# **Brandeis University**

Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies

# Hotspots of Antisemitism and Anti-Israel Sentiment on US Campuses





© 2016 Brandeis University Steinhardt Social Research Institute www.brandeis.edu/ssri

Established in 2005 and housed at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, the Steinhardt Social Research Institute (SSRI) uses innovative research methods to collect and analyze sociodemographic data on the Jewish community.

The Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS), founded in 1980, is dedicated to providing independent, high-quality research on issues related to contemporary Jewish life.

# Acknowledgments

This study is part of a larger program of research on ethnic and religious identity among US college students. We are very pleased to acknowledge support for this research provided by Birthright Israel; the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Foundation; The Maimonides Fund; and the Steinhardt Foundation for Jewish Life.

We are grateful to our colleagues at the Steinhardt Social Research Institute and the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies who helped in the implementation of the study. In particular, we thank Sarah Meyer who expertly developed the online version of the survey and managed data collection for the survey. Sarah Meyer and Viktoria Bedo worked diligently to code open-ended text responses. Micha Rieser prepared the dataset for analysis. Antero Ortiz and Mark Grinberg provided technical support, and Deborah Grant and Masha Lokshin provided editorial and production support. Our cover was designed by Max Stern.

We are also grateful for feedback on the report from several external reviewers and our colleagues at the Cohen Center. Their comments were very helpful and substantially enhanced the report. We are particularly indebted to Professor Charles Kadushin and Dr. Janet Aronson for their careful reading of the report and critical insights.

Our gratitude to our funders and colleagues notwithstanding, the authors take full responsibility for the design, conduct, analysis, and interpretation of the study.

# Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables	iv
Executive Summary	1
Introduction	3
About this Report	5
School Characteristics	6
Respondent Characteristics	6
Anti-Israel Sentiment on Campus	7
Hostile Environment Toward Israel	7
Exposure to Hostile Remarks Toward Israel	7
Being Blamed for the Actions of the Israeli Government	7
Comfort Discussing the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict	11
Jewish Students and Anti-Zionism	14
Hostility toward Jews and Antisemitism on Campus	15
Hostile Climate Toward Jews	15
Exposure to Antisemitic Rhetoric	15
Antisemitic Harassment	
Cal State and Other UC Campuses	22
Columbia University	23
Hostility Toward Israel and Jews: Campus and Individual-Level Dynamics	25
Jewish Students' Relationship to Israel	27
Connection to Israel and Comfort Discussing Israel: School and Individual-	
Level Dynamics	27
Anti-Israel Hostility and Antisemitism in Context	
Discussion	35
Notes	
References	41
Appendix	43

# List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Perceptions of hostile environment toward Israel	8
Figure 2. Hearing hostile remarks toward Israel	9
Figure 3: Blamed for the actions of the Israeli government because of Jewish identity	10
Figure 4: Discomfort expressing opinion about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict	12
Figure 5: Discomfort discussing Israeli-Palestinian conflict due to lack of knowledge	
or hostility of discourse	13
Figure 6: Perceived hostile environment toward Jews	16
Figure 7: Exposure to antisemitic remarks on campus	17
Figure 8: Personally experienced any antisemitic insult or harassment	19
Figure 9: Personally witnessed any antisemitic insult or harassment	20
Figure 10: Type of antisemitic incident(s) experienced or witnessed	22
Figure 11: Connection to Israel	29
Figure 12: Percent who indicated that Israel or Jewish-related topics were a pressing issue .	32
Figure 13: Most pressing issues (selected schools)	33
Table 1: Examples of antisemitic incidents	21

# **Executive Summary**

There has been recent widespread concern about antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiment on US college campuses. Attributed to the rise of the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, reports of antisemitic incidents on campus have increased. The impact of these incidents, particularly on Jewish students, but also on the overall campus climate, is unclear. In 2015, we found that a substantial portion of Jewish students reported having been exposed to antisemitism and hostility toward Israel, but that the extent of the problem varied considerably across campuses. The present study aims to assess the current situation and identify "hotspots"-campuses where antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiment are especially acute. The study also aims to understand the relative prevalence and particular manifestations of hostility at different campuses, and the ways in which hostile climates influence the lives of Jewish students. This report is based on findings from a spring 2016 survey of Jewish undergraduate students at 50 US campuses.

One key finding of the present study is that in terms of hostility to Israel and antisemitism, university campuses are quite different from one another. In addition, hostility to Israel experienced by students at some campuses does not appear to diminish their emotional connections to Israel.

Specifically in terms of the variation in antisemitism and anti-Israel hostility across campuses:

• CUNY-Brooklyn, Northwestern, and many of the schools in the University of California system, are "hotspots" where the majority of Jewish students perceive a hostile environment toward Israel, and over one quarter perceive a general environment of hostility toward Jews on their campus. On these campuses it appears that the high rates of antisemitic harassment and hostility are largely driven by hostility toward Israel.

- At Wisconsin, Rutgers, and Illinois, hostility toward Jews and antisemitic harassment are relatively high but do not seem to be highly connected to criticism of Israel. At these schools, more traditional antisemitic stereotypes and tropes, rather than criticism of Israel's politics, seem to be driving the perceived hostility toward Jews.
- There are many schools where antisemitism and hostility to Israel are negligible. Respondents at several large private universities, including U of Miami, Wash U, and Syracuse perceive very little hostility toward Israel, and virtually all of these respondents disagree that there is a hostile environment toward Jews.
- One of the strongest predictors of perceiving a hostile climate toward Israel and Jews is the presence of an active Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) group on campus.

In terms of the relationship between hostile environments and students' connections to Israel, the study found that:

• Even when they experience antisemitism and hostility toward Israel, Jewish young adults' connection to Israel remain strong. Neither the presence of an SJP group on campus nor being on a campus which is generally perceived as having a hostile environment to Israel are related to the strength of students' connection to Israel.

- The most Jewishly engaged students, including those who are more closely connected to Israel, are the most likely to perceive hostility to Jews and Israel on their campus.
- Connection to Israel notwithstanding, students often feel silenced in debates about this topic. On many campuses more than one third of Jewish students feel at least a little uncomfortable expressing their opinions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- Discomfort due to the hostility of the discourse occurs more frequently on campuses that are notable for pervasive perceptions of anti-Israel sentiment, including CUNY-Brooklyn, NYU, and the UC campuses.
- Regardless of which school students attend, and how much anti-Israel sentiment they perceive, a significant minority of Jewish undergraduates are uncomfortable expressing their opinions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict because they feel they do not know enough to enter the conversation.

Public discussion has focused on legislative remedies for tempering antisemitism and anti-Israel hostility on college campuses. Based on the present research, our view is that more emphasis needs to be placed on educational strategies. The complex picture painted by this study not only suggests a different policy emphasis, but also reinforces the importance of systematic research to assess the prevalence of antisemitic and anti-Israel environments on campuses, and their impact on Jewish students. Future research should focus on understanding the dynamics of hostility as they are reflected on different campuses and how they are experienced by both Jewish and non-Jewish students. Although there may be some general best practices for developing policy responses across campuses, efforts to address these issues will need to take into account each campus' particular manifestation of antisemitic and/or anti-Israel hostility in the context of that school's unique blend of students, cultural and political climates, and local concerns.

# Introduction

Marking the start of the 2016-17 academic year, Mollie Harris and Benjamin Gladstone, undergraduates at McGill and Brown Universities respectively, warned Jewish students across North America to prepare for virulent anti-Israel and antisemitic hostility in the classroom and on the quad (Gladstone, 2016; Harris, 2016). The depressing portrait that these students paint for their Jewish peers is characteristic of the broader Jewish community's widespread concern about increased antisemitism and anti-Zionism on US campuses related to the rise of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement (Summers, 2016). Since the beginning of the 2015-16 academic year, student groups aligned with BDS have increasingly relied on more public types of disruptive activism (rallies, interruptions, and "die-ins"). In some cases, these activities have led to the harassment and intimidation of Jewish students (Israel Campus Coalition, 2016).

In in the first half of 2016, AMCHA reported that 57% of the 113 US schools with the largest proportions of Jewish undergraduates had incidents involving the targeting of Jewish students for harm, antisemitic expression, or BDS activity. Although this represents a marked increase in the number of incidents compared to 2015 (see, also, ADL, 2015), the impact of these incidents on the overall climate of the campus and, in particular on Jewish students, is unclear. How often do Jewish students personally experience specific instances of antisemitic harassment? To what extent do they feel uncomfortable simply being Jewish or expressing their views about Israel on their campus? To what extent does a hostile campus climate affect Jewish students' connections with Israel? How large a role does hostility toward Israel or Jews play in their day-to-day lives?

In 2015, in an effort to address the lack of systematic data about the intensity and impact of anti-Israel and antisemitic activity, we initiated a program of research on colleges and universities in the United States and Canada (Saxe, Sasson, Wright, & Hecht, 2015). Our research followed a study conducted by Kosmin and Keysar (2015) which found that, in 2014, more than half of Jewish students in their sample had experienced or witnessed antisemitism on their campuses. Our study found that, in the preceding year, about one third of Jewish students reported being verbally harassed because they were Jewish, slightly less than half were told that "Israelis behave like Nazis toward the Palestinians," and about one quarter were blamed for the actions of the Israeli government because they were Jewish. However, the prevalence of these reports varied considerably across campuses. In particular, the study found that schools in the California state system and, to a lesser extent, large land-grant universities in the Midwest, had the highest levels of perceived antisemitism and hostility toward Israel. Our finding that these issues varied dramatically by campus was echoed by Maltz (2016) who, after visiting several campuses in California in 2016, noted that, "It's hard to generalize about Jewish student life in California, because no two campuses are alike."

In response to these findings, we first expanded our research program to conduct comprehensive studies of undergraduates at select campuses on which we surveyed both Jewish and non-Jewish students. In studies of both Brandeis University and the University of Pennsylvania we found that issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ranked low on the list of students' concerns, below issues such as racial inequality and diversity, stress and academic pressure, and the cost of education (Saxe et al., 2016; Shain et al., 2016). Only a minority of Jewish students perceived hostility toward Israel or antisemitism to be substantial problems on their campuses. At both Brandeis and the University of Pennsylvania only a small proportion of non-Jewish students expressed any support for BDS.

The second element of our expanded research program, and the focus of the current report, looks at 50 US campuses and aims to understand the dramatic variability across schools that surfaced in our earlier studies. In contrast to our 2015 study, which investigated general trends in perceptions of anti-Israel and antisemitic activity, the present study attempts to identify specific campuses—"hotspots" where perceptions of antisemitism and anti-Israel activity are particularly high. We also identify the campuses where antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiment are rare. As we examine the particular manifestation of these activities on select campuses, we also attempt to uncover how those environments influence the lives of Jewish students in terms of their connection to Israel and their comfort level for discussing related topics.

