Welcome to the Forward’s first-ever Jewish Guide to College. It was created and shaped by two young and valued members of our staff, Aiden Pink and Laura E. Adkins, whose own diplomas are as fresh as their memories. They spent months collecting data and crunching numbers, surveying campus professionals and speaking to students, parents and alumni, to create a comprehensive picture of what Jews take into consideration when they look for a college.

At a time when campus life is either pilloried or parodied, this guide draws from 10,000 points of data to paint a real picture of Jewish life at 171 colleges and universities across the country. To rank the schools, Aiden and Laura created a formula that took into account nearly 50 variables because they understand that students have different Jewish concerns and priorities. Some want a vibrant Hillel and a kosher dining hall. Others look for a campus brimming with social activism. It’s all here — along with solid information about academics, cost and other factors. There are fun facts from each campus, some surprising rankings, and dozens of first-hand accounts by Jewish professionals and students.

We consider this guide a work in progress, and intend to update it every year — with your help. Send along your comments and suggestions to college@forward.com. And join me in thanking Aiden, Laura and the editors for helping us to view American higher education through a Jewish lens.

— JANE EISNER

They made it: On facing page, a student splashed in blue and white powder during a Yom Ha’atzmaut (Israel Independence Day) celebration at Boston University.

Grand Old Flag: Jewish and non-Jewish student leaders from Hillel and FemHillel, a women’s technology club, celebrate during the Israel Independence Celebration at Baruch College.
it provides by far the most thorough public documentation of campus-based anti-Semitism in all its permutations. However, for the purposes of this guide, the only things we are counting are anti-Semitic incidents that AMCHA categorizes as “Targeting Jewish Students and Staff,” which include cases of physical assault, harassment and promoting anti-Semitic imagery, like swastikas. The guide does not count harsh criticism of Israel or the promotion of the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement as anti-Semitism for the purpose of this guide — though BDS is tracked in a different category.

The Academic Score
Thirty points came from two academic factors: acceptance rate (as a proxy for selectivity) and the student-to-faculty ratio. We chose these two variables because we care about individualized attention in addition to the prestige status of the institution.

The Israel Score
Twenty points were assigned based on factors relating to Israel activity on campus, including the average Birthright trip size, active Israel clubs across the political and ideological spectrum, Israel study abroad options, Israel studies programs, and the presence or absence of a formal BDS resolution in the student government or in student referenda.

Where does the data come from?
Our information came from a variety of sources. Most of the data about cost and academics are available on universities’ websites, as well as in the college guides from U.S. News & World Report and The Princeton Review. Information from Hillel International’s college guide was also indispensable. Other information was gleaned from the websites of the major Jewish religious denominations, Greek organizations and campus political and religious groups, as well as from the Association for Israel Studies and the AMCHA Initiative.

But the most crucial, unique and insightful information came from Hil- lel, Chabad and OU/JIC directors and staff throughout the country who shared information and anecdotes about life on their campuses.

— LAURA E. ADKINS

There are over 4,000 colleges and universities in the United States — and every school in our list of 171 campuses could be a good choice for Jewish students, no matter where they’re ranked. Our rankings are based on over 50 different factors and a total potential score of 100 points. We limited our listings to schools that were ranked in the top 100 by U.S. News & World Report, schools that were in Hillel International’s list of the top 60 by Jewish population, and other universities that we know have thriving Jewish student bodies.

The Jewish Life Score
This was our biggest category — 40 points of 100. We took into account a multitude of factors, including the availability and diversity of Jewish institutions on campus, the presence of nearby synagogues, active Jewish student clubs, attendance at Shabbat services, the presence of an erev, the availability of kosher food, options for a Jewish studies degree, Jewish scholars, Jewish Greek life, the size of the Jewish population and, of course, anti-Semitism.

Anti-Semitism is notoriously difficult to define, let alone quantify. To track anti-Semitism, we have relied on data compiled by the AMCHA Initiative, a not-for-profit organization that documents anti-Semitism on college campuses. While AMCHA has sometimes been criticized for its political stances,...

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BDS resolution: Yes
Israel-related clubs: Yes
Jewish sororities: No
Jewish dorms: Yes

Where do Jewish students come from?

Most of the students who come to Emory are from the tri-state area, but there are also students from all over the country. Many come from the tri-state area, where they go to high school and are familiar with the Jewish community there. Others come from more distant places, such as Los Angeles, Miami, and Boston, to name a few.

