

Future Jewish Leaders from Brandeis University Explore “Israel without Filters”

Future leaders of the American Jewish community need a deep understanding of Israel in all its complexity and strong relationships to Israeli leaders. To meet this need, Oranim International School partnered with the Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership Program at Brandeis University to facilitate the Myra Kraft Seminar in Israel for Hornstein students.



Hornstein students visiting Isaac Herzog, Chairman of the Jewish Agency

Shaping the Future Relationship between Israel and American Jewry

This January, Oranim International School partnered with the Hornstein program to facilitate a nine-day intensive seminar in Israel, the Myra Kraft Seminar in Israel, entitled, *Israel without Filters: Implications for Israel-Diaspora Relations*. The seminar provides Hornstein students with the knowledge, tools, and connections to shape the future relationship between Israel and American Jewry. The seminar is the culmination of a half-semester course at Brandeis in which students learned about Israel-diaspora relationships through readings, discussions, and guest speakers.

As one student wrote, “We feel so privileged to have had the chance to learn about the Israel-Diaspora relationship from educators who specialize in this topic and to experience the diversity within Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa.”

Thirteen students from the Hornstein program, Brandeis University’s master’s degree program preparing visionary leaders for the Jewish community, participated in the seminar. Accompanying the students from Brandeis University were Hornstein Director Prof. Leonard Saxe, and course instructor Dr. Janet Aronson. Also accompanying the trip from Brandeis faculty was Barry Shrage, retired president of Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston. Dr. Roberta Bell-Kligler and Martina Ezias of Oranim International School developed and facilitated the seminar, and Dr. Elan Ezrachi was responsible for the seminar in Jerusalem.

Meeting Leaders of Israeli Society

The seminar introduced Hornstein students to leaders in Israeli society, including Isaac Herzog, Chairman of the Jewish Agency. Herzog tweeted following their meeting: "*Fascinating discussion w/ Jewish leadership students from Brandeis U. All Israeli leaders need to hear this generation of American Jews, who are fully committed to Israel, on their challenges with continuity, unity and security.*"

Students even had a surprise visit from the Mayor of Tel Aviv, Ron Huldai!

Encounters with Young Israeli Activists

Highlights of the seminar for students included opportunities to meet with young Israelis their age who, like them, are working to make positive change in their society. Students enjoyed a *mifgash* (encounter) with M.A. students in the Ruderman Program for American Jewish Studies at the University of Haifa, as well as a *mifgash* with Oranim College students. They also appreciated the opportunity to meet with young Israeli activists in Jerusalem and elsewhere.

As they return home, Hornstein students will take with them the connections they made to diverse Israelis as they continue to think about how they can shape the relationship between Israel and the American Jewish community for the next generation.