## About this Report

The present report is based on findings from a survey of Jewish undergraduates at 50 colleges and universities across the United States. The sample for this study consisted of US applicants to Birthright Israel<sup>1</sup> who were undergraduates at one of the 50 schools selected for this study in the 2015-16 academic year. The sample includes individuals who went on Birthright Israel and individuals who applied but did not participate. Birthright Israel applicants represent a broad spectrum of the Jewish student population, although they likely differ from Jewish students who did not apply to the program on some dimensions. Their perceptions, when carefully compared across schools, can contribute to a better understanding of how the climate of different campuses vary in relation to Israel and antisemitism.

The campuses selected for this study are not a random sample of US universities but were purposely sampled based on the estimated size of the campus Jewish population, geographic diversity, public/private status, selectivity, and prior evidence of high levels of anti-Israel hostility or antisemitism. In addition, some key schools were omitted from this study because they are potential subjects for future in-depth research on their entire undergraduate student bodies. Respondents to this survey are treated as informants with regards to the views of their fellow Jewish students and the climate on their respective campuses.

Sampled respondents were sent a link to an online survey. Respondents were given a \$5 Amazon.com gift card upon completion of the survey. Data were collected between March 14 and April 25, 2016. Overall, surveys were sent to 19,516 Birthright Israel applicants. The overall response rate (AAPOR RR2) was 22.5% with a total of 4,010 completed and 350 partial responses. See Technical Appendix A for more details on the study's methodology.

To ensure that our estimates were not influenced by small sample sizes at certain schools, school-level estimates presented in this report were limited to schools where there were 65 or more respondents. In two instances, individual schools were combined into larger groupings: all four schools in the California State system (Chico, Fullerton, Long Beach, and Northridge) were treated as a single institution ("Cal State"). Similarly, while there were a sufficient number of respondents at the University of California-Los Angeles, and the University of California-Santa Barbara to permit those schools to be analyzed individually, four schools (Berkeley, Davis, San Diego, and Santa Cruz) were aggregated and analyzed together as "other UC schools." In both the UC and Cal State situations, grouping respondents together was possible because students' responses at the different schools within each of these two systems were similar (see page 22). One campus that was part of our sample but not included in the analyses below is Columbia University. There were not enough respondents from Columbia to permit robust estimates, but due to the considerable evidence of anti-Israel hostility on campus, we discuss it in more detail on page 23.

The tables and figures that follow include the 31 schools and two grouped "systems." Other analyses that employ multi-level statistical models include all 50 schools.<sup>2</sup>

# **School Characteristics**

The 50 schools included in this study vary on a number of dimensions. They include 14 private and 36 public colleges and universities. Sixteen schools are in the Northeast, 11 in the South, 10 in the Midwest, and 13 in the West. The schools vary significantly in terms of the size of their student bodies: seven are small (less than 10,000 students), 14 are medium (10,000-20,000 students), and 29 are large (with more than 20,000 students). Schools also vary in their selectivity. Seven are ranked among the 20 "Best Colleges/Universities" according to US News & World Report (2015). The 50 schools included in this study are home to an estimated 150,000 Jewish students. The schools vary in the estimated size of their Jewish populations and the share of those populations relative to their student bodies (Hillel International, n.d.). The majority of the schools (34) have an active SJP chapter.<sup>3</sup> Only three schools reported no antisemitic incidents in 2015 (as measured by the AMCHA Initiative, n.d.). For complete details see Table 1 in the Appendix.

# **Respondent Characteristics**

Sixty percent of respondents participated in a Birthright Israel trip, while 40% applied but did not participate. Thirty-three percent identified their Jewish denomination as Reform, 22% as Conservative, 5% as Orthodox, 35% as either "secular/culturally Jewish" or "just Jewish," and the remaining 5% as some other denomination. Seventy-two percent of respondents had two Jewish parents. Twenty percent of respondents had no formal childhood Jewish education, 11% attended Jewish supplementary school at most once a week, 46% attended Jewish supplementary school more than once a week, and 23% attended Jewish day school. Fifty-nine percent of respondents identified as female and 40% as male, while 1% expressed some other gender identity. At the time they were surveyed, around 10% of respondents were in their first year at college, 24% were sophomores, 29% were juniors, and 35% were seniors, with an additional 2% considering themselves some other class designation. As is common among both American college students (Eagan et al., 2015) and young adult Jews (Pew Research Center, 2013), the majority of respondents (61%) identified as politically liberal, with 22% identifying as moderate and 17% as conservative.

## Anti-Israel Sentiment on Campus

Our examination of the campus climate for Jewish students begins by looking at the different ways anti-Israel sentiment is experienced. Our 2015 survey found that more than one quarter (27%) of Jewish undergraduates felt that hostility toward Israel was a "fairly" or "very" big problem on their campus. The overall rate, however, masks the substantial differences among campuses in perceptions of hostility toward Israel. These variations are the focus of the present study.

#### **Hostile Environment Toward Israel**

To understand differences in perception across campuses, Jewish students were asked to what extent they agreed that there was a hostile environment toward Israel at their school. Overall, 34% of respondents agreed at least "somewhat" that there was a hostile environment toward Israel on their campus. But the range was extremely large, with as few as 3% to over 70% of students at a given campus agreeing that there was a hostile environment toward Israel on their campus (Figure 1, page 8). At one extreme are schools including Northwestern, Texas, CUNY-Brooklyn, the other UC campuses, and BU, where at least 60% of respondents agreed at least "somewhat" that there was a hostile environment toward Israel on their campus. At the other extreme, fewer than 10% of respondents at Tulane, Syracuse, or Miami expressed any agreement that there was a hostile environment toward Israel on their campus.

#### **Exposure to Hostile Remarks Toward Israel**

To understand the prevalence of exposure to anti-Israel sentiment on campus, students were asked whether, during their time at their school, they had ever heard hostile remarks toward Israel either from students, faculty, or their school's administration. Most of the hostile remarks toward Israel originated with

fellow students—overall, 43% reported hearing hostile remarks about Israel from fellow students and 15% reported hearing such remarks from professors or the administration at their school. As was the case with general perceptions of hostility, there are significant differences between schools in the degree to which respondents have heard hostile remarks about Israel, and these differences are especially large with respect to remarks from faculty and the administration (Figure 2, page 9). In particular, at CUNY-Brooklyn, Illinois, UCSB, other UC schools, Northwestern, UMass, UCLA, and Texas more than one in five Jewish students reported having heard hostile remarks toward Israel from faculty or the administration at their school. In contrast, at UCF, Syracuse, and U of Miami, fewer than 5% of respondents reported hearing such remarks from faculty or administrators.

### Being Blamed for the Actions of the Israeli Government

The line between anti-Israel sentiment and antisemitism can be blurred, at times, when criticism of Israel is directed at Jewish students. To understand the extent to which Jewish students are directly targeted on issues related to Israel, respondents were asked how often, if at all, they have ever been blamed for Israel's actions because they are Jewish (Figure 3, page 10). Overall, 12% of respondents reported that they were blamed for the actions of the Israeli government at least "occasionally." There were significant differences between schools both in terms of prevalence of ever being blamed and in the frequency of the occurrences. Many of the schools perceived as having a hostile environment towards Israel-such as Northwestern, Texas, CUNY-Brooklyn, and schools in the UC system—also had high percentages of students report being blamed for Israel's actions because they were Jewish.

Northwestern				15%	12%2	2	40%	15%	15%
Texas					12% 4%		42%		% 4%
CUNY-Brooklyn			10		9% 5%		39%		15%
Other UC schools					2% <b>7</b> %				2%
BU			18%		9% 4%		39%	9%	
UCLA			20%		7% 5%			17% 152	
UCSB			16%	24				20% 9%	
Northeastern			14%	24%	11%		6%	12%3%	
Michigan			26%	20%		31	%	14% 3%	
Illinois			19%	27%	7%	32	%	11%4%	
Ohio State			7%	31%	8%	32	.%	10%3%	
Rutgers			25%	25%	9%	27%	% <mark> </mark>	1%4%	
NYU		19	9%	28%	11%	283	%	0%3%	
Wisconsin		20%	3	7%	8%	24%	10%	<b>4</b> 5	
Temple		28%	6 2	23%	14%	25%	3%	%	
UMass		26%	2	8%	12%	20%	10%3	%	
Cal State		20%	27%		20%	19%	11%4	%	
Cornell		28%	28	8%	15%	23%	42%		
Pitt		24%	36%	2	14%	16%	10%		
George Washington		27%	389	%	11%	19%	23%		
Binghamton		22%	33%		21%	19%	32%		
UCF	1	5%	38%		23%	20%	30%		
CUNY-Queens	1	8%	35%	2	.5%	15% 4	3%		
Florida		27%	37%		15%	17%	40.		
Maryland	20%		50%		15%	13%28	2		
Penn State	30		34%		22%	11%228			
USC	21%		41%		23%	14%0	6		
Florida State	16%	41		29		10%30%			
Indiana	21%		47%		18%	12%0%			
Wash. U.	20%		42%		25%	8%3%			
Tulane	14%	44%		323		6%2%			
Syracuse	13%	42%		38%		5%20%			
U of Miami	12%	49%		33%		370%			
10	0% 80%	60%	40%	20%	0	%	20%	40%	60%
Strongly dis	agree 📮 Disa	igree 📃 S	omewhat	disagre	e S	omewha	at agree	Agree	■ Stro

# Figure 1: Perceptions of hostile environment toward Israel

Note: "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about {school}...? There is a hostile environment toward Israel"

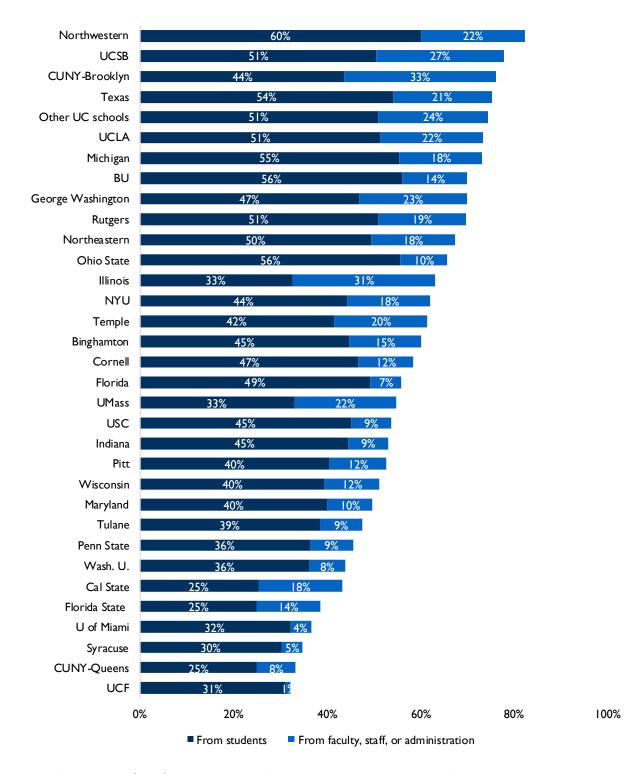


Figure 2. Hearing hostile remarks toward Israel

Note: "Since coming to {school}, have you heard any of the following on campus by students, professors, or the administration? Hostile remarks toward Israel"