Learning opportunities:

in the main cafeteria. Kosher sandwiches are for sale at four locations on campus. There is also a 24-hour grocery store that has kosher sections. There are shuttles from Emory that go every day.

in daily dining, and social service programs. —RABBI YAakov & RACHELi TAUbes.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Tuition: $14,934
Room & board costs: $11,886
Average annual scholarship/grant package: $39,947

Scholarship for Jewish students: Yes
Emory Memorial Fund Award

CAMPUS INFORMATION:

Location: Atlanta
Undergraduate enrollment: 6,840

Jewish undergraduate enrollment: 1,420
Jewish population share: 18%
Student origin: 21% in-state/79% out-of-state

ISRAEL: Score 18,33/20
Size of Birthright trip: $5
School-approved study abroad program in Israel: Yes

Active Hillel clubs: 30

Hillel Friday night services: 6

Synagogues within 10 miles: 26
(2 Orthodox, 11 Conservative, 8 Reform)

Eruv: Yes

Most famous Jewish alumnus: Ivanka Trump

Most unique/noteworthy Hillel club: Moral Voices Fellowship for Rwanda is a year-long interfaith and interethnic dialogue program that culminates in a 10-day trip to Rwanda to volunteer at the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village. Kosher food details: Kosher dining is tied into the university dining plan so that any student can eat at Hillel anytime using a "meal swipe," "dining dollars," cash, or credit. There are also kosher sandwiches and other grocery-type items available in different dining areas throughout campus.

Overall Score 84.3/100

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Fun fact: During the third quarter of football games, students throw toast onto the field when singing the lyrics "Here’s a toast to dear old Penn." The bread is cleaned up with a special toast zamboni.

Why should Jewish students attend Penn?

The Orthodox Jewish community at the University of Pennsylvania is the most vibrant and exciting community of its kind on any college campus in America. It offers a complete array of services to Penn students and to the local community, including social activities, learning opportunities, daily Shabbat and holiday davening, and social service programs. —RABBI YAakov & RACHELi TAUbes.

ACADEMICS:

Score 30/30
Acceptance rate: 9%
Student/faculty ratio: 6:1

Jewish studies major: Yes
Israel studies major: No

FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Tuition: $33,464
Room & board costs: $14,536
Average annual scholarship/grant package: $13,650
Scholarship for Jewish students: Yes

CAMPUS INFORMATION:

Location: Philadelphia
Undergraduate enrollment: 9,226
Jewish undergraduate enrollment: 1,900
Jewish population share: 20%

ISRAEL: Score 17/20
Size of Birthright trip: $190
School-approved study abroad program in Israel: Yes

Israel-related clubs: PAC, J Street U, TAHID

BDS resolution: Never introduced
Why should Jewish students attend Harvard? “There are ample opportunities for Harvard students to connect to Jewish life on campus, by attending Harvard’s monthly bagel brunch with 300 peers, hosting a hanukkah party or Passover Seder in the dorms, attending Shabbat dinner, learning with our rabbis, baking challah, doing campus community service and so much more. Students are encouraged to come up with new and creative ideas, and the Hillel staff supports them in making their dreams a reality. Additionally, all the Jewish campus organizations work together to ensure the needs of all of our students are being met. Hillel also leads two yearly Birthright trips that consist of quality programming and building strong connections to Israel and the Jewish community more broadly. We offer a unique extension program exclusively for Harvard students that enables them to stay for five additional days. Students attend sessions with politicians, journalists, and community representatives to go deeper into issues of Israeli society and geopolitics. Overall, Harvard is a place where students have the chance to explore their Jewish selves, find meaningful Jewish experiences, and take an active role in discovering their personal connection to Jewish communal life.”

—REBECCA POWELL, student activities director, Harvard Hillel

HUMP DAY: Harvard students (and a stuffed camel) celebrate Yom Ha’atzmaut.
CAMPUS INFORMATION:
Location: Ithaca, N.Y.
Undergraduate enrollment: 14,315
jewish undergraduate enrollment: 3,000
jewish population share: 2%
ISRAEL: Score 11.5/20
Size of Birthright trip: 100
School-approved study abroad program in Israel: Yes
jewish-related clubs: Cornellians for Israel, TANH, JAC-Mishelanu
RDS resolution: Introduced, failed
JEWISH LIFE: Score 27.67/40 Score 35-54/40
Hillel: Cornell Hillel
Chabad: Rosh Hashanah Chabad Center at Cornell OU-JUC: Yes
Near: Yes
jewish fraternities: AEPi, ZBT
jewish sororities: Alpha Delta Epsilon
jewish dorm: Center for Jewish Living
Anti-Semitic incidents in 2016: 0
Can get kosher food on the school meal plan? Yes
Active Hillel clubs: 3
Hillel Friday night services: 3
Synagogues within 10 miles: 4 (Orthodox, 1 Conservative, 1 Reform)
Erhu: No
Most famous Jewish alumna: Dinah Shore
Kosher food details: Kosher stricter in Kellogg and Biederman Halls, kosher and dairy is readily available at Gries Vegetarian Cafe.
Kosher meat is harder to come by. The Chabad House is working on a kosher food truck to serve gourmet meat options on campus for lunch.

