



PRESS RELEASE  
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## **Hebrew College selected by The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations to receive grant for interreligious programming across Boston-area college campuses**

The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations (AVDF) awarded Hebrew College's Miller Center for Interreligious Learning & Leadership a three-year \$250,000 grant to develop and expand the Boston Interfaith Leadership Initiative (BILI), an innovative fellowship program for undergraduate students.

The BILI fellowship, currently in its second year, trains students from eight Boston-area colleges to serve as effective interreligious leaders on their campuses and in the broader community. The year-long program brings together undergraduate fellows from Bentley University, Boston University, Brown University, Harvard University, MIT, Northeastern University, Tufts University, and Wellesley College.

The grant will enable the Miller Center to expand and further diversify its interreligious programming to:

- include students from four additional Boston-area institutions
- provide additional leadership development opportunities for fellows
- bring together religious life professionals from participating schools
- publish resources to bolster interreligious programming on college campuses
- explore the possibility of creating similar undergraduate interfaith initiatives in other parts of the country

"We are honored that AVDF chose to support this important intercollegiate initiative," said Rabbi Or Rose, director of the Miller Center for Interreligious Learning & Leadership, and a leading scholar and practitioner in the field of Interreligious Studies. "BILI's student-driven model provides fellows with an important opportunity for substantive learning and cooperative programming across multiple traditions. We are excited to continue developing this initiative with talented and passionate students and colleagues in Boston and beyond."

Rabbi Rose and his colleagues launched the BILI program in August 2017 to provide a space in which outstanding student leaders from Boston-area schools could develop interreligious leadership skills and build a network of peers and mentors. Each cohort includes religious and secular students from an array of spiritual and cultural traditions and a diversity of geographic, racial, and socio-economic backgrounds.

In addition to meeting monthly to explore theological, historical, and ethical issues and engage with religious, civic, and intellectual leaders, fellows plan an interreligious retreat for undergraduate students throughout New England. This process encourages fellows to utilize the skills and knowledge that they have gained in the program to expand the population of students engaged in interreligious dialogue.

"At Hebrew College, we are committed to religious depth and openness – drawing deeply on our sacred traditions, while building a world of dignity and compassion for all," said Hebrew College President Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld. "We are thrilled that The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations' grant will enable us to share this commitment with undergraduates throughout Boston and beyond, empowering them to cultivate their own religious lives and their connections with one another."

**About The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations:** The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations ([www.avdf.org](http://www.avdf.org)) were established in 1952 by former ALCOA chairman, Arthur Vining Davis. Grounded in Arthur Vining Davis's principled and innovative leadership in national corporate life and philanthropy, The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations strengthen America's intellectual life, humane instincts, and democracy through philanthropic support for private higher education, public educational media, interfaith leadership and religious literacy, the environment, and palliative care.

**About Hebrew College:** Founded in 1921, Hebrew College ([www.hebrewcollege.edu](http://www.hebrewcollege.edu)) promotes excellence in Jewish learning and leadership within a pluralistic environment of open inquiry, intellectual rigor, personal engagement, and spiritual creativity. Its programs include a Rabbinical School, a School of Jewish Music, a School of Jewish Education, and graduate degrees and courses in Jewish studies; community education for adult learners; and a supplemental Hebrew high school and middle school.

**About The Miller Center:** Hebrew College's Miller Center for Interreligious Learning & Leadership ([www.hebrewcollege.edu/millercenter](http://www.hebrewcollege.edu/millercenter)) provides current and future religious and ethical leaders with the knowledge and skills to serve in a religiously diverse society. The Center's work is rooted in the cultivation of authentic personal and institutional relationships across lines of difference. It is our conviction that through study, dialogue, and joint action, we can help create a more just, compassionate, and sustainable world.

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