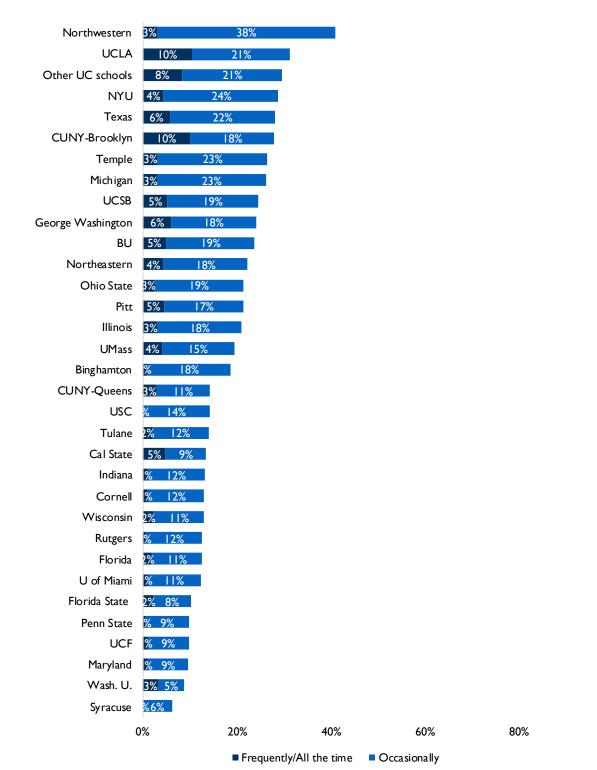


Figure 3: Blamed for the actions of the Israeli government because of Jewish identity

Note: All respondents. "Which of the following affect your comfort level in discussing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with your peers?"

100%

## Comfort Discussing the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Finally, we looked at the relationship between perceptions of a hostile environment toward Israel on campus and Jewish students' willingness to engage in discussions about Israel. Respondents were asked how comfortable they were expressing their opinions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict when discussing the topic with their campus peers. Overall, 31% of all respondents reported being "very much" comfortable expressing their opinion about the conflict, 34% said they were "somewhat" comfortable, 22% "a little" comfortable, and 13% said they were "not at all" comfortable. Figure 4 shows that the proportion of students who felt either "a little" or "not at all" comfortable varied widely across schools, from over than 60% at CUNY-Brooklyn, to less than 20% at George Washington and USC. Although comfort was particularly low on some campuses with high reported rates of hostility to Israel (such as CUNY-Brooklyn and other UC schools), there were also other schools, like BU, where high levels of hostility did not necessarily translate into difficulty discussing this issue.

Not only did the findings highlight variation across schools with respect to how comfortable students were discussing the conflict, but also in why they felt discomfort. Students who said that they were only "a little" or "not at all" comfortable expressing their views on the conflict were asked what specific factors hindered their level of comfort. Two largely independent factors appear to be driving lack of comfort discussing the conflict. First, some students perceived an environment on campus that was hostile to open discussion about Israel. Second, a number of students attributed their discomfort to their lack of knowledge on the topic. Figure 5 shows the proportion of all respondents at each school who listed the hostility of the discourse and lack of knowledge as reasons they felt uncomfortable discussing the conflict (respondents who listed both are included in both estimates). While there was relatively little variation across schools in the proportion of students who were uncomfortable due to lack of knowledge, there were some schools-CUNY-Brooklyn, NYU, all the UC campuses, Northeastern, and Northwestern-where lack of comfort due to perceived hostility of the discourse was particularly high, and others, such as Miami, and the University of Southern California, where it was particularly low.

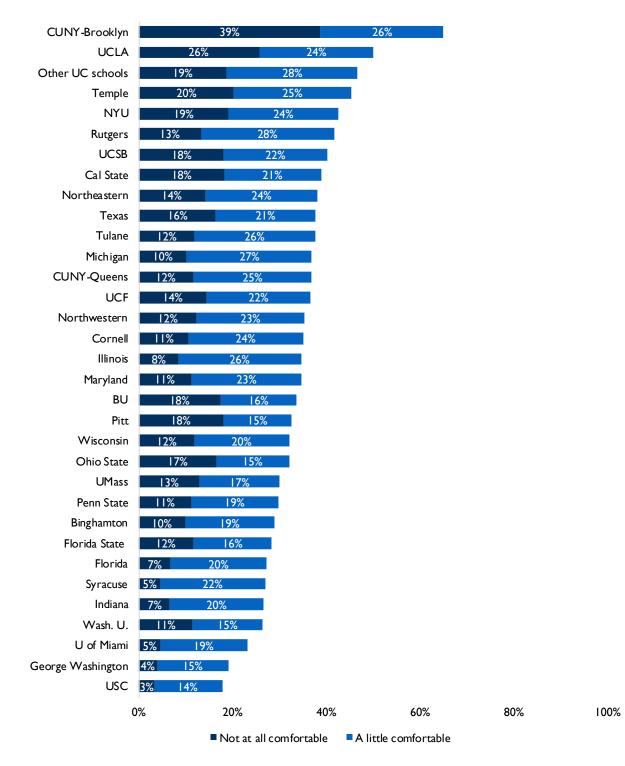
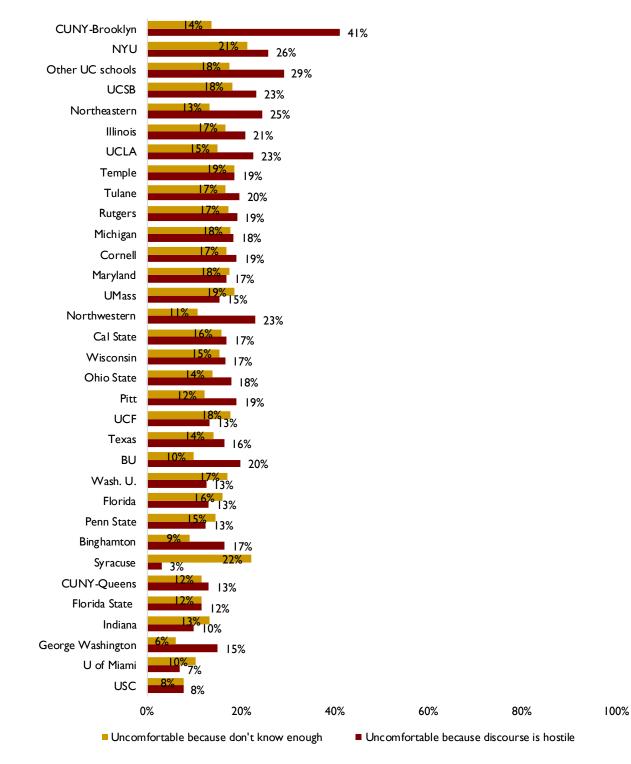


Figure 4: Discomfort expressing opinion about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Note: "At {school}, when talking with your peers, how comfortable do you feel expressing your opinion about...? The Israeli-Palestinian conflict" Figure 5: Discomfort discussing Israeli-Palestinian conflict due to lack of knowledge or hostility of discourse



Note: All respondents. "Which of the following affect your comfort level in discussing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with your peers?"

## Jewish students and Anti-Zionism

One controversial element in the discussion about hostility toward Israel on college campuses is the extent to which criticism of Israel and anti-Zionism are inherently antisemitic (Johnson, 2016). The current survey asked respondents to what extent they would consider criticism of Israel or denial of Israel's right to exist to be antisemitic. The majority of students we surveyed were fairly tolerant of criticism of Israel. Overall, only 4% of respondents said criticism of Israel was "definitely" antisemitic and 20% said that is was "probably" antisemitic, 52% thought it was "probably not," and 23% thought it was "definitely not" antisemitic. In contrast, only a minority felt the same about Israel's delegitimization. Overall, 40% of respondents said that opposition to Israel's existence as a Jewish state was "definitely" antisemitic and 37% said it was "probably" antisemitic. Nineteen percent of respondents thought delegitimization of Israel was "probably not" antisemitic and only 4% thought it was "definitely not." These data mirror earlier findings (Saxe et al., 2015).

Support for BDS, specifically in the academic context, is very rare among Jewish students. Only 2% agreed, even "somewhat," that universities should boycott Israeli academic institutions and scholars. There was no significant variation in support for BDS among Jewish students across schools.

## Hostility toward Jews and Antisemitism on Campus

We continue our examination of the campus climate for Jewish students by looking at their experiences of antisemitism on campus. In our 2015 survey, 13% of Jewish undergraduates felt that hostility to Jews was a "fairly" or "very" big problem on their campus. However, students considered this problem to be less pervasive than the issue of the hostile environment toward Israel on campus (Saxe et al., 2015). In the present study, we examined variations across campuses to identify which schools were more likely to have Jewish students report a hostile environment toward Jews and experience and/or witness antisemitic acts. In addition, we looked at the nature of those incidents.

### **Hostile Climate Toward Jews**

To understand the extent to which antisemitism is experienced on campus, in the current study, students were asked about the presence of a hostile environment toward Jews on their campus. Overall 15% of respondents agreed that there was a hostile environment toward Jews on their campus (12% "somewhat agreed," 3% "agreed," and only 1% "strongly agreed), compared to over a third who agreed that there was a hostile environment toward Israel. There is substantial variation in perceptions across the schools examined in this study, with as few as 1% or as many as 40% at a given campus agreeing that their school has a hostile environment toward Jews, although this variation is less dramatic than with respect to perceiving hostility toward Israel.

At UCLA, CUNY-Brooklyn, Illinois, and the other UC campuses (Berkeley, Davis, Santa Cruz, and San Diego), over a third of respondents agreed that there was a hostile environment toward Jews, whereas at schools like Syracuse, USC, Tulane, Miami and Washington U., almost no Jewish students agreed even "somewhat" that there was a hostile environment toward Jews, and around half of Jewish students strongly disagreed.