ACADEMICS:
P25% of all students are involved in the Student Senate, and one-third of Cornell researchers are tied to Jewish studies.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION:
Tuition: $56,915
Room & board costs: $13,950
Average annual scholarship/grant package: $30,433

THAT’S THEIR JAM: Hamantaschen baking at the Rohitam Chabad Center at Cornell.
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Fun fact: The Columbia Queer Alliance is the oldest LGBTQ student organization in the world. It was founded as the Student Homophile League in 1966.

Why should Jewish students attend Columbia? “The Kraft Center for Jewish Student Life is a sev-en-story building on 116th Street that is home to Columbia/Barnard Hillel. More than 90 students from diverse backgrounds participated in Hillel last academic year. Students can explore Judaism through classes, Greek life, travel or through one of many activities that Hillel offers daily. Columbia/Barnard Hillel takes advantage of all that New York has to offer, giving students the opportunity to visit museums, attend plays and to learn with some of the great Jewish thinkers who work in or visit NYC.” —JASON BENKENDORF, executive director, Columbia/Barnard Hillel

FINANCIAL INFORMATION:
Tuition: $55,056
Room & board costs: $13,444
Average annual scholarship/grant package: $55,056

CAMPUS INFORMATION:
Location: New York, N.Y.
Undergraduate enrollment: 5,612
Jewish undergraduate enrollment: 1,100
Jewish population share: 25%

ISRAEL: Score 16.8/20
Size of Birthright trip: 49
School-approved study abroad program in Israel: Yes
Israel-related clubs: AmeriPAC, J Street U, Tamid
BDS resolution: Never introduced

JEWISH LIFE: Score 21/20
Hillel: Columbia/Barnard Hillel
Chabad: Chabad at Columbia University
OU-JIC: No
Heir: No

ACADEMICS: Score 29/30
Acceptance rate: 6%
Student/faculty ratio: 6:1
Jewish studies major: Yes
Israel studies major: No, but has Israel studies center

CAMPUS INFORMATION:
Location: Washington, D.C.
Undergraduate enrollment: 7,800
Jewish undergraduate enrollment: 1,500
Jewish population share: 20%

ISRAEL: Score 17.5/20
Size of Birthright trip: 55
School-approved study abroad program in Israel: Yes
Israel-related clubs: AmeriPAC, J Street U, Tamid
BDS resolution: Never introduced

JEWISH LIFE: Score 29/30
Hillel: Columbia/Barnard Hillel
Chabad: Chabad at Columbia University
OU-JIC: No
Heir: No

ACADEMICS: Score 3/30
Acceptance rate: 6%
Jewish studies major: Yes
Israel studies major: Yes

FINANCIAL INFORMATION:
Tuition: $32,000
Room & board costs: $9,500
Average annual scholarship/grant package: $16,500

CAMPUS INFORMATION:
Location: Providence, R.I.
Undergraduate enrollment: 6,652
Jewish undergraduate enrollment: 1,000
Jewish population share: 15%

ISRAEL: Score 14.6/20
Size of Birthright trip: 40
School-approved study abroad program in Israel: Yes
Israel-related clubs: Brown Students for Israel, J Street U

JEWISH LIFE: Score 29/30
Hillel: Brown RISD Hillel
Chabad: Rohr Chabad House
OU-JIC: No
Heir: Yes

Jewish fraternities: Beta Rho Pi
Jewish sororities: None
Anti-Semitic incidents in 2016-17: 4
Can you get kosher food on the school meal plan?: Yes
Active Hillel clubs: 30
Hillel Friday night services: 2
Synagogues within 10 miles: 8
No

Jewish dorm: Want More College Info?
Want More College Info?
We have detailed data on 171 colleges and universities online.

- Scholarships
- Student Reviews
- Kosher Food
- Greek Life

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