracting the most extreme forms of anti-Israelism or staging “one off” events, such as inviting popular or provocative speakers, designed to attract large audiences. Israel’s cause on campus would be better served by **creating strategies geared toward the specific situation on individual campuses, with the goal of moving campus influencers in a positive direction toward Israel.**
18. **A “win” in campus discourse will not mean creating a broad base of support for the full range of Israeli policies.** Effectiveness of campus advocacy should be judged instead on the widespread acceptance of the morality of the existence of a Jewish state and the degree to which campus discourse about Israel is judged to be moving in a positive direction.
19. **The heart of campus strategy should be identification and engagement with key**

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<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that this does not apply to Israelis studying abroad for whom it is obviously much more difficult to disassociate from the Jewish state.

- influencers on a given campus, with the goal of moving them a realistic distance toward Israel.** The current climate for Israel on some campuses is such that many groups may be unwilling to identify themselves with the Jewish state in nearly any terms. Within this context, convincing key groups not to formally align themselves with anti-Israel efforts can also be a significant “win.”
20. **Efforts to engage anti-Israel groups are not likely to reduce the incidents of extreme anti-Israel activity on any given campus.** They may nevertheless have other benefits, including highlighting the unwillingness of anti-Israelists to engage in even the most basic forms of dialogue.
  21. **Campus Israel supporters will likely have to operate without a permanent campus coalition** due to the anti-Israelism of at least some members of dominant campus networks or the general unpopularity of groups that tend to be more sympathetic to Israel.
  22. **Engaging emerging campus groups can serve as an effective strategy for moving a significant portion of the student population in a more positive direction toward Israel.** Many have a natural affinity for Israel. Israel supporters can also effectively work through bilateral and temporary partnerships.
  23. **Campus is largely not a hostile environment for Jewish students.** There has probably never been a richer array of ways for students to engage in meaningful Jewish activities today than there has ever been, including at schools where anti-Israelism is widespread.
    - Casting the issue as campus hostility to Jews, therefore, does not jive with the lived experience of most Jewish students and has not to date significantly altered the dynamic on campus. **The rights of Jewish students should of course be protected to the same extent as those of every other group, but discussions of Israel should not be framed in terms of these rights.**
    - Instead, Israel supporters should seek to **focus on perception of Israel and frame discussion of the Jewish state in a larger context.**
  24. The challenges inherent in moving the campus discussion of Israel in a more positive direction are significant and should not be underestimated. But **by recognizing both positive and negative trends on campus and crafting long- and short-term strategies customized to specific campuses, the needle can be moved more favorably toward the Jewish state.**

### How to Read This Report

25. **This report is written so that it can be quickly and easily skimmed.** Key points are bolded, allowing the reader to grasp the main thrust of the document by reading them alone. Theses and conclusions are further boxed. Text that is not bolded, as well as footnotes, provide greater depth, citations, and further points to consider.

## Section 2: Methodology

26. This document is intended as a conceptual framework, not a research paper. **The David Project nevertheless engaged in significant research, discussion, and debate in preparing its conclusions.**
27. First, we conducted **a literature review of articles, academic journals, books, reports, videos and other related sources relevant to trends on campus in a general sense, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and Israel advocacy on campus for an eleven year period (2000-2011).**
  - This research was conducted using JStor, LexisNexis, ProQuest, Google, and other research methods such as recommendations and collaboration among staff. A bibliography section at the end of the report lists the principal sources. Other sources were also used, and some of these are included in footnotes throughout the report.
28. Next, **an online survey was developed and emailed to all of The David Project's student contacts.** The survey was designed to gauge these students' views of the climate on campus regarding Israel. It was non-scientific and was composed of nine short answer questions, including optional biographical information and type of school.

The questions were:

- [Optional] Please tell us about yourself: Name, Email, College/University, Graduation Date and Major
- Please define your school: National University, Liberal Arts, Regional University, Regional College and Other
- How do you perceive the overall atmosphere on your campus towards Israel? What is most responsible for shaping this climate?
- For the average student on campus, what do you think their perception of Israel is?
- What are some types of pro-Israel programming you or others engage in on campus? Do you find these effective in impacting others' opinions?
- What/Who do you believe are primarily responsible for anti-Israel activities or sentiments on campus?
- What have you found to be the most effective response to anti-Israel sentiments? Please provide examples.
- What role have pro-Israel students played or should play in this situation? Faculty? Non-campus community?

- Other comments
29. Then, we conducted interviews with faculty members from a range of universities and colleges and with professionals active in Israel and/or Jewish-related causes with at least some focus on campus.
30. The faculty members interviewed were selected based on existing relationships, our assessment of their strategic value (i.e. published works, influence, and university type), and their willingness to be interviewed for the project. Interviews were conducted either in-person or on the phone by David Project staff. The interviews did not have a formal set of questions but general questions were asked to direct the discussion in order to hopefully ensure that the full range of the interviewee's views was expressed.

The faculty members interviewed were:

- Phyllis Chesler – Emerita Professor of Psychology and Women's Studies at City University of New York (CUNY)
- Steven M. Cohen – Research Professor of Jewish Social Policy, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and Director of the Berman Jewish Policy Archive at New York University
- Donna Divine – Morningstar Family Professor in Jewish Studies and Professor of Government at Smith College
- Sam Edelman – Professor Emeritus, Communication Arts and Sciences and Jewish and Israel Studies at California State University at Chico and former Executive Director of Scholars for Peace in the Middle East (SPME)
- Benjamin Ginsberg – David Bernstein Professor of Political Science at Johns Hopkins University
- Lenn Goodman – Professor of Philosophy at Vanderbilt University
- Amos Guiora – Professor of Law at University of Utah
- Bernard Reich – Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at The George Washington University
- Alvin Rosenfeld – Director of the Institute for the Study of Contemporary Anti-Semitism and Professor of Jewish Studies and English at Indiana University
- Ted Sasson – Senior Research Scientist at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and the Steinhardt Social Research Institute at Brandeis University and Associate Professor at Middlebury College

- Charles Small – Founder and Director of the Yale Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Antisemitism at Yale University
  - Jim Wald – Associate Professor of History at Hampshire College
  - Ruth Wisse – Martin Peretz Professor of Yiddish Literature and Professor of Comparative Literature at Harvard University
31. The professionals interviewed were similarly selected based on existing relationships and our assessment of their strategic value. Interviews were conducted either in-person or on the phone by David Project staff. As with the faculty interviews, these interviews did not have any formal set of questions but general questions were asked to direct the discussion in order to hopefully ensure that the full range of the interviewee's views was expressed.

The professionals interviewed were:

- Mitchell Bard – Executive Director of American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise
- David Dabscheck – Deputy Managing Director of the Israel Action Network
- Rachel Fish – PhD candidate at Brandeis University and former staff member at The David Project
- Wayne Firestone – President of Hillel International
- Jordan Fruchtman – Chief Program Officer of Moishe House and former Executive Director of Hillel Foundation of Orange County, California
- Adina Holzman – Analyst, Left-Wing Research for Anti-Defamation League
- Jonathan Kessler – Leadership Development Director of American Israel Public Affairs Committee
- Stephen Kuperburg – Executive Director of Israel on Campus Coalition
- Ken Marcus – Executive Vice President and Director of The Anti-Semitism Initiative at the Institute for Jewish and Community Research
- Rabbi Adam Naftalin-Kelman – Executive Director of University of California at Berkeley's Hillel
- Rabbi Joseph Polak – Director of Boston University's Hillel
- Eran Shayshon – Director of National Security and Global Affairs at Reut Institute
- Ken Stern – Specialist on Anti-Semitism at American Jewish Committee

- Aaron Weil – Executive Director of University of Pittsburgh’s Hillel
  - Ronen Weiss – Jewish Agency Shaliach for Hillel
32. **Finally, The David Project team primarily tasked with producing the report met formally on four occasions to discuss the research and debate our individual conclusions, ultimately achieving a final consensus on our thesis and main points.** This discussion continued through the writing of an outline and drafts, which were themselves sent to a wider audience within and outside The David Project for further edits and comments, many of which were ultimately incorporated into the report.
33. All of the compiled research was interpreted by individual team members and the team as a whole through our experience working on campus and with students. Our own daily work helping students advocate on Israel’s behalf on a variety of campuses around the country was the additional factor affecting our conclusions.