A comparison with Figure 1 (page 8), suggests that hostility to Jews and Israel coexist on some campuses, but not on others. A high proportion of students at schools in the UC system and at CUNY-Brooklyn perceived their campuses to be hostile to both Israel and Jews. In contrast, although Illinois was perceived to have one of the most hostile environments toward Jews among the schools we studied, it was not perceived to have a particularly hostile environment toward Israel. Similarly, although over two thirds of respondents at Texas considered their campus to have a hostile environment toward Israel, only 20% thought of it as having a hostile environment toward Jews. The analyses below will further explore the extent to which perceptions of antisemitism are driven by hostility to Israel, as compared to other factors, and how this relationship manifests itself on different campuses.

#### **Exposure to Antisemitic Rhetoric**

To understand how perceptions of hostility toward Jews related to exposure to antisemitic rhetoric, the survey asked students how often, if at all, they had heard any of a number of antisemitic statements on their campus since coming to their school. At the vast majority of the schools, less than 10% of students reported that they had "frequently" or "all the time" heard someone on their campus suggest that "Jews have too much power in America," that "Jews exploit the Holocaust," or that "Jews are more loyal to Israel." On about two

UCLA	9%	30%	18%	26%	<b>9%</b> 8%			
CUNY-Brooklyn	11%	26%	23%	25%	8% 8%			
Illinois	13%	27%	25%	27%	<mark>6%</mark> 2%			
Other UC schools	12%	28%	26%	22%	<mark>9%</mark> 3%			
UCSB	19%	29%	21%	27%	0%4%			
Northwestern	17%	32%	23%	23%	<mark>5%</mark> 0%			
Wisconsin	13%	39%	20%	20% 4%	4%			
BU	15%	41%	19%	18% 5%	3%			
Rutgers	17%	36%	22%	19% 3%	3%			
Cal State	29%	30%	20%	16% 2% 2	%			
Ohio State	21%	37%	22%	17% 4%	0%			
Temple	19%	36%	25%	13% 3% 5%	, 5			
Northeastern	19%	36%	24%	17% 1%	%			
Texas	12% 31%		38%	16% 4%	0%			
UMass	19%	33%	2 <b>9</b> %	15% 5%	0%			
Michigan	16% 3	6%	2 <b>9</b> %	6% 2 <mark>%</mark>	%			
Binghamton	31%	36%	21%	<mark>10%2%</mark> 1%				
NYU	23%	47%	18%	10%1 % 1%				
Cornell	35%	45%	9%	<mark>  % </mark> % 0%				
Florida State	32%	40%	16%	10% <mark> </mark> %0%				
Florida	29%	40%	20%	<b>9%2%</b> 0%				
UCF	32%	38%	19%	10% <mark>%</mark> 0%				
CUNY-Queens	32%	41%	17%	6% <mark>3%</mark> 1%				
Indiana	27%	40%	23%	9%I % 0%				
Penn State	31%	43%	17%	8%0%1%				
Maryland	36%	41%	15%	<b>7%</b> %0%				
George Washington	28%	46%	20% 4	<b>2%</b> 0%				
Pitt	26% 4	3%	26% 3	<b>%%</b> 1%				
Wash. U.	53%	4	1% 23	<b>7%</b> 1%				
U of Miami	47%	40%	9%3	<b>0</b> %0%				
Tulane	49%	39%	8%	<b>%</b> 0%				
USC	44%	37%	17% 2	<b>%</b> 0%				
Syracuse	45%	36%	17% 02	<b>‰</b> 0%				
100	0% 80% 60%	40%	20% 0	% 20%	40%	60%	80%	10
Strongly disa	agree 🗖 Disagree 🗖 S	omewhat dis	agree 🔍 So	omewhat ag	ree Agree	Stron	gly agree	

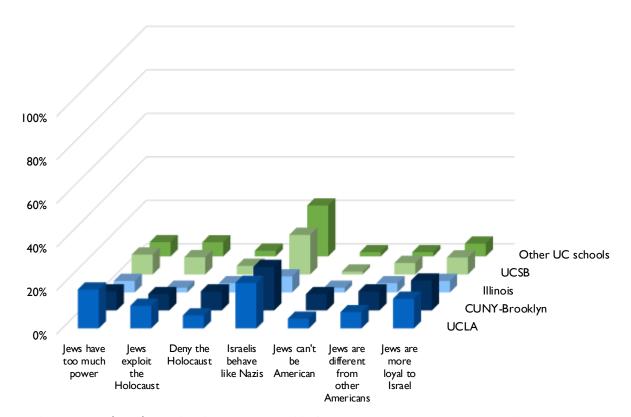
# Figure 6: Perceived hostile environment toward Jews

Note: "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about {school}...? There is a hostile environment toward Jews"

thirds of the schools less than 10% heard "frequently" or "all the time" that "Israelis behave like Nazis." This was the statement that students were the most likely to report hearing at all schools. A small number of schools emerge as being the settings for students' frequent exposure to these antisemitic statements: UCLA, BU, Rutgers, NYU, CUNY-Brooklyn, and the Cal State schools.<sup>4</sup> This set of schools has a significant overlap with the schools identified as having a high level of perceived hostility to Jews. The highest levels of perceived hostility toward Jews were at UCLA, CUNY-Brooklyn, Illinois, UCSB, and the other UC schools.

Figure 7 presents the proportion of students at each of these campuses who reported having heard one or more of seven antisemitic statements on their campus. It is clear that the content of antisemitic rhetoric students are exposed to differs by school.

At CUNY-Brooklyn, and the various UC campuses, where respondents tended to perceive a hostile environment toward both Jews and Israel, close to 20% reported having heard that "Israelis behave like Nazis." At Illinois, where perceived hostility to Israel was much lower, only 7% reported hearing this statement. Almost 20% of respondents at UCLA reported having heard that Jews have too much power, but this statement was only rarely heard elsewhere. Fewer than 10% of respondents at any of these schools reported hearing others deny the Holocaust or claim that Jews can't be American.



#### Figure 7: Exposure to antisemitic remarks on campus

Note: "Since coming to {school}, how often, if at all, have you PERSONALLY heard anyone on campus suggest that...?"

### **Antisemitic Harassment**

To assess the extent to which Jewish students at particular schools were the targets of antisemitic harassment, the survey asked respondents if they had personally experienced any of the following on campus because they were Jewish: insult or harassment in person, feeling unwelcome in a campus organization, insult or harassment on social media, and/or physical attack. Reported rates of physical attack were almost nonexistent at the schools in the sample. Figure 8 shows the percent of students who experienced any of the other types of harassment by school.

Overall, these types of harassment were relatively uncommon at the schools examined in this study. Insult or harassment on social media was reported by less than 10% of respondents at most of the schools examined. Although rates were higher for in-person harassment and feeling unwelcome in a campus organization, less than 20% of respondents in nearly all of the schools reported these experiences. There are, however, a number of campuses at which experiences of discrimination were more prevalent, including the other UC campuses, Illinois, UCSB, and Texas.

Students were also asked if they had witnessed others being harassed because they were Jewish, with the results presented in Figure 9. There appears to be wider variation across schools with respect to the prevalence of witnessing antisemitic insults compared to personally experiencing them, and, overall rates of witnessing harassment are also higher than rates of personally experiencing it.

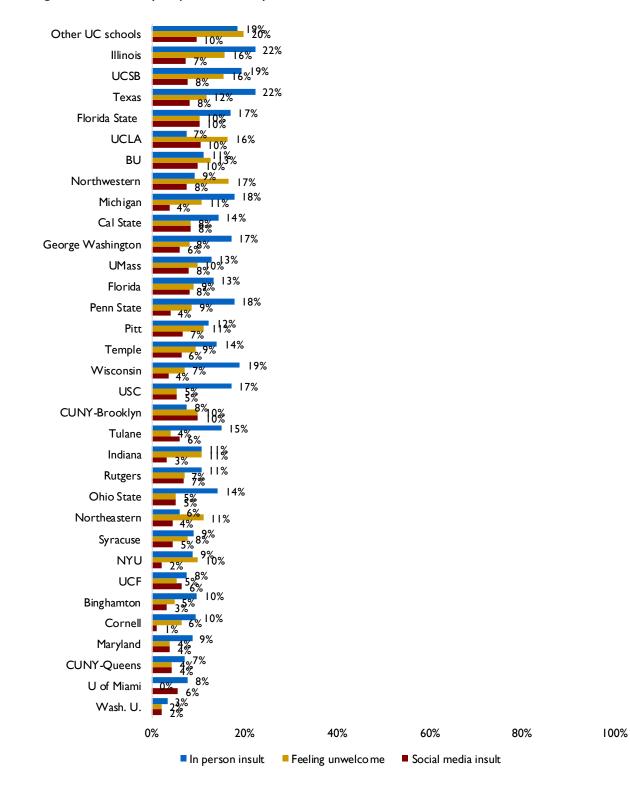
In many cases the schools with the highest reported rates of personal experiences of discrimination, including the other UC schools, Northwestern, Wisconsin, UCSB, and UCLA, were also schools where a high proportion of students perceived a hostile environment toward Jews. Thus, the hostile environment respondents perceive at these schools does appear to be translating in the specific instances of harassment.

To better understand the specific nature of the antisemitic harassment experienced or witnessed by students, we looked at respondents' open-ended descriptions of these incidents. Codes were used to categorize incidents in the following four ways:

- Israel-related: pertaining to the modern state of Israel in some way (e.g., delegitimization or demonization of Israel)
- Jewish: pertaining to being Jewish but not specifically to Israel
- "Classic": involving specific symbols, images, or tropes associated with historical antisemitism (e.g., Jews controlling the media or economy, blood libel)
- Holocaust: specifically related to Holocaust imagery or denial

Table 1 (page 21) gives examples of the types of incidents that fall into each category.

Figure 8: Personally experienced any antisemitic insult or harassment



Note: "Since coming to {school}, have you PERSONALLY experienced any of the following on campus BECAUSE you are Jewish?"

