Jewish Studies

Jewish Studies completed a comprehensive strategic plan, addressing its academic offerings, students’ life, and community outreach. The plan was developed by three subcommittees, endorsed by the entire strategic planning committee, approved unanimously by the Advisory Board, and embraced by the senior executive vice presidents of the College. Its major recommendations are an expansion of the Jewish Studies Center, a Holocaust Education Initiative, and a Center for Southern Jewish Culture.

The Jewish Studies major at the College passed all the faculty committees, the Faculty Senate, and the Board of Trustees without a single dissenting vote. It is before the CHE in Columbia now, and should be available to students beginning in the fall 2011 semester.

Academic offerings in Jewish Studies are increasingly integrated in the College’s curriculum. Jewish Studies offers first-year seminars each fall and its two semester history sequence now satisfies the College’s two semester General Education history requirement. Both the first-year seminars and the Jewish history offerings fill with students early in the registration process, in large part because of that integration.

The community’s financial support for Jewish Studies has been outstanding. Annual giving now supports a significant portion of the program—our largest two donors give $20,000 each a year—with endowment revenues providing less yearly support (in virtue of the downturn in the economy). Two major gifts this year were “anonymous” funding for the Jewish Student Life Coordinator (as $45,000 a year for the next five years, with a million dollar bequest in the family’s estate) and a $1.5 million gift by Anita Zucker and her family for the Zucker/Goldberg Holocaust Education Initiative. The Henry and Sylvia Yaschik Foundation continues to be a major supporter with annual giving of about $50,000 per year.