### **What This Report Is and What It Is Not**

34. **This document is not a research paper.** It is not intended to be read as an authoritative account of the current state of the American university, the place of Jews within it, or of the history of American pro-Israel campus activism. Rather, **it is a guide for how to think about both the problem of anti-Israelism on the American campus and what to do about it.**
35. **This document is not a messaging guide.** It covers messaging in a tangential manner, but the strategy section of this report does not focus in a sustained way on messaging. **A separate report on campus messaging is forthcoming from The David Project.**
36. **This document is also not a guide for responding to BDS or extreme public events designed to slander the Jewish state like Israel apartheid week.**<sup>5</sup> Much of this work has already been capably done.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, we believe that while these forms of extreme anti-Israelism have some effect on campus discourse and robust efforts to combat them have their place, **BDS and Israel apartheid week are not the central problem on campus.**
- Most students appear to be turned off by the extremism of these kinds of efforts, no American university or college is likely to formally divest from Israel in the short-term at least, and even symbolic statements of support for BDS from student government bodies have to date met with practically no success. **A far more potent problem is a less-extreme but more widespread pervasive negativity toward Israel on key campuses.**

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<sup>5</sup> Israel apartheid week was started at the University of Toronto in 2005 by that school’s Arab Students’ Collective and subsequently spread to dozens of other campuses around North America. There is evidence, however, that its influence and occurrence was less in spring 2011 than it was in years past, and so its impact may also be diminishing.

<sup>6</sup> See Mitchell Bard’s “BDS Cookbook” <http://www.stopbds.com/>

37. **This document is a strategy paper for the pro-Israel community to better think through how it functions in the campus space.** It is driven by the conviction that the last decade of campus efforts have imparted critical lessons on what can work and what likely will not, and that we should strive to understand those lessons, using them to craft more effective strategies for the future.



### Section 3: The American College Campus and Israel

38. Among professional Israel advocates and interested observers, **there is widespread agreement that university and college campuses are the leading venue for anti-Israel activity and the spread of anti-Israelism.**
- Many countries around the world where this is likely the case nevertheless have strong alternative centers of anti-Israelism, such as widely-read and prestigious publications like *The Guardian* or *The Financial Times* in the United Kingdom, theoretically reducing the importance of campus as a venue. The widespread social acceptability of anti-Israelism in many countries similarly makes the phenomenon more widespread, again theoretically diminishing the specific impact of campus.
39. The United States remains a largely unique case for the breadth and depth of pro-Israel feeling throughout much of society. Some leading American universities and colleges stand out as an exception to this exception. **In the United States, Israel is viewed negatively on some campuses by a wider margin of people than in any other mainstream venue.**
40. It is common for pro-Israel activists in the United States to say that campus matters because that is where the thinking of America's future political leadership is molded. No doubt this is true to a large and important extent. However, **campus matters also because it is where the worldview of a large swath of influential people outside of the political class as well as the population at large<sup>7</sup> is largely formed.**
- **Long-term bipartisan support for a strong relationship between Israel and the United States cannot be assured if the environments of key universities and colleges are largely negative toward the Jewish state.** A significant majority<sup>8</sup> of the country currently attends college. Often in the short-term and certainly over the long-term, the views of the majority establish the policies of the government of the United States to a perhaps greater degree than in any other country.<sup>9</sup>
  - The influence of the worldview that students form during their college years on their politics, and therefore on the policies that might ultimately be adopted by the United States government, should not be underestimated. **The education in a milieu of pervasive negativity toward Israel by further generations of students may significantly weaken long-term American government support for the Jewish state.**
  - Similarly, **campus often serves as an incubator for social trends that go on to have a wide impact in society at large.** Israel supporters should not assume that, over the long-term, anti-Israelism can be isolated to certain campuses alone.

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7 In 2009, nearly 13 million people were enrolled full-time in higher education institutions in the United States. See <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=98>

8 In October 2010, more than 68% of people who had graduated high school that year were enrolled in higher education institutions. See <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/hsgec.nr0.htm>

9 See Tocqueville, Alexis de *Democracy in America* (1835 and 1840)

41. **The long-term impact of the college years and the heightened importance of campus to anti-Israel activists in the United States make campus the most important battleground for Israel’s future positioning in the United States.**

### The American Student

42. **Students<sup>10</sup> today are largely politically apathetic.** The majority of students on the majority of American university and college campuses are not generally active politically or concerned with politics, at the campus level, the local level, the national level, or the international level.<sup>11</sup>
- **Students are therefore not likely to hold strong views on any given political issue.** When asked, they may claim to believe that a particular political point of view is “correct” or “true,” but they are unlikely to possess a deeply-held ideology or worldview that informs their political perspectives. This means students are also less likely to act on these issues.
  - Many students, when pressed, will likely be willing to amend or reverse their position, or simply acknowledge they are not very well informed, on nearly any political issue.<sup>12</sup>
43. **Many universities and colleges are not academically rigorous environments for many of their students.** Culturally in the United States, the college years are seen by many students, including at elite schools, as a time to focus on recreation and self-exploration, not serious academic study.<sup>13</sup> This has its counterpart in strong evidence for a general relaxing of standards in many, though not all, academic departments, with recent studies finding a notable drop-off in both learning outcomes and hours of study for students.<sup>14</sup>
44. **Most students view themselves as non-ideological.** Akin to their lack of interest in politics, students do not see themselves as subscribing to any particular political ideology, leaving them theoretically open to a range of ideas. Zealotry in the pursuit of any cause can therefore be counterproductive, as deep commitment to a particular cause is likely to be seen in and of itself as cause for suspicion.

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10 For the purpose of this report, “students” are limited to undergraduate students, who represent the vast majority of students at most universities and colleges. This is not to say that the impact of graduate students is unimportant. See: [http://www.thedavidproject.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=999:israel-apartheid-week-getting-to-know-their-tactics-grad-students&catid=135:blog&Itemid=128](http://www.thedavidproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=999:israel-apartheid-week-getting-to-know-their-tactics-grad-students&catid=135:blog&Itemid=128)

11 Student apathy was a consistent theme through the interviews we conducted with Jewish and campus professionals and is an ongoing challenge The David Project has recognized in its campus work for many years. See also Putnam, Robert *Bowling Alone* (2001) and Altbach, Philip “Students: Interests, Culture, and Activism” in *Higher Learning in America* ed. Arthur Levine (1993)

12 This was evident in focus group sessions held with American college students, led by Frank Luntz and attended by David Project staff. See also “Alone on the Quad” by Aryeh Weinberg for the Institute for Jewish and Community Research, which found that significant majorities of students hold no views on key issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict <http://www.jewishresearch.org/quad/12-11/Alone%20on%20the%20Quad.pdf>

13 See <http://blogs.the-american-interest.com/wrm/2011/12/07/how-to-ruin-your-life/>

14 See Arum, Richard and Roksa, Josipa *Academically Adrift* (2011), which also includes a valuable discussion of the high degree to which student expectations and experiences in college center around social as opposed to academic activities.

45. This applies to Israel and Israel-related issues as well. **Anti-Israelism may be an ideological position weakly held by many of its “soft” supporters, so pro-Israel campus activists should not assume that strongly negative views about Israel are deeply held.** Positioned well and strategically, it is possible therefore for engagement and pro-Israel messages to win over a large segment of the student population, despite the negative environment in which many campus advocates must operate. (More on that issue can be found in Section 4: Strategies for Creating Campus Climate Change.)
46. **The lack of knowledge about Israel applies probably equally well to most Jewish students.** A small percentage of Jewish students on American college campuses are active in sustained Jewish- or Israel-related activities.<sup>15</sup> While there are many individuals within this small percentage with Zionist passion, extensive experience in Israel, and/or a great deal of knowledge about Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict relative to their peers of all backgrounds, they are not indicative of the experiences or views of most of their Jewish peers.

*Bernard Reich, The George Washington University: “Jewish students today are often less knowledgeable and less interested in Israel matters than in the past. They are generally unwilling to enter discussions or debates about Israel, and are unprepared for many of the issues when they do.”*

47. **The bulk of Jewish students are not apathetic about Israel. They are apathetic about Judaism and therefore the Jewish state as well.**<sup>16</sup> The Israel-passionate minority are also likely to come from backgrounds of sustained involvement within the Jewish community, such as day-school educations and long-term programs in Israel, or are the children of Israeli immigrants to the United States.<sup>17</sup>
- It is not likely that these **students become involved in Israel advocacy** solely because of an interest in Israel, but rather **because they have a rich Jewish identity of which they see advocacy and affinity for Israel as a natural part.**
  - **Birthright Israel<sup>18</sup> and MASA and other long-term programs in Israel** have now reached hundreds of thousands of young Jews and **can potentially reap dramatic rewards in terms of student activism on campus.**

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15 As an example, the University of Maryland, College Park has perhaps the largest and most active population of Jewish students on any predominantly non-Jewish campus in the United States. Yet, according to the local Hillel chapter’s published statistics, of 6,500 Jewish students on campus, less than 8% regularly participate in Jewish-related activities. <http://www.marylandhillel.org/about-hillel/>

16 See Cohen, Steven M. and Eisen, Arnold *The Jew Within* (2000)

17 See Cohen, Steven M. and Kelman, Ari Y. *Beyond Distancing: Young Adult American Jews and Their Alienation from Israel* (2007)

18 See Saxe, Leonard et al *Generation Birthright Israel: The Impact of an Israel Experience on Jewish Identity and Choices* (2009)

## Campus as a Venue

48. The US-based Gallup polling service has consistently tracked significantly larger sympathy for Israel than for the Palestinians among Americans for more than two decades.<sup>19</sup>
- These trends are of a piece with a **longstanding non-Jewish American predilection toward and support for Zionism.**<sup>20</sup> **The continued power of these trends, which have much more to do with American culture than with any actions or inactions taken by Israel and/or the American Jewish community, is certainly the large part of continued strong American bipartisan support for Israel,** as evidenced, among many other things, by the reception to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s speech before a joint session of the American Congress on May 24, 2011.<sup>21</sup>
49. **Growing cracks in that support are most evident on campus.** This is due primarily to the greater general campus receptivity (student claims to be non-ideological notwithstanding) to radical left politics than in American society in general.
50. **Campus has also long been used by a segment of ideologically committed faculty and graduate students to promote radical left politics, within which the Palestinian cause is increasingly popular.** The power of a radical left disposition that largely defines Palestinians as victims and Israelis as oppressors is derived from different sources:
- The influence and growth in the mid-20th century of “Middle Eastern Studies” departments and related ideologies<sup>22</sup> as well as financial support from Arab autocrats<sup>23</sup> is an important but incomplete explanation.