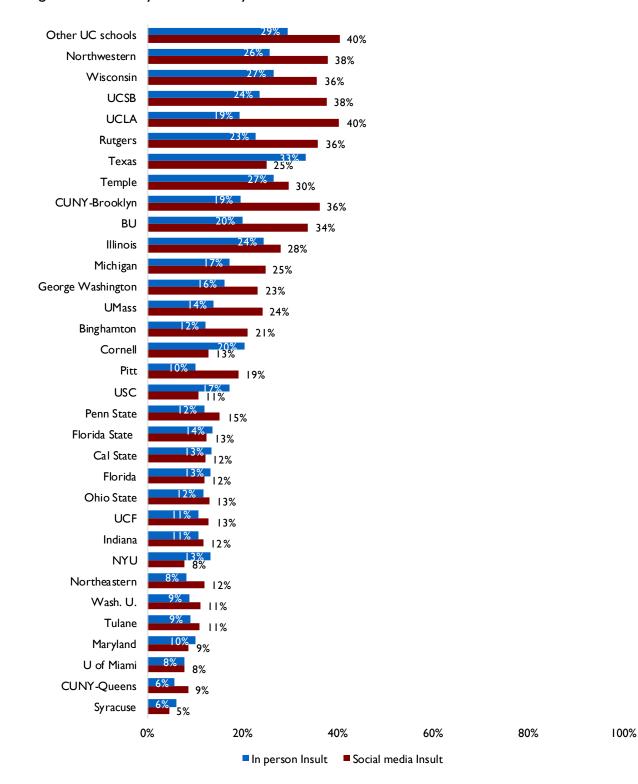


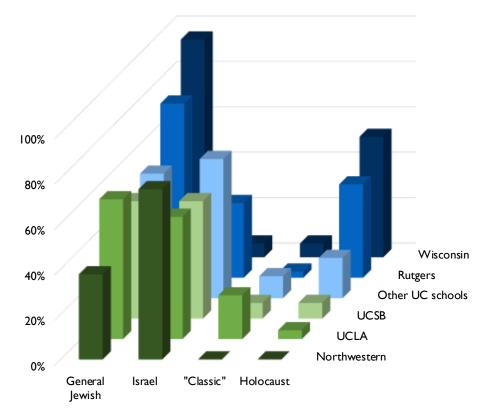
Figure 9: Personally witnessed any antisemitic insult or harassment

Note: "Since coming to {school}, have you personally WITNESSED any of the following on campus happening to Jewish students on campus BECAUSE they are Jewish?"

Туре	Examples	
Jewish	A group on campus put eviction notices on the dorm room doors of Jewish people. It made me feel unsafe. (Junior, Northeastern)	I had rushed two sororities on campus and I was rejected along with the three other Jews who rushed. We were not sure why only the Jews didn't get accepted. (Sophomore, CUNY-Queens)
Israel- Related	One of my teachers at CSUN asked me how it was to live in an Apartheid state. The moment she found out I am Jewish, my grade was affected. (Junior, California State University - Northridge)	During apartheid week the SJP club stood in front of the dining hall wearing white shirts with red 'blood' spatter across from them. They had signs saying 'this is what the Jews did to us.' I felt extremely harassed; even though it was not personally to me when I stood there I saw complete hatred that they had to all of the Jews walking by. There were even some people a part of SJP shouting profanities and giving the middle finger to the Jews that were just standing next to them. (Junior, Rutgers)
"Classic"	We were tabling for the Jewish Business Students Association and someone made an insulting 'joke' about being cheap/ stingy. (Senior, Texas)	In my dorm freshman year, I was asked where my horns were and was told I was going to hell because I did not believe in Jesus. (Senior, Illinois)
Holocaust	My freshman year I lived in a dorm. I once opened my door to my next-door neighbor drawing a swastika on my door. (Junior, Ohio State)	On Simchat Torah we were parading with the Torah outside and singing songs and people started to write things on Yik Yak telling us to go back to Auschwitz. (Junior, Binghamton)

Table I. Examples of antisemitic incidents

There is considerable variation in the form that antisemitic harassment takes, even at schools where overall hostility is high. Figure 10 shows the relative prevalence of each of these types of antisemitic harassment at the six schools with the highest overall rates of witnessing antisemitic harassment (see Figure 9). At Northwestern and campuses in the UC system, where many respondents perceived hostility to both Jews and Israel, insults and harassment related to Israel were among the most common. Conversely, at Wisconsin and Rutgers, where a majority of respondents disagreed that the there was a hostile environment toward Israel on their campus (see Figure 1), antisemitic harassment was less likely to involve Israel and more likely to reference the Holocaust or Jews in general. "Classic" antisemitic tropes were rare at these schools, with the possible exception of UCLA.



### Figure 10: Type of antisemitic incident(s) experienced or witnessed

Note: Coded responses to "Please describe the incident(s)." Codes not mutually exclusive.

## Cal State and other UC Campuses

Students at the Cal State campuses were grouped together because of the relatively small number of respondents at each of these campuses (<65), and because there were substantial similarities in how students on the campuses within each group answered many of the questions in the survey. The same is true for the four smaller UC campuses (Davis, Berkeley, San Diego, and Santa Cruz).

We did not find any significant difference between respondents at the various Cal State campuses in their perceptions of hostility to Jews or Israel on their campus, once connection to Israel and Birthright Israel participation were controlled for.<sup>5</sup> In contrast, differences did appear between respondents at schools within the UC group. In particular, students at UC Davis were significantly more likely than students at any of the other three schools to perceive hostility to Jews on their campus. Students at both UC Davis and UC Berkeley were significantly more likely to perceive hostility to Israel on their campus compared to students at UC San Diego or UC Santa Cruz.<sup>6</sup> However, because of the small number of respondents at each of these campuses, it is impossible to reliably determine how each of these schools individually would compare to the other schools discussed in this report.

## **Columbia University**

This study obtained 52 responses for students at Columbia University—not enough to allow for robust, quantitative comparisons between Columbia and other schools in this study. Yet an examination of the responses of these students strongly suggests that many Jewish students at Columbia perceived it to have particularly high levels of hostility toward Israel. Thirty-six out of the 52 respondents at Columbia (70%) at least somewhat agreed that there is a hostile environment toward Israel on their campus. Although these estimates are not particularly stable, and would be noticeably different if even a single respondent changed his or her answer, they still place Columbia at or near the top of all the schools studied in terms of hostility toward Israel.

Fifteen out of 52 respondents (28%) at Columbia agreed at least somewhat that there is a hostile environment toward Jews. This would place Columbia in the top ten schools with the highest rates of hostility toward Jews but considerably lower than the rates reported at UCLA and CUNY-Brooklyn. The percentage of respondents at Columbia experiencing and witnessing antisemitic harassment was similar to the rates seen at the schools with the highest levels of harassment (e.g., Northwestern, Wisconsin, and schools in the UC system).

Additional analyses suggest that hostility perceived by Jewish students at Columbia is closely connected to criticism of Israel and the BDS movement in particular. Sixteen out of 52 respondents (32%) at Columbia reported hearing that "Israelis behaved like Nazis toward the Palestinians," a number substantially higher than the 23% reported at Northwestern and the other UC campuses. Respondents' open-ended responses in the survey further highlighted criticism of Israel as a source of perceived hostility. Several Columbia students explicitly mentioned "Israeli apartheid week" in their discussion of antisemitic incidents on campus.

# Hostility Toward Israel and Jews: Campus- and Individual-Level Dynamics

The analyses presented above indicate that there is considerable variation in the extent to which Jewish students at different schools perceive hostility toward Israel and Jews on their campus. These analyses have highlighted a number of specific campuses, including schools in the UC system, Northwestern, CUNY-Brooklyn, and Illinois, where hostility appears to be particularly high, and other schools, including Washington University, CUNY-Queens, and Syracuse, where hostility is extremely low. While the findings about particular schools are notable, it is also important to understand whether there are general trends underlying the differences between specific schools. Are there certain types of schools where hostility tends to be higher or lower, or certain school-level factors that predict perceptions of hostility?

Multilevel modeling was used to explore some of the individual- and school-level factors that might be associated with perceiving a hostile environment toward Jews or Israel on campus. These analyses control for 1) the tendency of certain types of students to be more or less likely to perceive or experience different forms of hostility and 2) the relative prevalence of these students across schools.

The analyses indicate that respondents at public universities were more likely to report a hostile environment toward Jews than those at private universities, but there were no differences between public and private schools with respect to perceived hostility toward Israel. Respondents at schools in the southeastern US were somewhat less likely to report hostility to Jews or Israel compared to those at schools in other regions.

Respondents at schools with a larger number of Birthright Israel applicants on their campus were less likely to report a hostile environment toward Jews or Israel. In contrast, the total number of Jewish students on campus or their relative proportion in the student population did not seem to have a significant effect on respondent's perceptions of hostility, although this could be due to inaccuracies of the estimates of the Jewish population on these campuses. Respondents at more selective schools, as measured by the US News & World Report (2015) rankings, were more likely to report that their schools had a hostile environment toward Israel, but not toward Jews.

One other school-level factor found to be significantly associated with perceiving greater hostility to both Jews and Israel was the presence of an active SJP group on campus. In other words, all else being equal, students at schools with an active SJP group were more likely to perceive a hostile environment toward both Jews and Israel.

At the individual level, regardless of which school they attended, respondents with inmarried parents and those who had gone on a Birthright Israel trip were more likely to report a hostile environment toward Israel and Jews on their campus. Thus, although having a large number of Birthright Israel applicants on campus is associated with reduced perceptions of hostility, actually participating in Birthright Israel is associated with increased perceptions of hostility. The analysis of the relationship between connection to Israel and perceptions of hostility below will help shed some light on this somewhat surprising result. 

# Jewish Students' Relationship to Israel

To understand whether a campus climate that is hostile to Israel and/or to Jews is affecting Jewish students' relationship to Israel, we examined Jewish students' connection to Israel. Among all respondents, the vast majority felt connected to Israel: 43% of respondents reported that they were "very much" connected to Israel, and an additional 32% reported that they were "somewhat" connected. Figure 11 also shows that there is relatively little variation in the levels of connection to Israel across schools. This suggests that the dramatic differences in levels of hostility and harassment across campuses do not seem to be translating into dramatic differences in the extent to which students at these campuses are connected to Israel. For example, CUNY-Brooklyn, which had some of the highest reported rates of hostility toward Jews, also had the second highest average connection to Israel, whereas the school with the lowest level of connection, UMass, was average with respect to measures of hostility toward Jews and Israel.

## Connection to Israel and Comfort Discussing Israel: School and Individual-Level Dynamics

This section outlines the characteristics of schools and of Jewish students that impact the way they think and talk about Israel.

**Connection to Israel.** Although there was little campus-level variation in connection to Israel, there was substantial individual-level variation in students' feelings of connection to Israel. To determine the factors associated with an individual student feeling more connected to Israel, a multi-level regression model was run on the entire sample.<sup>7</sup> As implied by Figure 11 (page 29), school-level factors had little or no relationship with the

degree to which a respondent felt connected to Israel. In particular, respondents at schools with an active SJP group, or at schools where other respondents tended to perceive a hostile environment toward Israel, were not any more or less likely to be connected to Israel compared to their peers at other schools. The number of total Birthright Israel applicants at a respondent's school likewise had no impact on a respondent's level of connection to Israel.

Individual-level factors, including participation in a Birthright Israel trip and having two Jewish parents, did appear to be associated with a stronger connection to Israel. In addition, students who perceived more hostility toward Israel on their campus than their peers also tended to be more connected to Israel. This result mirrors the finding discussed earlier, that those respondents who were more connected to Israel than their peers were more likely to perceive hostility. In sum, these results suggests that while there is no campus-level relationship between the overall level of hostility to Israel on campus and the overall level of connection to Israel among students on campus, the individual students on campus who are most connected to Israel are most likely to perceive hostility to Israel.

