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TOP 11

JEWISH QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING THE COLLEGE SEARCH

BY ERIN SCHREIBER



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Each spring it becomes a rite of passage for families with high schoolers to plot out trips traversing the country with stops at colleges and universities. Often a parent's alma mater will be included, along with visits to prominent state schools.

Along the route. By the time many of these trips commence, mailboxes have been clogged with enough slick college viewbooks from places you've never heard of.

Statistics. For all the research – and worry – that goes into applying to colleges, the choice was largely based on what felt right, on where they felt most at home. And chances are, feeling like home will involve ways to connect and grow as part of a young Jewish community member.

College is often a turning point "Jewishly". We're taught that the Bar or Bat Mitzvah signifies adulthood, but college is where you have the chance to actually live that latitude. Within the wings and roots you've been given. Asking questions about academics and scholarships, asking questions about how the school can support you Jewishly during college can help you to your new home away from home, and make an otherwise intimidating and unfamiliar place be a fit. Here are 11 questions to ponder – and ask! – as you dig beyond the statistics to the heart of the matter.

So much of choosing a college can feel like your homework and explored Jewish life on and even off campus, following your heart may make the decision very clear. Wherever your search leads, move forward knowing your biggest job is to stretch and grow – and enjoy the journey as much as the outcome.



1

Are there Jewish organizations on campus? What is the focus of their programs? Are there programs to be mentored and opportunities to grow as a leader from the beginning? Schedule a visit with these groups, or call to find a good time and staff will likely give you the best view of Jewish life on campus. Look at their flyers and social media history to get a sense of the organization.

8

Are there Jewish faculty and staff who support students? These people may become your home away from home, be it helping you navigate the university system, acting you to opportunities in the community, or sharing their table and brisket advice. They're great at academics, but not who you feel comfortable with more personal conversations. Often the relationships with staff transcend their roles as they help you

2

Is there a Jewish center or organization on campus?

They may have a variety of offerings and resources. Programs that connect them to other campus leaders, and staff are university employees.

3

Is there a robust Jewish life on campus? What resources beyond the campus you might benefit from? While Jewish groups that offer programs and events, what families look for first, relationships with nearby synagogues, Federations and Federations can provide meaningful experiences that can be a great start to a Jewish life on campus.

9

Are there things you need to know about Jewish life? How are holidays celebrated on campus? Are there opportunities for Jewish students to explore and learn? What kinds of services are offered and where? Are there Jewish student organizations? What are the locations and what are the meal plans? Are there Jewish student organizations? What are the locations and what are the meal plans?

4

Are Jewish students? Are faculty aware of Jewish holidays and supportive of student observance? How have any incidents of anti-Semitism been handled? Are there strong Jewish Israel dialogue? Are collaborative interfaith groups active on campus?

10

Are there something here to challenge you and stretch you Jewishly? Can you take on a leadership role? Can you explore and learn? Can you explore and learn? Can you explore and learn? Can you explore and learn?

5

Are there Jewish organizations on campus? Maybe it's a variety of non-Jewish organizations, maybe it's a Jewish sorority or fraternity.

11

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6

What are the challenges of being Jewish on campus?

These challenges you will face with?

12

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7

What options exist for study abroad?

Particularly to Israel or other places of significance to Jews, or your particular family history? Can college credit be obtained through these programs? What are the options for these programs look like on the ground in the country where you will be studying?