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19 The percentage saying they sympathize more with Israelis than with Palestinians in 2011 is at 63%, near the all time high of 64% tracked in 1991 during the first Iraq war. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/146408/americans-maintain-broad-support-israel.aspx> It should be noted that while in 2011 an annual world public opinion poll conducted on behalf of the BBC also found the United States to be one of only four countries in the world to have a higher proportion of its population more rather than less favorable to Israel (the others were Russia, India, and Ghana), in 2010 the favorable to unfavorable proportion was 43% to 31%, while in 2011 the difference shrank to to 43% to 41%. [http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/views\\_on\\_countriesregions\\_bt/680.php#isr](http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/views_on_countriesregions_bt/680.php#isr) One way to explain the inconsistency between BBC and Gallup’s findings is the drastically different methodology and terminology used in both polls. Gallup measures support in context of the conflict (“*in the Middle East situation, are your sympathies more with the Israelis or more with the Palestinians?*”) while the BBC measures views of the overall impact of a given country (“*Please tell me if you think each of the following countries is having a mainly positive or mainly negative influence in the world?*”).

20 See Oren, Michael *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East: 1776 to the Present* (2007); Goldman, Shalom *Zeal for Zion: Christians, Jews, and the Idea of the Promised Land* (2009); Mead, Walter Russell “The New Israel and The Old” in *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2008). In 1922, at a time when the major institutions of American Jewish life were officially non-Zionist and AIPAC did not exist, both Houses of Congress passed a unanimous resolution supporting the Balfour Declaration of 1917.

21 See <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2011/05/israeli-prime-minister-gets-20-standing-ovations-in-congress-sends-message-to-white-house/>

22 See Kramer, Martin *Ivory Towers on Sand* (2001)

23 See <http://www.jewishideasdaily.com/content/module/2011/3/2/main-feature/1/follow-the-moneyor>

- **Campus is the most likely mainstream venue in American society to reflect the trends of the global left**, absorbing the ethos of the United Nations and related international organizations, as well as human rights organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, all of which have long histories of undue focus on and often unwarranted criticisms of Israel and Israeli policy.<sup>24</sup>
- By overwhelming percentages, professors self-identify on the left of the political spectrum. Significant percentages also self-identify as political radicals and activists, and believe that professors have the right or obligation to promote their own political views in the classroom.<sup>25</sup>
- **Postmodernism and relativism continue to have a large impact in academic circles.**<sup>26</sup> Those who hold these views often have a bias against Western views of history and social progress, seeking to empower voices perceived to be on the margins of history. **Israel defines itself and is defined as a part of the West, so this kind of thinking also lends itself to a bias against Israel and Israeli perspectives.**
- It would be to overstate the case to claim that postmodernism and relativism are the only views on campus. It would also be to understate the case to claim that these ways of viewing the world, which are often cast in anti-American and anti-Israel tones, are not deeply influential on the thinking of many young people during their undergraduate years.<sup>27</sup> **Campus is perhaps the venue students will encounter in their lives where radical political views find the widest general endorsement, including from authority figures.**

*Benjamin Ginsberg, Johns Hopkins University: "There has been some shift in faculty and student opinion against Israel. A number of years ago it was almost taken as a given that Israel was a nice place."*

51. Student apathy about politics in a general sense is probably the largest limiting factor in the influence of anti-Israelism, whatever the intellectual disposition of faculty and graduate students. **Campus nevertheless is the primary path by which anti-Israelists can break into American public debate, regardless of the impact they have on students, and they are exploiting this avenue to the greatest extent possible.**<sup>28</sup>
52. **Not all campuses are equal.** There are geographic areas, largely on the coasts, where anti-Israelism is strongest.

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24 A partial list of possible citations includes: Bernstein, Robert "Rights Watchdog, Lost in the Mideast" in *The New York Times* (October 19, 2009); Gold, Dore *Tower of Babel: How the United Nations Has Fueled Global Chaos* (2005); and Kirpatrick, Jeane "How The PLO Was Legitimized" in *Commentary* (July 1989)

25 Gross, Neil and Simmons, Solon *The Social and Political Views of American Professors* (Sept. 2007)

26 See Bloom, Allan *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987)

27 See <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/13/opinion/if-it-feels-right.html>

28 Stephen Walt, John Mearsheimer, Juan Cole, Noam Chomsky, Norman Finkelstein, and Hatem Bazian are a few examples of contemporary figures who seek to exploit their current or past credentials as university professors to promote anti-Israelism in the general culture.

- **But there are also many large and/or important schools where the phenomenon is not a significant issue by nearly any measure.** Indiana<sup>29</sup> and Vanderbilt universities are examples of two significant campuses that are largely pro-Israel, and there are many others.
- 53. **There are schools where anti-Israelism is intense and theatrical, but they do not likely have a wider impact beyond the individual school** which itself is not largely influential. Evergreen State<sup>30</sup> in Olympia, Washington, is an example of this kind of school.
- 54. **Some schools have a greater ability to impact the national conversation than others.** This is related to both size and prestige, but the largest and most prestigious are not necessarily those with the greatest impact, and the importance of a given school is related to other factors.
- 55. As The Reut Institute has noted,<sup>31</sup> anti-Israelism is often focused on certain geographical areas that serve as a self-reinforcing cluster for the different components of the anti-Israel network. **In the United States, a university can serve as the most important and influential node in a given cluster**, as is likely the case with the University of California, Berkeley in the Northern California Bay Area and Columbia University in New York City.
- 56. **Many if not most of the individuals participating in anti-Israel activities on college campuses are outside agitators not formally affiliated with the university.** The majority of anti-Israel agitators for events on campus are often – sometimes overwhelmingly so – outsiders and over fifty years old.<sup>32</sup>
- 57. **As the most influential mainstream venue where anti-Israelists have a voice, outsiders use college campuses to erode American support for Israel in ways they otherwise would not be able to in general society.** In terms of the most radical forms of anti-Israelism, the primary problem on campus may not be one of student radicalism but of outside extremists using the credibility and prestige that adheres to campus to further their aims.

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29 See Rosenfeld, Alvin “Responding To Campus-Based Anti-Zionism” in *Antisemitism On The Campus: Past & Present* ed. Eunice Pollak (2011). Rosenfeld sees Indiana’s “Israel-friendly” disposition as deriving from “a prevailing institutional ethos that directs the university’s educational mission in a spirit of non-partisan, generally collegial cooperation.”

30 Evergreen State is the alma mater of Rachel Corrie, an American member of the anti-Israel International Solidarity Movement who was accidentally killed in 2003 by an IDF bulldozer in Gaza while trying to prevent the demolition of a Palestinian home. Corrie’s story has since been used by a variety of activists and artists to try to galvanize anti-Israel feeling. Anti-Israelism is itself deeply ingrained in the culture of Evergreen State, one of only three American colleges or universities whose student governments have passed divestment resolutions. The other two are Wayne State University and the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Similar attempts elsewhere have either failed or were overruled.

31 See <http://reut-institute.org/Publication.aspx?PublicationId=3769>

32 Examples of large gatherings on campus where this was the case and that were observed firsthand by David Project staff or student leaders in the 2010-2011 school year include a Peter Beinart speech at UCLA and an event on the Goldstone Report featuring speeches by Norman Finkelstein and Rashid Khalidi at Columbia University.

- In this, they are not likely to have success in convincing a broad swath of the population that Israel is “racist” or similarly illegitimate, but they may be able to convince them that Israel is severely flawed.
- Similarly, successful BDS efforts on campus are not likely to catalyze a widespread movement to implement boycotts and sanctions against, or divest from Israel. But they may be able to effectively broadcast the message that Israel is flawed.