Although the finding that perceptions of hostility is related to greater connection to Israel may seem counter-intuitive, it echoes our earlier findings that the Jewish students most connected to Israel and those from more engaged Jewish backgrounds were the most likely to report that hostility toward Jews was a big problem on their campus (Saxe et al., 2015). This same dynamic (that those who perceive more hostility tend to be the most engaged with Jewish life) also explains the finding reported here that those with inmarried parents and those who had gone on a Birthright Israel trip were more likely to perceive a hostile environment toward Jews and Israel at their school.

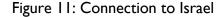
The positive relationship between perceptions of hostility and connection to Israel could mean that individuals who are more connected are more likely to be the target of antisemitic hostility. It could also mean that individuals who are more connected are more sensitive to anti-Israel or antisemitic hostility, or even that anti-Israel harassment actually leads to increased feelings of solidarity with Israel. In fact, all of these dynamics could be at work simultaneously, but the current study is unable to untangle the causal contribution of these three phenomena.

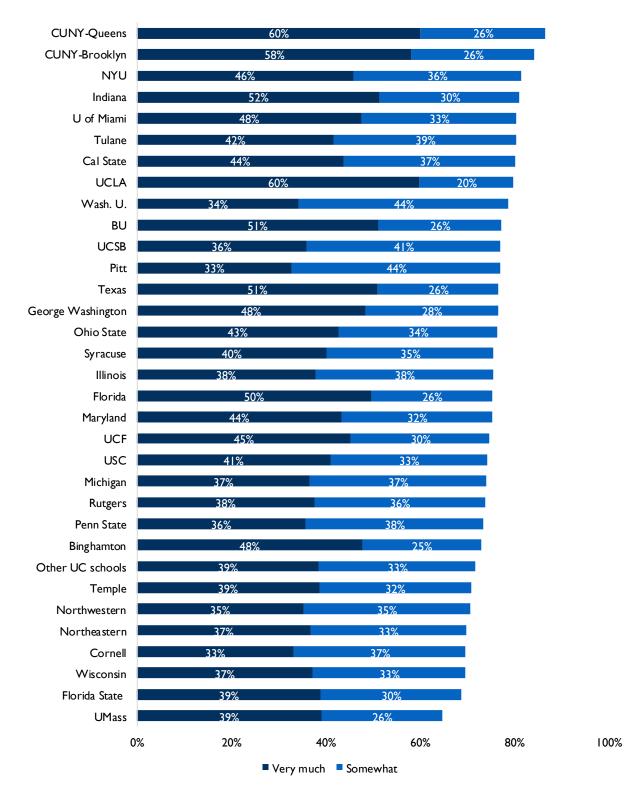
#### Comfort expressing opinions about Israel.

Although the perception of a hostile environment does not appear to lower Jewish students' levels of connection to Israel, students' comfort level in engaging in discourse about Israel might be affected. As discussed above, some respondents felt uncomfortable voicing their opinions about the situation in Israel because they felt they did not know enough, whereas others felt uncomfortable because they perceived the debate to be overly hostile. Multilevel statistical models suggest that it is primarily features of the schools that respondents attend that drive a lack of comfort due to a hostile discourse. In contrast, it is characteristics of the respondents themselves, not the schools they attend, that are most associated with their feeling uncomfortable due to a lack of knowledge.<sup>8</sup>

In particular, factors associated with discomfort related to the hostility of the discourse included the presence of an active SJP group on campus and the location of the campus outside the Southeastern United States. In contrast, the respondents' individual characteristics—whether they participated in Birthright Israel, had taken a Jewish studies course, or had in- or intermarried parents had no association with feeling uncomfortable because of a hostile discourse.

At the same time, discomfort due to lack of knowledge was less of an issue for those respondents who had participated in a Birthright Israel trip, who had inmarried parents, or who had taken an Israel studies course. In contrast to these individual-level characteristics, neither the presence of an SJP group on campus, the campus' geographic location, nor the number of Birthright Israel applicants on campus had any impact on whether respondents at a given school felt less comfortable because they felt they did not know enough.





Note: "To what extent do you feel a connection to Israel?"

# Anti-Israel Hostility and Antisemitism in Context

The analyses presented above demonstrate the extent to which Jewish students experience harassment and perceive hostility toward Israel and Jews on their respective campuses. But it is important to put these issues in context in terms of other contentious issues on campus (e.g., race/diversity, sexual assault, costs of attendance).

Respondents were asked to list what they felt were the three most "pressing" issues on their campus. These results were coded and classified into a number of different general categories, which included issues related to "Jews" or "Israel" (these categories were not mutually exclusive and a given issue could be categorized as concerning both "Israel" and "Jews").

Some examples of pressing issues coded as related to Jews include: specific concerns such as "swastikas being painted on campus property," "not having one centralized Jewish home for students," or general mentions of "antisemitism." Examples of pressing issues that were coded as relating to Israel include: "BDS," "SJP", "dialogue about the Israel/ Palestinian conflict," or simply mentions of "Israel" or "Palestine." Figure 12 illustrates that, at most schools, fewer than 10% of Jewish students listed issues pertaining to either Jews or Israel as among the most pressing on campus. Many of campuses where Jews and Israel were mentioned as pressing issues by a significant portion of respondents have been discussed in this report in terms of their level of hostility toward Jews or Israel: CUNY-Brooklyn, Texas, BU, UCLA, and UCSB. Jews and Israel were also pressing issues on other campuses where perceived hostility to Jews and Israel were lower, such as Ohio State.

Figure 13 shows the proportion of students who listed a number of pressing issues at their school. The figure is limited to the four schools where the largest proportion of students listed either Jews or Israel as a pressing issue.

Cost is a pressing issue at all four schools. Safety, health, and violence (including sexual assault) were commonly mentioned issues at Ohio State and BU, but less so at CUNY-Brooklyn and UCLA. In contrast, race and diversity were frequently mentioned issues at BU and UCLA, but less so at Ohio State, and hardly mentioned at all at CUNY-Brooklyn (the only school where issues of Jews and religion were more pressing than issues of cost or safety). Greek life was rarely mentioned as a pressing issue at any of these four schools, with the exception of Ohio State. Logistical aspects of student life (including parking, food, housing, and traffic) were only occasionally mentioned.

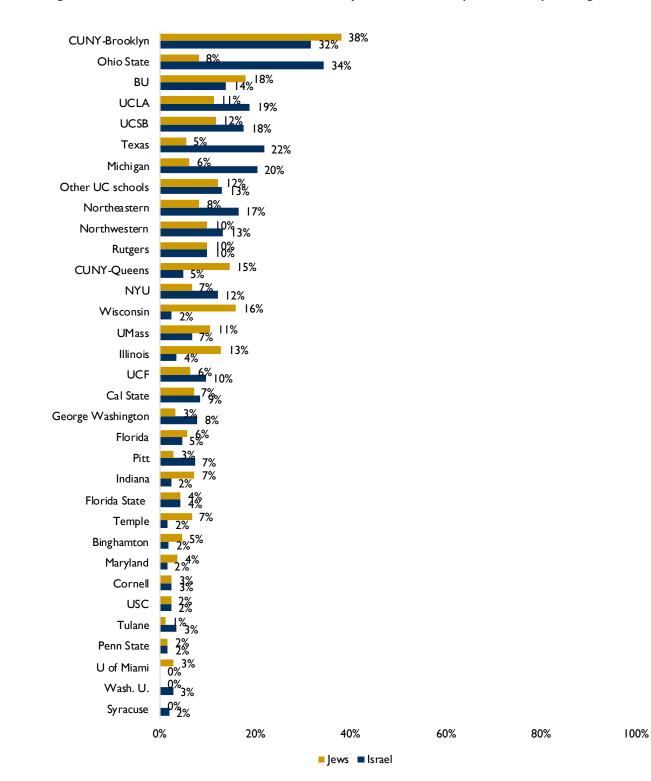
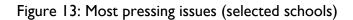
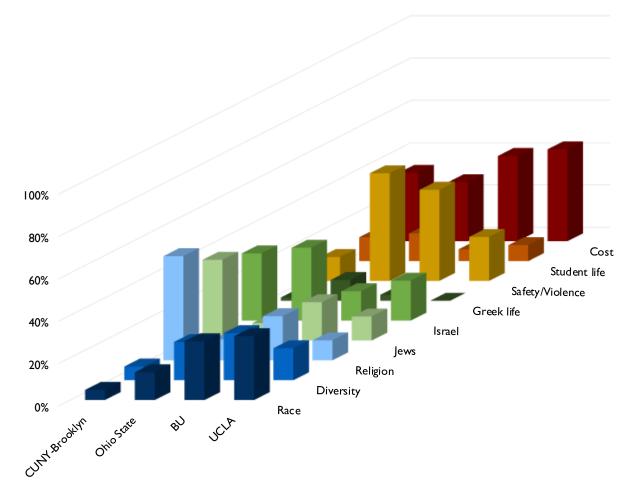


Figure 12: Percent who indicated that Israel or Jewish-related topics were a pressing issue

Note: "In your opinion, what are the three most pressing issues at {school} right now?" Coded responses.





Note: "In your opinion, what are the three most pressing issues at {school} right now?" Coded responses.

## Discussion

In a speech at the Righteous Among the Nations awards ceremony in January 2016, President Obama told the audience "Here, tonight, we must confront the reality that around the world, anti-Semitism is on the rise. We cannot deny it. ...when Jewish centers are targeted from Mumbai to Overland Park, Kansas; when swastikas appear on college campuses—when we see all that and more, we must not be silent" (The White House, 2016). The results of the present study suggest that the reality described by the President is a fact of life for Jewish students on campuses in the United States, but it is far from universal. Furthermore, the current situation is considerably more complex than current public discourse suggests, not only with respect to the prevalence, but also the nature of the problem and its impact.

The key finding of the present study is that, in terms of hostility to Israel and antisemitism, university campuses are quite different from one another. Some campuses, such as CUNY-Brooklyn, Northwestern, and many of the schools in the University of California system, are "hotspots" where the majority of Jewish students perceive a hostile environment toward Israel, and over one quarter perceive a general environment of hostility toward Jews on their campus. On these campuses about three in four students report hearing hostile remarks toward Israel and over 20% of students report being blamed for Israel's actions because they are Jewish. In addition, around one third of students report witnessing some form of antisemitic harassment, often Israel related. On these campuses, it appears that the high rates of antisemitic harassment

and hostility are largely driven by hostility toward Israel. In fact, one of the strongest predictors of perceiving a hostile climate toward both Israel and Jews is the presence of an active Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) group on campus.

