



המכללה העברית

HEBREW COLLEGE

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RABBI SHARON COHEN ANISFELD NAMED NEW PRESIDENT OF HEBREW COLLEGE

NOVEMBER 30, 2017 Newton Centre, MA – Successfully concluding a national search, the Hebrew College Board of Trustees yesterday voted unanimously to select Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld, current Dean of the Rabbinical School, to serve as the next President of Hebrew College. She is the first woman elected to lead Hebrew College in the school's history. Rabbi Anisfeld will oversee the College's full array of campus and online programs in educational and spiritual leadership, and youth and adult learning. She will succeed Rabbi Daniel L. Lehmann, who earlier this year announced his intention to step down as President at the end of this academic year.

A graduate of Brown University, Rabbi Anisfeld was ordained in 1990 by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. She joined Hebrew College in 2003, first as an adjunct faculty member and then as Dean of Students, before taking over as Dean of the Rabbinical School in the fall of 2006. For the past 14 years, Sharon has brought her strong leadership skills and passionate presence to Hebrew College. She has exhibited a passion for pluralism, intellectual and spiritual depth, and communal responsibility in all of her leadership roles, inspiring students and alumni to bring Torah to bear on contemporary issues of personal meaning and social justice.

Under her stewardship as Dean, the Rabbinical School has become integral to Hebrew College's mission to promote excellence in Jewish learning and leadership within a pluralistic environment of open inquiry, intellectual rigor, personal engagement and spiritual creativity. The Rabbinical School has experienced strong institutional growth—this year, it welcomed the largest incoming class of any single campus rabbinical school in the country. Over 300,000 Jews worldwide are touched by Hebrew College Rabbinical School alumni in congregations, on college campuses, in pastoral care settings, and in organizations promoting social justice, Jewish education, and Jewish creativity. The School expects to ordain 13 rabbis in June 2018, bringing its total alumni community to over 100.

"I want to thank the Search Committee for their outstanding work on this process," said Andy Offit, Chair of the Hebrew College Board of Trustees. "I couldn't be more confident that Rabbi Anisfeld is the right person to steward Hebrew College's next chapter. We warmly welcome our new President, recognized globally as a leader in Jewish education, and passionate about Hebrew College and its mission. We have made tremendous strides as an institution over the past several years under President Danny Lehmann's capable leadership, and we are excited to build upon the momentum under Sharon's presidency."

Prior to assuming her position at Hebrew College, Rabbi Anisfeld spent 15 years working as a Hillel rabbi at Tufts, Yale and Harvard universities. She has been a summer faculty member for the Bronfman Youth Fellowships in

Israel since 1993, and is co-editor of two volumes of women's writings on Passover. In 2015, Rabbi Anisfeld was named one of the 50 most influential Jews in the world by *The Jerusalem Post*. From 2011 to 2013, she was named to *Newsweek's* list of Top 50 Influential Rabbis in America.

"I am honored to serve this extraordinary community that I have called home for the past 14 years, and I am excited and ready to embrace this new leadership role. I am endlessly inspired and sustained by the vision and dedication of the faculty, students, alumni, and staff with whom I am privileged to work," said Rabbi Anisfeld. "We are blessed to live in a time when so many are seeking an approach to Judaism that transcends denominational boundaries—drawing deeply on the wells of the past, and making Jewish wisdom accessible to a world in need of healing and hope. Our work—providing compelling opportunities for life-long Jewish learning and educating the next generation of Jewish leaders—has never been more important."

Rabbi David Ellenson, Chancellor Emeritus and former President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and Director of the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies at Brandeis University reacted enthusiastically to news of the appointment: "Rabbi Anisfeld is an extraordinary and quietly charismatic leader who will bring her gifts as a writer, speaker, engaged listener, and deep spiritual and moral voice to her new role as President of Hebrew College. She possesses a rare blend of modesty, warmth, knowledge, care, and judgment that provide her a unique ability to connect with people and inspire them to think creatively about how they can engage positively with the Jewish community and the wider world. Her appointment as President is cause for great celebration!"

President-elect Anisfeld will assume full responsibility for leadership of the College beginning January 1, 2018. Rabbi Lehmann, the current President, will be on sabbatical from January to June 2018, during which time he will provide guidance and help ensure a smooth transition. Hebrew College is currently engaged in a process to identify a successor to Rabbi Anisfeld as Dean of the Rabbinical School.

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About Hebrew College

Founded in 1921, Hebrew College 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. For more information, visit www.hebrewcollege.edu.