### **Pervasive Negativity, Not a Burning Campus**

58. **Most American campuses are not hostile environments for most Jewish students. The problem for Israel is one of pervasive negativity on some leading campuses.**

59. While acts of physical (and certainly verbal) violence and intimidation can and have taken place, **even on campuses where anti-Israelism is most pronounced Jewish students can largely dissociate themselves from it by ignoring or withdrawing from discussions about Israel.** Furthermore, most supporters of Israel will be able to organize activities and speak out on Israel’s behalf without threat of physical violence or overt intimidation.<sup>33</sup>

60. The chief concern therefore is not the welfare of Jewish students but that **a pervasively negative atmosphere will affect the long-term thinking of current college students, negatively affecting strong bipartisan support for Israel.**

61. **Attention-grabbing spectacles like Israel apartheid week, while notable, are therefore not as likely to impact Israel’s long-term standing in the United States as less aggressive but more pervasive negative views about Israel expressed in a variety of informal ways.**

62. While university administrators can play an important role in improving the climate for Israel, currently many **do not treat even the most shrill anti-Israelist rhetoric with the same seriousness as they treat other forms of bigotry.**<sup>34</sup>

63. As with any form of bigotry, **the precise boundaries between speech that represents fair if critical discourse about the Jewish state and unacceptable anti-Israel slander or unfair treatment of Israel supporters are difficult to precisely articulate. Nevertheless, a significant percentage of anti-Israel rhetoric does cross the line and would ideally be rendered socially unacceptable.**

64. **There are also consequences for some students who identify themselves as supporters of Israel and as Zionists that clearly cross the boundary of acceptable discourse.** These can include

33 At least some Jewish students active in pro-Israel activities at the University of California, Irvine, one of the worst campuses for anti-Israelism in the United States, have consistently said that they do not feel physically threatened as a result of their efforts. See [http://www.jewishjournal.com/cover\\_story/page2/is\\_uc\\_irvine\\_safe\\_for\\_jews\\_20100413/](http://www.jewishjournal.com/cover_story/page2/is_uc_irvine_safe_for_jews_20100413/)

34 A “First Amendment opportunism” is often employed in the case of anti-Israelist or even overtly traditionally antisemitic rhetoric, with administrators claiming that they are impotent as taking any action would compromise the free speech rights of the speakers. Such logic is strikingly not employed when handling many other free speech related incidents, where campus administrators are often overzealous in their restriction of a variety of forms of clearly protected speech. See <http://thefire.org/cases/freespeech/>

classroom repercussions, whether in the form of grade retribution or other negative treatment. Students and/or professors who are explicit in their support for Israel can also face social ostracism.

65. **Overt harassment of supporters of Israel also does occur in some instances on some campuses, and it is often not treated with the seriousness it deserves by university administrators and faculty.**
66. Racial antisemitism of the kind most associated with the Nazis is not likely a serious problem on any American college campus. Swastikas appearing on a dorm room door or other similar manifestations are often dealt with quickly and seriously.<sup>35</sup>

### **Anti-Israel Harassment as Infringement of Jewish Students' Civil Rights**

67. In the last year, **an important dialogue has opened<sup>36</sup> over the use of federal civil rights legislation to combat Israel-related harassment as illegal infringement of the civil rights of Jewish students.** At least four federal investigations have been launched into civil rights complaints by Jewish students.<sup>37</sup>
  - This dialogue has emerged out of the contention that overt anti-Jewish harassment can go unpunished. **In the past, the issue of campus anti-Israelism was ignored by the Federal Office of Civil Rights** using a specious definition of antisemitism as religious intolerance not covered by Federal civil rights legislation.<sup>38</sup> This was clarified to include Jewish students in 2004 and again in 2010, opening the door for legal action.
  - There is widespread consensus that civil rights enforcement, including efforts to protect the rights of Jewish students, must respect freedom of speech and the doctrine of academic freedom. **Contrary efforts could create a campus backlash against Israel supporters that erodes, rather than enhances, Israel's standing.**
  - Moreover, legitimate efforts to combat campus antisemitism could be complicated by overly aggressive complaints, given the current social acceptability of anti-Israelism on many leading campuses.

### **Caveat: Business School, The Humanities, and The Future of the American University**

68. **At a faculty level, anti-Israelism comes mostly from humanities and social science departments,** especially those (like sociology and ethnic studies programs) with a particular tendency toward a more general political radicalism.

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35 See <http://indianapublicmedia.org/news/iu-police-investigate-october-hate-crimes-22185/>

36 See <http://forward.com/articles/141386/> and <http://forward.com/articles/144334/>

37 See [http://www.jewishresearch.org/quad\\_09\\_11/09-11/OCR\\_Opens\\_Investigation\\_against\\_Columbia.htm](http://www.jewishresearch.org/quad_09_11/09-11/OCR_Opens_Investigation_against_Columbia.htm)

38 See Marcus, Ken "A Blind Eye to Campus Anti-Semitism?" in *Commentary* (Sept. 2010)

69. **Humanities departments at many schools are increasingly under stress.** Since the 1970's, "liberal arts" majors have represented a steadily declining proportion of students. At the same time, business and computer science majors have seen steady gains, and business is today the single most popular undergraduate major in the United States. These long-term trends have likely been strengthened as a result of the financial crisis that began in 2008, as students put even more attention on burnishing their credentials for an increasingly competitive employment marketplace.<sup>39</sup>
70. Similar trends have also made for-profit colleges an increasingly popular option for many students. As a rule, these schools tend to enroll students of a lower socioeconomic background and offer courses and majors that adapt quickly to changes in workforce needs and are related strictly to acquiring employable skills.<sup>40</sup>
71. In a general and obvious sense, these kinds of majors are not generally concerned with political issues,<sup>41</sup> making the introduction of anti-Israel narratives into coursework less likely, whatever the proclivity of individual professors.
72. While significant percentages of professors of social science and other humanities self-identify as radical and vast majorities identify themselves on the left of the political spectrum, **in business, economics, and related majors professors self-identify in a more politically balanced breakdown.**<sup>42</sup>
73. **There is also evidence that younger humanities and social science faculty members self-identify as politically radical and/or see it as part of their teaching responsibilities to convey those political beliefs at a significantly lower rate than their elder colleagues.**<sup>43</sup>
74. More importantly, **business faculty and students are often receptive to Israel-friendly narratives growing out of the Jewish state's economic successes in the last twenty years.** The success in turn of Dan Senor and Saul Singer's 2009 book *Start-Up Nation* describing Israel's extraordinary culture of business innovation has also made the topic of Israel interesting to

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39 Declining enrollment and financial stresses on taxed higher education budgets have already led to significant cuts in "core" humanities fields like languages and classics in at least one state, and there are indications that more cuts are on the horizon. See <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/10/11/the-crisis-of-the-humanities-officially-arrives/> and [http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/10/12/florida\\_governor\\_challenges\\_idea\\_of\\_non\\_stem\\_degrees](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/10/12/florida_governor_challenges_idea_of_non_stem_degrees)

40 For-profits now enroll 12% of all American college students. Their enrollment increased 236% in the decade that began in 1998 at the same time as traditional nonprofit college enrollment increased 25%. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/18/magazine/why-we-need-for-profit-colleges.html?pagewanted=2& r=2>

41 There is research that indicates a correlation between the number of economics classes taken by a student in their undergraduate years or a major in business or economics and adult political beliefs. See [www.newyorkfed.org/research/staff\\_reports/sr450.pdf](http://www.newyorkfed.org/research/staff_reports/sr450.pdf)

42 According to Gross and Simmons (2007), 24% of social science professors self-identify as politically radical, as compared to only 5% of business professors. The study also found that 78% of psychology professors self-identify as "Democrat" while 48% of accounting professors self-identify as "Republican."

43 See previous reference and <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/03/arts/03camp.html?pagewanted=all>

many from a strictly economic or business point of view. Many business schools, including the most prestigious, offer special-themed courses and trips to Israel, sometimes after students take a longer course focusing on Israel's business history and climate.<sup>44</sup>

75. **Business schools, hard sciences, and related majors therefore represent a major potential avenue now and for the foreseeable future to increase positive sympathy for Israel on American campuses.**

76. **Pervasive negativity toward Israel on campus is a serious problem with the potential to significantly impact long-term bipartisan support for the Jewish state. To effectively change this perception, Israel supporters must think strategically with an eye toward emerging campus trends.**



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44 The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania offered a four-day, full credit course in Israel for its MBA students during the 2010-2011 school year as one of its "Global Modular Courses." <http://www.youtube.com/user/thewhartonschool#p/c/0/YAJzS7t55MA> The Olin School at Washington University in St. Louis similarly offers a semester-long, full credit course for its MBA students entitled "Business in Israel" taught by Professor Steven Malter that culminates in a week-long trip to Israel. TAMID is a four year old Israel focused investment club run by BBA students at The University of Michigan's Ross School.