At the same time, hostility toward Israel does not inevitably translate to hostility toward Jews. At NYU, for example, perceptions of hostility to Israel are relatively high, but unlike at the schools discussed above, Jewish students do not perceive this campus to have a hostile environment toward Jews, and reports of antisemitic harassment are rare. More generally, Jewish students at highly selective schools tend to see their campuses as having a hostile environment toward Israel but not necessarily as hostile toward Jews.

There are also other campuses, including Wisconsin, Rutgers, and Illinois, where hostility toward Jews and antisemitic harassment are relatively high, but do not seem to be highly connected to criticism of Israel. At these schools a quarter or more of Jewish students perceived a hostile environment toward Jews, and as many as one third have witnessed antisemitic harassment. Yet, perceived hostility to Israel is closer to the average level of all the schools included in the study. Less than a quarter of students report being blamed for Israel's actions, and the antisemitic incidents witnessed or experienced by students are less likely to involve Israel. At these schools, more traditional antisemitic stereotypes and tropes, rather than criticism of Israel's politics, seem to be driving the perceived hostility toward Jews.

Finally, there are many schools where antisemitism and hostility to Israel are negligible. Respondents at several large private universities, including U of Miami, Wash U, and Syracuse perceive very little hostility toward Israel, and virtually all of these respondents disagree that there is a hostile environment toward Jews. Antisemitic harassment on these campuses is likewise rare. Overall, the relative ordering of schools with respect to perceived hostility (e.g., the finding that a greater portion of students perceive a hostile climate at CUNY-Brooklyn than at CUNY-Queens) is consistent with data reported by other sources (AMCHA Initiative, n.d.). Yet, it is important to note that even at schools where hostility toward Jews and Israel are high, this does not necessarily dominate the lives of Jewish students. Even on campuses with the highest levels of hostility toward Jews, Jewish respondents still tend to consider concerns over race and diversity, cost, student life, and safety and violence more "pressing" campus issues than Israel or Jews.

The findings of this study indicate that, even when Jewish students experience antisemitism and hostility toward Israel, their connection to Israel remains strong. Neither the presence of anti-Israel groups on campus, nor being on a campus which is generally perceived as having a hostile environment to Israel, are related to the strength of students' connection to Israel. In addition, as we found in our 2015 study (Saxe et al., 2015), analyses indicate that more Jewishly engaged students, including those who are more closely connected to Israel, are the most likely to perceive hostility toward Jews and Israel on their campus.

Connection to Israel notwithstanding, students often feel silenced in debates about this topic. This study found that a significant proportion of Jewish students feel uncomfortable expressing their opinions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Discomfort discussing Israel because of the hostility of the discourse occurs more frequently at schools that are notable for pervasive perceptions of anti-Israel sentiment, including CUNY-Brooklyn, NYU, and the UC campuses. Discomfort talking about Israel is also closely related to the presence of an SJP group on campus—suggesting that the rhetoric deployed by such groups often causes students to withdraw from discussions.

Not all "silencing" is driven by the hostility of the discourse about Israel. Regardless of which school they attend and how much anti-Israel sentiment they perceive, a significant minority of Jewish undergraduates are uncomfortable expressing their opinions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict due to their lack of knowledge. Thus, the key to drawing these students back into a dialogue may not be efforts aimed at combatting antisemitism or anti-Israel hostility on campus directly, but rather educational experiences, such as Jewish and Israel studies courses or authentic experiences of Israel.

Unlike anti-Israel hostility and antisemitism, which vary dramatically across campuses, lack of knowledge about Israel is a more consistent issue, present to some extent on all of the schools we studied. Since colleges and universities are, at their core, educational institutions, tapping into the core mission of the college experience presents an opportunity for "top-down" interventions that have potential for making a difference. There is already a vibrant discussion among Jewish educators about how to enhance the understanding of Israel (see Horowitz, 2012; Kopelowitz & Grant, 2012; Zakai, 2014). Many of these efforts aim to create a balance between building factual knowledge, helping students engage with the complexity of the issues, and fostering students' emotional attachment to Israel. Although educational programming will not obviate difficult discussions or hostile interactions, it can nevertheless bolster students' understanding of the issues and provide a sense of collective

In our view, educational strategies have not gotten the attention they deserve, as public discussion has focused on legislative remedies and ways to respond to incidents of antisemitic and anti-Israel hostility. Both California and New York have recently enacted laws with respect to BDS (NY State Assembly. A09036, California State Assembly. AB-2844). Although both sets of laws make important statements, they do not address the

solidarity.

need for more robust education about Israel. Particularly because campuses have become a focal point for anti-Israel and antisemitic activity, it is essential to provide an academic response.

The complex picture painted by this study not only suggests a different policy emphasis, but also reinforces the importance of systematic research to assess the prevalence of antisemitic and anti-Israel environments on campuses and their impact on Jewish students. Future research exploring antisemitism and anti-Israel hostility on US campuses should focus on understanding the dynamics of hostility as they are reflected on different campuses and experienced by both Jewish and non-Jewish students. Although there may be some general best practices for developing policy responses across campuses, efforts to address these issues will need to examine each campus' particular manifestation of antisemitic and/or anti-Israel hostility in the context of the school's unique blend of students, cultural and political climates, and local concerns.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup>Birthright Israel is a free, 10-day trip to Israel for Jewish young adults ages 18 to 26 that aims to strengthen Jewish identity, Jewish peoplehood, and connection to Israel among Jews around the world (Saxe & Chazan, 2008). The program was launched in 1999 and is funded by a coalition of private donors, Jewish organizations, and the Israeli government. As of summer 2016, more than 500,000 Jewish young adults from around the world have participated (http://www.birthrightisrael.com/about-us).
- <sup>2</sup>There is a notable exception to the restrictions discussed above. In this report multi-level, random-effects regression models are used to explore the relationship between individual- and school-level factors on individual perceptions of hostility to Israel or Jews, comfort expressing views on Israel, connection to Israel, and involvement with Hillel. Because these models are able to correctly account for the clustering of respondents within schools, and the varying sample sizes of different schools, respondents from all 50 schools are included in these models, and schools in the Cal state and University of California system are not grouped together but considered as separate schools.
- <sup>3</sup>A CMJS researcher looked for online presence of SJP chapters at each of the universities included in this study. This included, but was not limited to, Facebook pages and Twitter accounts.

<sup>4</sup>See Tables 2-5 in the Appendix.

- <sup>5</sup>See Table B4 in Technical Appendix B for full results of random effects ordered logistic regression models on perceiving a hostile environment toward Jews and Israel among students in the Cal State system, as a function of school.
- <sup>6</sup>See Table B5 in Technical Appendix B for full results of random effects ordered logistic regression models on perceiving a hostile environment toward Jews and Israel among students in the "Other UC" schools, as a function of school.
- <sup>7</sup>See Table B6 in Technical Appendix B for full results of a random effects ordered logistic regression model of connection to Israel.
- <sup>8</sup>See Table B7 in Technical Appendix B for full results of random effects ordered logistic regression models of feeling uncomfortable expression an opinion about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict due to lack of knowledge or perceived hostility of the discourse.

4(

# References

- AMCHA Initiative. (n.d.). Campuses we continue to monitor [Webpage]. Retrieved from http://www.amchainitiative.org/campusmonitor
- AMCHA Initiative. (2016). Report on antisemitic activity during the first half of 2016 at US colleges and universities with the largest Jewish undergraduate populations. Retrieved from http:// www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Report-on-Antisemitic-Activity-During-the-First-Half-of-2016.pdf
- Anti-Defamation League. (2015). Anti-Israel activity on campus, 2014-2015: Trends and projections. Retrieved from http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/israel-international/israel--middle-east/campus -anti-israel-activity-report-2015-11-04.pdf
- California State Assembly. AB-2844. 2016. Retrieved from <u>https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/</u> <u>billNavClient.xhtml?bill\_id=201520160AB2844</u>
- Eagan, K., Stolzenberg, E. B., Bates, A. K., Aragon, M. C., Suchard, M. R., & Rios-Aguilar, C. (2015). *The American freshman: National norms fall 2015*. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA.
- Gladstone, B. (2016). Brown University: Where anti-zionism and anti-semitism do (and don't) meet. The Tower. Retrieved from http://www.thetower.org/3141-brown-university-where-anti-zionism-and-anti-semitism-do-and-dont-meet/
- Harris, M. (2016). So you're a Jew and you're starting college? Prepare for anti-Zionism. The Washington Post. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/ wp/2016/08/23/so-youre-a-jew-and-youre-starting-college-prepare-for-anti-zionism/
- Hillel International (n.d.) College guide. Retrieved from http://www.hillel.org/college-guide/ search#
- Horowitz, B. (2012). Defining Israel education. Northbrook, IL: The iCenter for Israel Education.
- Israel on Campus Coalition. (2016). *Fall 2015 campus trends report*. Retrieved from http://israelcc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Fall2015CampusTrendsReport.pdf
- Johnson, K.C. (2016, September 20). Free speech and CUNY anti-Semitism. *Tablet Magazine*. Retrieved from http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/213844/free-speech-and -cuny-anti-semitism
- Kopelowitz, E.M. & Grant, L.D. (2012). Israel education matters: A 21st century paradigm for Jewish education. Jerusalem, Israel: The Center for Jewish Peoplehood Education.
- Kosmin, B.A. & Keysar, A. (2015). National Demographic Survey of American Jewish College Students 2014: Anti-Semitism Report. Hartford, Washington, DC: Trinity College, The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under the Law.
- Maltz, J. (2016). How the on-campus brawl is turning young Jews off Israel. *Haaretz*. Retrieved from http://www.haaretz.com/jewish/features/1.717781
- N.Y. State Assembly. A09036. 2016. Retrieved from http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/? default\_fld=&leg\_video=&bn=A09036&term=2015&Summary=Y&Memo=Y&Text=Y

- Pew Research Center. (2013). A Portrait of Jewish Americans. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center's Religion and Public Life Project.
- Saxe, L., & Chazan, B. (2008). Ten days of Birthright Israel: A journey in young adult identity. Lebanon, NH: Brandeis University Press/ University Press of New England.
- Saxe, L., Sasson, T., Chertok, F., Wright, G., Shain, M., Hecht, S., & Koren, A. (2016). All together separate: Race, ethnicity, and religion on the Brandeis campus. Waltham, MA: Steinhardt Social Research Institute, Brandeis University.
- Saxe, L., Sasson, T., Wright, G., & Hecht, S. (2015). *Antisemitism on the college campus: Perceptions and realities.* Waltham, MA: Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University.
- Shain, M., Chertok, F., Wright, G., Hecht, S., Koren, A., Gelles, R. J. & Saxe, L. (2016). *Diversity, pressure, and divisions on the University of Pennsylvania campus.* Waltham, MA: Steinhardt Social Research Institute, Brandeis University.
- Summers, L. (2016, March 31). Larry Summers: Colleges have become hypersensitive to racial prejudice. Why not anti-Semitism? *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from https:// www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/03/31/larry-summers-colleges-havebecome-hypersensitive-to-racial-prejudice-why-not-anti-semitism/
- US News & World Report. (2015). US News & World Report announces the 2016 best colleges. Retrieved from http://www.usnews.com/info/blogs/press-room/2015/09/09/us-newsannounces-the-2016-best-colleges
- The White House Office of the Press Secretary (2016). Remarks by the President at Righteous Among Nations Award Ceremony. Speech presented at Righteous Among Nations Award Ceremony in Embassy of Israel, Washington, D.C. Retrieved September 8, 2016, from https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/01/27/remarks-president-righteous-among-nations-award-ceremony
- Zakai, S. (2014). "My heart is in the East and I am in the West": Enduring questions of Israel education in North America. *Journal of Jewish Education*, 80(3), 287-318.

