University of Miami ranks in the top 10 of private colleges chosen by Jewish students. With the Jewish population estimated at 2,000 students, UM Hillel has important work to do to achieve its mission of enriching the lives of Jewish students.

University of Miami Hillel’s way of creating Jewish life is distinctive. Our pluralistic approach creates non-judgmental physical and spiritual spaces that are open, welcoming and diverse in expression.

In response to the increasing demand for a dynamic, meaningful Jewish life on campus, UM Hillel set out to renovate and expand its facility to create a modern, state of art space to welcome community and provide a home away from home for UM students.

When we envisioned the Braman Miller Center for Jewish Student Life, we wanted the style and feeling in our building to merit the city in which we live. Miami has become such a vibrant city, with a lot of options to choose from. We wanted UM Hillel to emulate that. In just three short years, the Braman Miller Center has become a hub for innovative, thoughtful and inclusive Jewish life for students, alumni, University and community members.

UM Hillel is gaining momentum, engaging more students, increasing its visibility on campus and becoming an important asset to the university and the greater Miami Jewish community.

Within the last three years we have:

- Increased our annual budget from $565,000 in 2015 to $1,100,000 in 2018
- We recruited the best available talent, growing to a team of 9 full time staff.
- We doubled our Birthright and Onward Israel participation, sending on average 120 students on this transformative Jewish identity experience.
- Our student involvement has grown tremendously, doubling the number of events with a 70% increase in student participation.

We are proud of our achievements, and excited about our work ahead. Have a look at what we have been busy with, and join us in our mission.

Debi Braman Wechsler, Board Chair

Igor Khokhlov, Executive Director
UM Hillel challenges students with new ideas, new ways of looking at the world, and new approaches to life.

On a daily basis, Hillel helps students navigate the university experience and discover for themselves what it means to be universally human and distinctively Jewish. Our engagement philosophy ensures that students of all backgrounds and observances connect to their Jewish identity.
“Hillel has provided me a home like no other, and has allowed me to create long lasting Jewish connections in Miami and Israel.”

- BRANDON JACKSON, CLASS OF 2019, UM HILLEL STUDENT PRESIDENT
Once in a lifetime

“We didn’t even know each other prior to Birthright. Within 10 short days we’ve come to understand how fortunate we are to be Jewish...it was a once in a lifetime experience and a bond we will share forever.”

AMANDA KUPERMAN, CLASS OF 2019
me experience...
Over the past two years, I have seen just how dynamic Judaism is on campus. Our ten week Jewish Learning Fellowship, continually inspires students to wrestle with who they are and what they believe. Whether we are innovating at the Braman Miller Center or inspiring Jewish Canes to explore Judaism in new and creative ways, UM Hillel is the hub to celebrate Judaism.

Jewish life extends far beyond the walls of our building because of strategic alliances and partnerships with the University. As the Chair of the UM Chaplains Association, I advised student leaders to establish a new multi-faith group on campus. Now we have the privilege of learning together with students from many faiths. It is in the wilderness of Sinai that the Jewish people were born. So if Judaism is about the journey, I am excited to take my students along for the ride.

Rabbi Lyle S. Rothman,
Campus Rabbi and Jewish Chaplain
“I love the Jewish Learning Fellowship at UM Hillel. I leave every week feeling inspired”

SPENCER SCHWARTZ, CLASS OF 2021
“By exposing people to the Jewish faith and debunking stereotypes through honest conversation, we are creating allies on campus.”

Megan Lipsky, Class of 2018
Incoming First-Year Students

“...knowing that we have a strong Hillel enabled me to be openly proud of my Judaism anywhere on campus. Hillel is the place where all of the parts of me came together this first year at Miami.”

RONEN PINK, CLASS OF 2021
Campus Entrepreneurs Initiative

“Looking back at this whole year, I couldn’t put into words how much I gained from this opportunity. I have made incredible connections, grew as an individual, and found a deeper connection with my Judaism and Israel.”

KARIN AVIVI, CLASS OF 2020
UM HILLEL BECOMES THE HOST OF A NATIONAL CONFERENCE: LATINOS AND JEWS UNITED/LATINOS Y JUDIOS UNIDOS

“Now, more than ever, Jews need friends. And we’re not the only ones. Vulnerable religious groups, racial groups, ethnic groups, genders, and others across the U.S. are looking to unite, to form a more perfect union. The Jewish and Latino students who came together in Miami showed us that now is the time to reach out and stand together. Let’s follow their lead.”

SEFFI KOGEN, AJC’S GLOBAL DIRECTOR OF YOUNG LEADERSHIP
PHILLIP BRODSKY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DAVID PROJECT
UM Hillel is engaging more and more students each year, reaching the majority of Jewish students on campus. Hillel understands that this higher level of success calls for a new level of impact.

We believe the time is now to permanently secure these gains and to position Hillel as a vital university and community partner.

Our goal is to raise $5 million dollars. Our financial position is secure, our budget is balanced and we carry no debt. Yet, to continue our forward momentum, we must establish an elevated and predictable financial position, ensuring that UM Hillel fulfills its vision to inspire every Jewish student to make an enduring commitment to Jewish life, learning and Israel.
The success of this campaign will allow UM Hillel to:

**Engage every student** in Jewish life with deep and meaningful initiatives.

**Establish a Center for Israel Excellence** that will deepen students’ connection to our homeland through educational, cultural and travel opportunities.

**Increase Jewish learning experiences**, strengthening students’ Jewish literacy by decoding its relevance for daily life.

**Secure and retain talented staff** that are critical to implementing all Hillel does to enrich the lives of Jewish students.

**Expand professional and civic mentoring** opportunities for students with community members, providing role models for these future Jewish leaders.

**Present signature events** steeped in Jewish culture, values and ethics for students and the community.

*UM Hillel wants to partner with you to rethink the existing boundaries of Jewish life and to expand and secure meaningful, engaging, and intentional Jewish experiences at the University of Miami and beyond.*
“Making an impact goes further than making a difference. An impact is created simultaneously in the present and for the future. As a student leader, I would like to share this message among my peers and with future Canes, L’Dor Vador.”

CASEY DRESBACH, CLASS OF 2019, UM HILLEL STUDENT PRESIDENT
“Hillel is my second home.”
**PROFESSIONAL STAFF:**

Igor Khokhlov, Executive Director  
Rabbi Lyle S. Rothman Campus Rabbi and Jewish Chaplain  
Karem Sandgarten, Director of Finance and Operations  
Carly Greenspan, Director of Jewish Life  
Tara Levy, IACT Director of Israel Engagement  
Rachael Cohen, Springboard Innovation Specialist  
Rabbi Adam Gindea, Base Miami Rabbi  
Jessie Gindea, Base Miami Educator

**STUDENT EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP:**

Casey Dresbach, Student President  
Brandon Jackson, Student President  
Jason Kaplan, Student Treasurer  
Ronen Pink, Director of Jewish Life and Culture

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