## Section 4: Strategies for Creating Campus Climate Change

77. **Pro-Israel organizations need to be more strategic in mapping campuses, guiding student leaders, and collaborating based on their individual strengths. The focus should be on moving the discussion of Israel in a positive direction, rather than responding to extreme anti-Israel activity. Student leaders can best do this by targeting influencers and tying their efforts to a long-term strategic vision designed for the conditions on their specific campus.**
78. For reasons outlined in Section 3: The American College Campus and Israel, **campus is a venue for the spread of anti-Israelism with heightened importance in the United States.** Because of the general left of center political disposition of most students and faculty and the tendency in left-wing political circles to be more critical of Israeli policies (especially Operation Cast Lead and other military efforts to combat terrorism), **we should not expect discourse on all campuses, at least in the short-term, to become supportive of the entire range of Israeli government policies.**
79. A “win” in campus discourse should not therefore be judged on the degree to which that discussion embraces Israel’s policies. Rather, it should be based on the degree to which campus discourse about Israel moves in a positive direction, as well as **the widespread acceptance of several key ideas:**
- **Jews are a people with a right to self-determination in their historic, ancestral homeland,** a right expressed through the modern state of Israel.
  - **Claims to the contrary, or that Israel cannot both define itself as a “Jewish” state and a democracy that protect the rights of all of its citizens, are wrong and dangerous** and therefore beyond the pale of reasonable debate.
  - **Israel is a legitimate member of the international community** and, while not perfect, is a free and peace-loving country that has and will in the long run be willing to make hard sacrifices for peace.
80. **Acceptance of these principles means that campuses where strong voices remain highly critical of Israeli policies should nevertheless still be seen as “victories”** if the justice of the existence of a Jewish state is not questioned, if that view is treated by the vast majority of the campus community as extreme and beyond the pale of legitimate debate, and/or **the campus discussion is assessed to be moving in a positive direction.**
81. **Larger “wins” in improving the environment on key campuses should similarly not be judged on majority support for Israel’s policies but in improvement on alternative measures, including:**
- **Campus no longer serves as a prime incubator for efforts to delegitimize Israel.**

- **Jewish and non-Jewish students have the opportunity to study about the Middle East and Israel in classes that are objective and not slanted against Israel.**
- **Israel supporters can freely and proudly express their support for the Jewish state without fear of academic or social intimidation.**

### **Have a Strategy**

82. The network of pro-Israel campus organizations have not provided sufficient guidance to date to students in developing long-term strategic visions. **Strategic planning by campus supporters of Israel to ensure that their efforts are geared toward the situation on their specific campus and are part of a long-term plan to change campus views is crucial.**

*Stephen Kuperberg, Israel on Campus Coalition: “Even on the most sophisticated campuses with the greatest amount of engagement around Israel there are still myriad opportunities to engage further to build strategic, lasting relationships with key campus decision makers and others.”*

83. Student groups often bring speakers to their campus or hold other “one off” events (rallies, parties, movie screenings, concerts, cultural events, political discussions, etc.) with little vision of how those activities deal with the specific situation on their campus or are part of even a semester or year-long effort to positively impact Israel’s image.
84. **However compelling these programs may seem to be, they will not move campus discussion in a significantly positive direction if they are not tied to a larger strategic vision.** Recommendations for how to do this follow.
85. **Campuses should first be “mapped”** by student leaders. Mapping means **identifying campus influencers, whether individuals or groups.** On many campuses these will be similar or the same, but there will be unique sources of influence on each, and some matter more on one campus than they do on others.
86. **Strategic campaigns** should serve as an organizing principle for pro-Israel efforts for a defined time period. For either a semester, a school year, or longer, **efforts on a particular campus should revolve around a particular theme,** thereby maximizing their potential impact.
- The precise theme should itself be dependent on the dynamics of the individual campus it is directed toward. The content of theme chosen is likely not as important as that there be one.
87. These efforts by students should be matched by **a commitment by pro-Israel groups to provide greater leadership and organizational development training,** as opposed to the more traditional approach of training students in debating and similar skills.

- This can include teaching students the basics of how to run a meeting, how to set up a taskforce, how to recruit new members, and how to create an organizational structure that is based on strategic outcomes.

### Target Influencers

88. Influencers are individuals or groups on campus that are able to affect the thinking of a much wider range of student opinion. **Rather than focusing their efforts on campus in a general way, Israel supporters should target those individuals and groups they deem most important for influencing campus discourse, thereby magnifying their impact.**
89. Notable influencers that can carry over from campus to campus include:
90. **Greek system.** On many campuses a large percentage of students are members of fraternities and sororities, and/or these organizations serve as a chief social venue.
- On some campuses this **gives members of at least some of these organizations social prestige** that can be leveraged to influence the views of others.
  - **The large, active membership of many of these organizations can serve, if successfully activated, as a crucial source of manpower for events or other activities that require high numbers to succeed.**
  - There are many campuses where the Greek system does not exist, captures a tiny minority of students, or is not considered socially or otherwise prestigious, minimizing or eliminating its importance as an influencer.
91. **“Campus celebrities”** should also be woven into pro-Israel activities as much as possible.
- On many campuses (even those whose athletic program does not garner much attention off campus) leading student athletes often fill this role. Other individuals, perhaps through their extraordinary social skills, successful professional accomplishments or sheer force of charisma, attain positive notoriety on campuses for a variety of reasons.<sup>45</sup>
  - While pro-Israel students tend to focus only on student leaders who serve some formal capacity on campus, it is important to note that “campus celebrities” may not serve any role in student government or student groups. This does not diminish their ability to affect others.
  - “Campus celebrities” can also be “hidden” to outside campus groups but well known to students, **who should seek to identify them, determine whether and how they can become part of the pro-Israel effort on their campus, and then seek to bring them into the process.**

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<sup>45</sup> See Gladwell, Malcolm *The Tipping Point* (2000)

92. **Student government.** A small percentage of students on most campuses are active – either through voting or more active participation – in student government, or similarly aware of its activities. Nevertheless, there are campuses where the student government is an important influencer.
- More importantly, **because of the heightened importance of campus as a venue for anti-Israelism in the United States, the statements and actions of student government at a particular school have heightened importance.** In other words, because other significant mainstream venues in the United States (the mainline Protestant churches being a possible and notable exception) are not likely to make dramatic anti-Israel statements or adopt policies aimed at delegitimizing the idea of a Jewish state, actions of this nature by student governments at influential schools have great relative importance.<sup>46</sup>
93. **Campus media.** Like other influencers that carry over from campus to campus, various student-produced media have more or less weight depending on the school and the publication.
- Some schools, like Columbia University's *Daily Spectator*, support daily newspapers that are important venues for campus discussion and often serve as a launching platform for students who go on to professional careers in journalism. Other schools support only a weekly paper, but nearly all have an additional panoply of other publications, radio stations, and other outlets, some with a specialized focus, whether on humor, literature, or another topic.
  - The editors of and most active students in the most influential of these publications are likely to be important influencers on any campus. **Campus Israel advocates should work to achieve leadership roles on these publications themselves or at least develop relationships with those who do to positively impact their coverage of Israel.**
94. **Student groups.** The vast majority of campuses in the United States have active and university funded and/or endorsed student organizations, and at many schools these groups have significant influence over student thinking.
- The popularity and influence of certain groups are different at different schools, and may change over time. **Effective student leaders will identify the most important student groups and seek to incorporate them or their leadership into pro-Israel campus activities.**
  - Too often pro-Israel events on campus are sponsored by pro-Israel or Jewish groups alone and focus solely on Israel-related issues. **Effective student leaders will create partnerships with other student groups to expand the reach of pro-Israel programming.**

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<sup>46</sup> A subsequently vetoed measure calling for divestment from companies that do business in Israel passed the University of California, Berkeley's student government association in spring 2010. The effect of the measure would have been symbolic, but the impact of that symbolism on wider discourse, due to the prestige of the school involved, should not be underestimated.

- Some student groups, primarily Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP)<sup>47</sup> and related groups, are a loud voice for anti-Israelism on many campuses, and have become well-known throughout the Jewish world for the dramatic anti-Israel events they stage at many schools, such as the construction of mock “walls” and checkpoints where students dressed as IDF soldiers beat or otherwise abuse other students dressed as Palestinians.
  - These kinds of activities have succeeded in increasing the profile of anti-Israel groups on many campuses. **That notoriety, however, has come at a cost in the likely view by most students that these groups are extreme and off-putting.**
  - While creativity is key to drawing students’ attention, **student leaders will be well-served by avoiding trying to match the extremism of anti-Israel groups.** Ensuring that their efforts are geared toward those campus influencers they can hope to reach will likely have a stronger long-term impact.
  - **Student leaders should not seek to partner or work with SJP or other anti-Israel groups,** even though these efforts have found some limited successes<sup>48</sup> in fostering positive relationships among students.
  - Student leaders should not underestimate the radicalism of the leaders and active members of anti-Israel groups, many of which have adopted an explicit “anti-normalization”<sup>49</sup> stance toward pro-Israel groups. Inviting active anti-Israelists to dialogue can however in some instances serve to reveal their unwillingness to engage in even the most basic kinds of conversation with pro-Israel groups, deepening campus awareness of their radicalism.<sup>50</sup>
95. Once a campus has been mapped, student leaders should then agree upon and implement a strategic plan for the semester or school year. **The plan should involve multiple activities of different types that reinforce one another and are on one or a similar theme.**

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47 SJP was founded at the University of California, Berkeley in 2001 and has since grown to more than 75 chapters at American universities. It held its first ever national conference in October 2011 at Columbia University. While the circumstances on any given campus are unique, SJP chapters are often the loudest anti-Israel voices on their campuses and have achieved a great deal of attention through the construction of mock “apartheid” walls, checkpoints, and other extreme forms of organizing. There are also indications that the group receives significant support from American Muslims for Palestine, a group perhaps even more radical in its orientation. More information on SJP can be found here: [http://www.adl.org/main\\_Anti\\_Israel/backgrounder\\_sjp.htm](http://www.adl.org/main_Anti_Israel/backgrounder_sjp.htm)

48 See <http://providence.thephoenix.com/news/97659-palestinian-student-remembers-his-israeli-friend/>

49 Many anti-Israelists have in recent years explicitly stated their refusal to cooperate or enter into dialogue over any matter if Israel supporters do not first state that Israel is an aggressor and Palestinians are victims. This stance was publicly adopted by Columbia University’s SJP chapter in April 2010. See [http://www.adl.org/main\\_Anti\\_Israel/campus\\_anti\\_israel\\_trends\\_activity.htm?Multi\\_page\\_sections=sHeading\\_2](http://www.adl.org/main_Anti_Israel/campus_anti_israel_trends_activity.htm?Multi_page_sections=sHeading_2) A February 2011 “public letter” from the Boston University SJP chapter is another notable example of the unwillingness of most anti-Israel groups to partner with pro-Israel groups for any reason. <http://bu-sjp.blogspot.com/2011/02/bu-sjp-responds-to-threats-from-campus.html> This response was effectively used by the student group Boston University Students for Israel to highlight the unwillingness of anti-Israel students to even enter into dialogue. [http://www.thedavidproject.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1010:bu-students-stand-up-for-israel&catid=135:blog&Itemid=128](http://www.thedavidproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1010:bu-students-stand-up-for-israel&catid=135:blog&Itemid=128)

50 Despite repeated efforts by many pro-Israel students and student groups across the country, we know of no instance where outreach to anti-Israel groups has resulted in the cancellation or adaptation of extreme anti-Israel events.

96. **Activities should be geared toward the identified campus influencers, not necessarily the entire campus.** Too much attention is often paid to creating events that attract a large number of attendees, rather than on events that attract the right attendees.

- **Widely-attended events can be counterproductive.** A well-known pro-Israel speaker may draw hundreds of people to a particular event, but potential protests and controversies may lead the broad center of campus opinion (already prone to moral equivalence) to conclude that Israel advocates are as extreme as anti-Israelists, leading to a “curse on both your houses” view of the conflict that does not increase positive sympathy for Israel. Provocative pro-Israel events can also backfire by energizing anti-Israel groups and allowing them to hijack the event to promote an anti-Israel message.

*Wayne Firestone, Hillel: “Very large public events have the potential to be derailed by people with agendas, yet more small, intimate events are treated more respectfully and are more successful.”*

97. **The best events will not necessarily be those that are most widely attended, but those that are attended by or geared toward the right influencers and that in turn influence or activate those influencers.** Examples of successful small-scale events include:

- **Leadership dinners.** A technique developed successfully on several campuses with the support of AIPAC, a leadership dinner means inviting a select group of influencers to a small event at which they are provided information on and/or a forum to discuss Israel-related issues of importance to them. **These forums need not be directly about Israel to be effective.** For example, a dinner that includes or focuses on a roundtable discussion of Arab politics can activate influencers in a positive direction at the same time as it gives campus Israel advocates the opportunity to deepen their relationships with those influencers.
- **Personal dinners.** In response to a BDS conference held at their school in February 2012, students at the University of Pennsylvania planned a series of ten dinners held in students’ residences, inviting a range of people on campus to discuss Israel with them in a more informal and relaxed atmosphere.<sup>51</sup>
- **Engaging influencers one on one.** Many campus Israel activities are focused on organizing events. **A campaign that also includes a sustained effort to engage influencers one on one on a regular basis can be of greater or lesser value than events, no matter how well-attended or publicized.**

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<sup>51</sup> While countering BDS efforts should not be the focus, it is true that they can serve as a galvanizing issue for Israel supporters on campus who should not hesitate to take advantage of that opportunity.

- **Engaging student government.** Anti-Israelists have worked effectively to achieve leadership roles or influence the decision making of the student government societies of many schools. While decisions taken by these bodies may have little practical import, they can have large symbolic value that is increased by the heightened importance of campus as a venue for anti-Israelism in the United States. **Israel supporters should seek to develop relationships with these leaders to limit or eliminate the impact of anti-Israel resolutions being passed by these bodies.**<sup>52</sup>
  - **Seeking to become influencers themselves.** Effective pro-Israel campus activists have in the past identified key influencing bodies on their campus and over time successfully placed themselves in key leadership roles.<sup>53</sup> This is a straightforward and effective strategy capable of winning numerous victories.
98. American Jewish organizations have in the past taken student influencers to Israel. With little follow-up though and without the engagement of pro-Israel students on campus, these efforts are likely to bear little fruit. **Taking campus influencers identified by pro-Israel student leaders to Israel on trips designed and implemented by student leaders themselves (with professional support) and tied to existing campus efforts is a potentially effective and important tool The David Project will be exploring.**
99. When engaging influencers, student leaders should do research and be realistic about how far toward Israel they are likely to be moved. **The David Project’s own I-Engage methodology is a successful paradigm for these kinds of efforts.**<sup>54</sup>
- Convincing one influencer not to support an anti-Israel event could be a “win,” while a “win” for another influencer would mean having them actively support a pro-Israel effort.
100. **Events targeted at a larger swath of people on campus, such as Yom Haatzmaut celebrations popular on many campuses, nevertheless have their place. Their ultimate success, however, will largely be determined by the extent to which they work within a larger strategic vision for campus.** Often these efforts, with thousands of dollars and many hours of student and other resources behind them, are designed and implemented as “one off” activities without a clear connection to other pro-Israel campus efforts. Their success would be amplified, and the message to the general campus community would be clearer, if they were instead organized as part of a larger campaign.

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52 In the spring of 2010 the University of California, Berkeley’s student government voted in favor of a bill calling for the state Regent to divest from companies that invest in Israel. The student government president ultimately vetoed the measure, after receiving by his own account very little contact from Israel supporters and overwhelming pressuring from anti-Israelists. See [http://www.jewishjournal.com/cover\\_story/article/q\\_a\\_with\\_will\\_smelko\\_20100511/](http://www.jewishjournal.com/cover_story/article/q_a_with_will_smelko_20100511/)

53 See: [http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=3&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=625&PID=863&IID=1079&TTL=An\\_Analytic\\_Approach\\_to\\_Campus\\_Pro-Israeli\\_Activism.\\_Case\\_Study:\\_Johns\\_Hopkins\\_University](http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=3&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=625&PID=863&IID=1079&TTL=An_Analytic_Approach_to_Campus_Pro-Israeli_Activism._Case_Study:_Johns_Hopkins_University)

54 See: [http://www.thedavidproject.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=869:the-campus-fight-for-israel&catid=42:in-the-media&Itemid=106](http://www.thedavidproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=869:the-campus-fight-for-israel&catid=42:in-the-media&Itemid=106)

101. A good strategic plan would also include a **mix of political and cultural activities**.
- In recent years, there has been an increased and healthy focus on putting a face on Israel that is often viewed in extreme and distant tones.<sup>55</sup> Both of these trends have dovetailed into increased cultural activities<sup>56</sup> on campus, such as the performance of an Israeli band or programs featuring Israeli food. These kinds of events also have their place. **To be successful they must also be tied into a strategic plan and a focus on influencers.**
  - A performance by a band or other artist would lend itself to outreach to editors and writers for campus publications to interview the performer(s) or write a story about the concert. Similarly, sufficient thought should be put into the artist chosen and the way the event is promoted so that it ties as naturally as possible into the larger strategic vision for campus.
102. At the same time, there has been increased attention on making the “liberal” or “progressive” case for Israel. This has lent itself to increased instances of campus events focusing on issues like gay rights or environmentalism in Israel. These kinds of activities also have their place.
- Student leaders, however, would be remiss to think that these “cover” the political issues Israel raises on most campuses. Depending on the target audience, **appropriate attention must be paid to the “harder” issues at the center of the conflict: Israel’s definition as a Jewish state, Jerusalem, refugees, and the territories.** Israel advocates must find ways to discuss these issues with the broader campus community if they hope to turn the campus discussion of Israel in a more positive direction.

### **Working Without a Permanent Coalition**

103. **Student supporters of Israel will likely have to operate without a natural and permanent campus coalition.** The dominant left-wing student coalitions on many target campuses will likely include groups and/or individuals highly critical of Israel, making permanent partnership impossible. Overt coalition with right-wing or not traditionally influential (i.e. evangelicals) student groups may also marginalize the impact of Israel advocates.
- **It is nevertheless possible for pro-Israel groups to form issue by issue bilateral or smaller multilateral coalitions with different campus groups that can prove fruitful over time.** For example, a student human rights group will be unlikely to cooperate regularly with a pro-Israel group until there are larger changes in the attitude toward Israel within the most influential human rights organizations around the world. If not led by anti-Israelists, though, a student human rights group may be willing to help promote campus awareness of human rights abuses in Arab countries or attend Israeli cultural events.

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55 See Gienow, Michelle “Skillfully Capturing a Charity’s Mission in Pictures Pays Off in Support” in *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* (2011)

56 As an aspect of their “anti-normalization” activities, many active anti-Israelists often try to impose politics and anti-Israelism onto cultural events, as in recent efforts to disrupt Israeli dance performances at the University at Buffalo <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l06f53sMDBo> and the University of Maryland <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVqtN1LsKSE> Israel supporters should not be surprised if and when anti-Israelists attempt to disrupt events focused solely on Israeli culture.

104. **Engage emerging campus communities and influencers.** Campus Israel advocates often overlook the importance of emerging groups with great potential to shape the campus conversation.
- Many of these groups also have the potential to be co-opted into the anti-Israel coalition on campus. **Preventing them from allying themselves with the anti-Israel effort or even co-opting them into pro-Israel efforts is an opportunity for a significant “win” by Israel advocates on many campuses.**
105. **Notable among these are Indian groups, which have a potential for natural affinity.** Indian Americans are overrepresented at many target schools. At the same time, many Indian Americans and their leaders see American Jews as a model for minority success in the United States, and have a natural desire to work with Jewish groups.
106. After decades of estrangement and lingering problems in the relationship, **India and Israel are increasing their ties, and have natural affinities in several key areas:**<sup>57</sup>
- Both are primary targets and victims of Islamist terrorism, suffer from protracted border disputes with majority Muslim populations, have enjoyed tremendous success in high-tech industries and benefit from an impressive and growing national culture of entrepreneurship, and see themselves as the modern political manifestations of ancient civilizations.
  - Israel has a long standing, close alliance with the United States. Indian leaders increasingly see a close alliance with the United States as a pillar of their country’s geopolitical strategy for many years to come. Indian political leaders therefore may view Israel’s successful relationship with the United States in similar terms to the way that some Indian American leaders view American Jewish success.
107. **Other Asian groups are also increasingly significant factors on American campuses** and could serve as fruitful partners:
- **South Korea** has a large and growing evangelical population<sup>58</sup> and there is evidence of increasing affinity for Israel and Jews in that country.<sup>59</sup>
  - **China** will obviously be a significant factor in world affairs for many years to come, and there is also some evidence of Chinese affinity for Jewish culture and Israel.<sup>60</sup>
108. **In line with general society trends, Latino students have a growing presence and import on many college campuses.** Israel supporters should work to engage them.

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57 See <http://blogs.the-american-interest.com/wrm/2010/04/22/the-zionist-hindu-crusader-alliance-marches-on/>

58 See [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/asia/jan-june07/southkorea\\_02-28.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/asia/jan-june07/southkorea_02-28.html)

59 See <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4046985,00.html>

60 See <http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=228199>

- Many Latino student groups are susceptible to partnership in an anti-Israel coalition. Convincing them not to publicly affiliate with or otherwise support anti-Israelism would itself be a significant victory for Israel supporters on many campuses.
109. **Evangelical students are an increasing proportion of and increasingly active on many target campuses.**<sup>61</sup> These students have a natural affinity for Israel and are becoming more active as campus advocates for Israel.<sup>62</sup>
- Evangelical positions on social issues like abortion and same-sex marriage are unpopular on most college campuses. Students who identify strongly in this way may have limited ability to influence non-evangelical students in a pro-Israel direction. **Israel supporters should therefore seek to work with this important demographic without entering into a permanent coalition that may hurt its ability to work with other groups and/or individuals on campus or that associates Israel’s “brand” too closely with unpopular “social” issues.**
  - At the same time, **campus Israel supporters would be remiss not to seek to utilize and partner with evangelicals in creative ways.**

### **Diversifying Faculty Perceptions**

110. **In the long-term, efforts must be made to limit the ability of faculty members to use their positions to propagandize against the Jewish state.** These efforts can make a difference in the short run but are realistically unlikely to fully bear fruit for a generation or more.
- In the interim, **accusing faculty members who propagandize against Israel of “academic malpractice” is likely to be a much more effective strategy than challenging specific allegations or invoking anti-Jewish bigotry.** Rightly or wrongly, the current campus atmosphere is much more sympathetic to charges that teachers are not satisfactorily teaching their subject than to complaints of anti-Jewish bias and Israel supporters will likely have a greater practical impact by framing their concerns in this manner.
111. Efforts to **build self-supporting networks of Israel-friendly faculty** is another important interim tool that can make it easier for faculty to challenge anti-Israelism among their colleagues.
112. These efforts include the Summer Institute for Israel Studies at Brandeis University that teaches current social science and humanities professors to teach courses on Israel<sup>63</sup> and the Schusterman Israel Scholar Awards administered by the American-Israeli Cooperative

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61 See Lindsay, D. *Michael Faith in the Halls of Power* (2007)

62 The trends of both evangelical and Korean influence on target campuses is evident in the existence of a Columbia University student group, Korean Campus Crusade for Christ <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/kccc/home.html>

63 See <http://www.brandeis.edu/israelcenter/SIIS/>

Enterprise,<sup>64</sup> which has also brought more than ninety visiting Israeli professors to nearly fifty American campuses.

### **Make the Issue Perception of Israel, Not Hostility Toward Jews**

113. Pro-Israel organizations have often cast the challenge on campus as an assault on Jewish students rather than as a spreading pervasive negativity toward Israel. Casting the issue in these terms does not jive with the lived experience of many Jewish students, who **know they can identify as Jews and largely not suffer repercussions.**<sup>65</sup>

*Ken Stern, American Jewish Committee: “Over the last decades, Jewish life on campus is in a golden era. Compared to where we were forty to fifty years ago, huge inroads have been made.”*

- **This is not intended to minimize the importance of protecting the rights of Jewish students,** nor to deny that these rights are sometimes denied in hostile environments which are deeply influenced by animus to both Israel and Jews.
  - **Nevertheless, depicting campus as hostile to Jews has not to date proven to be an effective strategy for decreasing anti-Israelism on campus,**<sup>66</sup> although it may sometimes be necessary to combat anti-Jewish hostility for reasons unrelated to a desire to promote Israel.
  - Narrowing the focus of the effort on Jews as opposed to Israel could also alienate or distract attention away from non-Jewish Israel supporters.
114. **Additionally, a focus on Israelis can help “humanize” as opposed to “politicize” the conflict.** Efforts that cast Israel solely in political terms often turn off college students. Personal narratives about the effect of the conflict on individual Israelis or their contributions to the world and creativity often have greater resonance.<sup>67</sup>
- **Nevertheless, the rights of Jewish students to be free of all forms of harassment related to their ethnic heritage should be protected as robustly as those of any other group.**

64 See [http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CCcQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.jewishvirtuallibrary.org%2Fsource%2Fisd%2F2011scholarawardpressrelease.pdf&ei=2-myToqtBMOq0AGjspCdBA&usg=AFQjCNGO\\_BQcZ0x3LA5d2LNtDSi7COaZJA&sig2=NnjPqPqoFABzbFWq8sTSQw](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CCcQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.jewishvirtuallibrary.org%2Fsource%2Fisd%2F2011scholarawardpressrelease.pdf&ei=2-myToqtBMOq0AGjspCdBA&usg=AFQjCNGO_BQcZ0x3LA5d2LNtDSi7COaZJA&sig2=NnjPqPqoFABzbFWq8sTSQw)

65 This was a recurring theme in much of the research we undertook for this report. There are also numerous public instances of pro-Israel Jewish students, even at schools with a harsh anti-Israel climate, arguing that while anti-Jewish outbursts occur and should be taken seriously, they don't significantly erode their freedom, even to advocate on behalf of Israel. See [http://www.jewishjournal.com/cover\\_story/article/is\\_uc\\_irvine\\_safe\\_for\\_jews\\_20100413/](http://www.jewishjournal.com/cover_story/article/is_uc_irvine_safe_for_jews_20100413/) and <http://blog.hilleluci.org/post/2518859976/be-ng-a-jew-at-uci> and <http://blog.hilleluci.org/post/3184149103/uci-not-what-you-imagined>

66 There are a few select examples of cases where harassment of pro-Israel students has been turned into grounds for effective Israel advocacy on campus, such as in the case of Lihi Benisty, illustrated in the 2011 David Project documentary “Finding Our Voices” [http://www.thedavidproject.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=164&Itemid=192](http://www.thedavidproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=164&Itemid=192) The pro-Israel community should not shy away from fighting robustly against these kinds of abuses, including through legal means.

67 See “Conclusions of U.S. Segmentation Study” from Applied Marketing Solutions for the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations.

115. **Leverage strong general American support for Israel on campus:**

- Many influencers on college campuses have ambitions far beyond their years on campus. **Israel supporters can use the continued reality of strong American affinity for Israel and the unacceptability in public debate of anti-Israelism to motivate these students to partner with and/or support pro-Israel efforts on campus.**
- Israel supporters working on campus must also understand that continuing high levels of sympathy with Israel in American society mean that no matter how bad the situation for Israel may be on a given campus we have more to lose than anti-Israelists do. **Attempts to match the extremism of anti-Israelists may even weaken our support in general society, making these efforts at best counterproductive, regardless of their campus impact.**<sup>68</sup>

**Frame Israel in a Larger Context**

116. **Many student efforts on campus alienate potential supporters by making their concerns too narrowly focused on Israel at the same time as they try to connect the Jewish state to issues with broader appeal.**

117. For example, many students have brought gay Israelis to campus to discuss gay rights in the country, an idea with obvious provenance that nevertheless does not usually interest a wider spectrum of campus due to its narrow focus on Israel. Instead, a pro-Israel group could plan a more general event on gay rights in the Middle East that would likely appeal to a much broader spectrum of students. By organizing the event themselves, hopefully in partnership with others, the pro-Israel students could ensure that the voice for Israel is included even though it may not be the central focus of the effort.

- The use of tactics of this nature will allow Israel supporters to “go negative” in a manner unlikely to generate the strong backlash common when direct and legitimate accusations of human rights abuses are made against Israel’s enemies.

118. **To successfully turn the campus discussion of Israel in a positive direction, Israel supporters must frame their efforts in a manner able to appeal to the dynamics of a specific campus and tie them to a long-term strategic vision.**

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<sup>68</sup> Such concerns do not come into play in many European countries, where anti-Israelism has become so widespread that Israel supporters can in effect act with a freer hand and in more dramatic fashion. See for example [www.paisdemierda.org](http://www.paisdemierda.org)

## Section 5: Conclusion

119. **The goal of this document is to provide the pro-Israel community with a first of its kind conceptual framework of the situation for Israel on university and college campuses in the United States and a strategic framework for improving that situation.**

120. The American campus discussion of Israel is of the first importance for four interlocking reasons:

- **The current Israel discourse on many key American campuses is pervasively negative.**
- **Long-term bipartisan support for the Jewish state cannot be assured if further generations of Americans are educated in this atmosphere.**
- **Campus has a heightened importance in the United States because it is the mainstream venue most receptive to anti-Israelism.**
- **Powerful social trends often begin on campus.**

121. Anti-Israelists are alive to these realities, which is why they have increasingly focused their efforts on college campuses both to influence the thinking of future generations of Americans and to use campus as a venue to disseminate anti-Israelism into the wider culture.

122. Efforts to improve the discussion of Israel have long been hampered by four primary trends:

- **A long-standing campus predilection toward relativism, postmodernism, and the views of the global left.**
- **The promotion of anti-Israelism by professors.**
- **Jewish student apathy and ignorance.**
- **The unwillingness of administrators to treat anti-Israelism in the same manner as they treat other forms of bigotry.**

123. Serious instances of anti-Jewish harassment occur on many campuses and deserve to be treated with the utmost seriousness. Efforts to use legal means to combat those abuses in a broad manner may however backfire lacking an acceptance of anti-Israelism as a form of bigotry by the general campus community.

124. There are nevertheless five trends that favor improvement in campus discussion of Israel:
- **General student political apathy and ignorance.**
  - **Changing dynamics in the backgrounds of the student population.**
  - **Weakening influence of humanities, social science, and related departments, as well as evidence of decreasing political radicalism among younger professors.**
  - **Growth in influence and size of business, economics, and related departments.**
  - **More effective and strategic advocacy and other interventions on the part of the pro-Israel community on campus.**
125. Some schools are predisposed to a pro-Israel point of view.
126. Improvements of the campus discussion at target schools with a more negative atmosphere toward Israel can nevertheless still be seen as a win even if this falls short of generating widespread support for Israel's policies.
127. Campus activism by Israel supporters is generally not strategic. In order to improve discourse about Israel, **they will need to identify the key influencers on their campus and target their efforts toward them.**
128. Israel supporters will also likely need to learn how to **work without a permanent campus coalition.** Permanent coalition with dominant left-wing blocs may be impossible due to the anti-Israelism of coalition members. Traditionally less influential right-wing groups may also not be fruitful alliances due to the unpopularity of social issue positions taken by these groups.
129. Israel supporters should nevertheless seek to work with groups on an issue by issue basis and **frame their efforts as much as possible in less Israel-specific and more general terms.**
130. Israel supporters should also be wary of framing Israel in solely "Jewish" terms, as to date this strategy has not seen significant success.
131. The David Project deploys significant resources to student leaders, including employing full-time staff dedicated both to assisting campus organizing efforts and providing in-depth education. Financial resources in the form of grants and off-campus conferences and additional educational experiences ensure that The David Project, in partnership with talented and passionate student leaders and the existing network of other pro-Israel organizations active on campus, can positively shape campus opinion on Israel.

132. **This report is not intended as the final word on the issue of Israel on campus.** We feel that the importance of the question makes it imperative that the pro-Israel community review critically its conceptual understanding of the issue in order to build more successful strategies for the future. **If this document helps generate a better conversation it will have served its purpose.**

133. **To ensure continued strong American support for Israel in the decades ahead, the American Jewish community must find ways to turn the discussion of Israel on campus in a more positive direction. By taking note of current and changing campus dynamics, acting strategically based on a long-term vision, targeting influencers, and developing relationships with emerging groups, this task can be won.**



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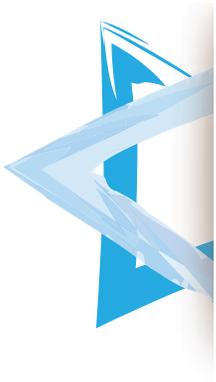
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# THE DAVID PROJECT

EDUCATING VOICES  
FOR ISRAEL

The David Project positively shapes campus opinion on Israel by educating, training, and empowering student leaders to be thoughtful, strategic and persuasive advocates.

Since The David Project began in 2002, it has grown to embody excellence and innovation in the field of pro-Israel advocacy on campus. Each year, we educate and prepare college students to assume leadership roles and support their efforts to deliver Israel programs and events to thousands of students on their North American campuses and in Israel. We are guided by a commitment to provide students and members of the academic community with the knowledge, strategies and skills to ensure that effective support for Israel thrives on campuses and in our communities. Our ground-breaking Israel education curricula are taught in more than 130 Jewish high schools and middle schools, laying a foundation for pro-Israel attitudes and advocacy in college and beyond.



## Campus Offerings

- Training of Student Leaders
- Strategy Planning and Goal Setting with Students
- Support in Building Partnerships
- Educational Resources on Current Events
- Significant Grant Allocations
- Israel on Demand Summer Seminars
- Israel Video Advocacy Seminars
- Israel Amplified Summer Program

## Educational Workshops

- Introduction to Campus Activism
- Understanding Israel: From the Historical, Physical, and/or Moral Dimensions
- Current Events: Today's News and its Implications
- Threats to Peace: Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas

## High School Offerings

- Israel and the Middle East: The Conflict in Context Curriculum
- People, Place & Self: The Jewish Connection to Israel Curriculum
- Teacher Training and Support
- Jews of Arab Lands Modular Unit
- Modern Zionism Modular Unit
- "I Speak Israel" Summer Program with Young Judaea

## Connect with The David Project

- Weekly Middle East Updates and Monthly Newsletter
- Blog Posts about Campus Programs and News
- Video Documentaries and Resources
- Daily Facebook Postings
- Latest News and Updates via Twitter

The David Project educates and inspires students to create a more balanced and thoughtful environment towards Israel on their campuses. The David Project's primary measurement of success is a positive change in campus opinion over time.



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