# Appendix

#### Table 1: Characteristics of schools

	State	Status <sup>1</sup>	Total Undergrad Pop. <sup>1</sup>	Estimated Num. Jewish Undergrads <sup>2</sup>	% Jewish Undergrads	Active SJP Group	Anti- semitism Tracker <sup>3</sup>	Num Resps
University of Southern California (USC)	CA	Private	18,740	2,000	11%	No	6	93
University of California - Los Angeles (UCLA)	CA	Public	19,574	2,500	13%	Yes	18	68
University of California - Santa Barbara (UCSB)	CA	Public	20,283	2,750	14%	Yes	8	77
Other University of California Schools (Other UC schools)	СА							157
Berkeley	CA	Public	27,126	2,500	9%	Yes	16	47
Davis	CA	Public	27,728	2,500	9%	Yes	12	39
San Diego	CA	Public	24,810	550	2%	Yes	4	44
Santa Cruz	CA	Public	16,277	1,600	10%	Yes	16	27
California State University (Cal State)	СА							83
California State University - Chico	CA	Public	16,127	500	3%	No		15
California State University – Fullerton	CA	Public	33,144	1,000	3%	Yes	3	14
California State University - Long Beach	CA	Public	31,523	1,000	3%	Yes	1	1
California State University – Northridge	CA	Public	35,616	3,500	10%	No	1	4:
University of Miami (U of Miami)	FL	Private	27,056	5,800	21%	No	0	90
Florida State University	FL	Public	32,948	3,220	10%	Yes	3	8
University of Florida	FL	Public	32,008	6,000	19%	Yes	10	21
University of Central Florida	FL	Public	52,532	6,000	11%	Yes	4	9
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Illinois)	IL	Public	32,959	3,000	9%	Yes	12	9
Northwestern University (Northwestern)	IL	Private	9,177	1,400	15%	Yes	25	6
Indiana University Bloomington (Indiana)	IN	Public	36,419	4,200	12%	No	2	9
Tulane University (Tulane)	LA	Private	8,353	2,250	27%	No	0	10
Northeastern University (Northeastern)	MA	Private	17,400	1,000	6%	Yes	15	13
University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass)	MA	Public	22,252	2,500	11%	Yes	15	12
Boston University (BU)	MA	Private	18,017	5,000	28%	Yes	14	8
University of Maryland, College Park (Maryland)	MD	Public	27,056	5,800	21%	Yes	7	20
University of Michigan (Michigan)	MI	Public	28,395	15,230	54%	Yes	12	15
Washington University in St. Louis (Wash. U.)	MO	Private	7,401	1,700	23%	No	2	9:

	State	Status <sup>1</sup>	Total Undergrad Pop. <sup>1</sup>	Estimated Num. Jewish Undergrads <sup>2</sup>	% Jewish Undergrads	Active SJP Group	Anti- semitism Tracker <sup>3</sup>	Num Resps
Rutgers, The State Universi- ty of New Jersey (Rutgers)	NJ	Public	34,544	6,400	19%	Yes	11	159
Binghamton University (Binghamton)	NY	Public	13,412	3,500	26%	Yes	3	123
Cornell University (Cornell)	NY	Private	14,453	3,000	21%	Yes	8	94
New York University (NYU)	NY	Private	24,985	6,000	24%	Yes	14	90
Syracuse University (Syracuse)	NY	Private	15,224	2,500	16%	No	1	66
City University of New York - Brooklyn College (CUNY - Brooklyn)	NY	Public	14,115	3,275	23%	Yes	6	80
City University of New York - Queens College (CUNY - Queens)	NY	Public	15,773	4,000	25%	No	0	72
Ohio State University (Ohio State)	ОН	Public	44,741	2,500	6%	Yes	9	79
Pennsylvania State University (Penn State)	PA	Public	40,541	4,000	10%	Yes	1	15
University of Pittsburgh (Pitt)	PA	Public	18,757	1,700	9%	No	1	8
Temple University (Temple)	PA	Public	28,408	1,750	6%	No	6	6
University of Texas at Austin (Texas)	ТΧ	Public	39,523	3,500	9%	Yes	8	8
George Washington Univer- sity (George Washington)	DC	Private	10,740	3,000	28%	Yes	3	10
University of Wisconsin- Madison (Wisconsin)	WI	Public	31,289	4,200	13%	Yes	9	8
Not Reported in Figures								
University of Arizona	AZ	Public	32,987	3,000	9%	Yes	4	4
University of Colorado – Boulder	СО	Public	26,426	2,000	8%	No	2	5
University of Delaware	DE	Public	18,141	2,000	11%	Yes	5	64
Florida Atlantic University	FL	Public	25,209	2,400	10%	No	2	4
Florida Gulf Coast University	FL	Public	8,100	80	1%	No		1
University of Iowa	IA	Public	23,357	600	3%	No	1	3
Purdue University	IN	Public	29,497	525	2%	Yes	1	2
Michigan State University	MI	Public	38,786	3,500	9%	Yes		5
Princeton University	NJ	Private	5,402	2,736	51%	Yes	9	2
Columbia University*	NY	Private	8,860	1,800	20%	Yes	29	5

### Table I: Characteristics of schools (con't)

1 US World News and Report; 2 Hillel International (n.d.); 3 AMCHA Initiative (n.d.)

 $\ensuremath{^*}$  Columbia University is discussed in a box on page 25

	# of schools	Schools				
20% and higher	0					
15 to less than 20%	2	<ul><li>NYU</li></ul>	• UCLA			
10 to less than 15%	4	<ul><li>Cornell</li><li>George Washington</li></ul>	<ul><li>Rutgers</li><li>BU</li></ul>			
5 to less than 10%	21	<ul> <li>Binghamton</li> <li>Illinois</li> <li>UCF</li> <li>USC</li> <li>Pitt</li> <li>Wisconsin</li> <li>Tulane</li> <li>Cal State</li> <li>Florida</li> <li>Other UC</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Penn State</li> <li>Florida State</li> <li>CUNY – Queens</li> <li>Northwestern</li> <li>Indiana</li> <li>Ohio State</li> <li>Michigan</li> <li>Texas</li> <li>CUNY – Brooklyn</li> <li>UCSB</li> </ul>			
Less than 5%	6	<ul><li>Miami</li><li>UMass</li><li>Syracuse</li></ul>	<ul><li>Maryland</li><li>Washington University</li><li>Northeastern</li></ul>			

### Table 2. Percent of students hearing "Jews have too much power" frequently or all the time

Table 3. Percent of students hearing "Jews exploit the Holocaust" frequently or all the time

	# of schools	Schools	
20% and higher	0		
15 to less than 20%	0		
10 to less than 15%	2	• UCLA	• BU
5 to less than 10%	13	Florida State	George Washington
		Texas	Other US
		Wisconsin	• NYU
		Michigan	CUNY-Brooklyn
		• Pittsburgh	UCSB
		Northwestern	Rutgers
		Cal State	U U
Less than 5%	18	Syracuse	Maryland
		<ul> <li>Binghamton</li> </ul>	UMass Amherst
		Cornell	Florida
		UCF	Tulane
		Washington University	Temple
		Ohio State	• USC
		Illinois	Penn State
		• Indiana	Northeastern
		Miami	CUNY-Queens

	# of schools	Schools			
20% and higher	5	<ul><li>CUNY-Brooklyn</li><li>BU</li><li>UCLA</li></ul>	<ul><li>Northwestern</li><li>Other UC</li></ul>		
15 to less than 20%	4	<ul><li>Rutgers</li><li>Cal State</li></ul>	<ul><li>Texas</li><li>UCSB</li></ul>		
10 to less than 15%	5	<ul><li>UMass Amherst</li><li>NYU</li><li>Penn State</li></ul>	<ul><li>Ohio State</li><li>Michigan</li></ul>		
5 to less than 10%	15	<ul> <li>Florida</li> <li>UCF</li> <li>Cornell</li> <li>Indiana</li> <li>USC</li> <li>Binghamton</li> <li>Washington University</li> <li>Pittsburgh</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Illinois</li> <li>Maryland</li> <li>Temple</li> <li>Florida State</li> <li>Wisconsin</li> <li>Northeastern</li> <li>George Washington</li> </ul>		
Less than 5%	4	<ul><li>Syracuse</li><li>Tulane</li></ul>	<ul><li>CUNY - Queens</li><li>Miami</li></ul>		

Table 4. Percent of students hearing "Israel behaves like Nazis" frequently or all the time

Table 5. Percent of students hearing "Jews are more loyal to Israel"	frequently or all the time
--	----------------------------

	# of schools	Schools	
20% and higher	0		
15 to less than 20%	0		
10 to less than 15%	4	• BU	• UCLA
		Cal State	<ul> <li>CUNY-Brooklyn</li> </ul>
5 to less than 10%	13	Temple	George Washington
		Northeastern	<ul> <li>CUNY-Queens</li> </ul>
		Illinois	• NYU
		• USC	UCSB
		Florida State	<ul> <li>Binghamton</li> </ul>
		Other UC	<ul> <li>Rutgers</li> </ul>
		• Tulane	
Less than 5%	16	Washington University	Wisconsin
		UMass Amherst	Florida
		• Indiana	Penn State
		• Miami	<ul> <li>Pittsburgh</li> </ul>
		Northwestern	Texas
		Syracuse	<ul> <li>Michigan</li> </ul>
		Maryland	Ohio State
		Cornell	UCF

The Steinhardt Social Research Institute (SSRI) develops and conducts quantitative studies of ethnicity and religion in the United States, with a particular focus on Jewish life. SSRI is a component of the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University.

The Cohen Center is a multi-disciplinary research institute dedicated to the study of American Jewry and issues related to contemporary Jewish life.

**Brandeis University** 





Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies