

# **Boston University**

**The JLIC educators at Boston University are Rabbi Avi and Shira Heller.**

## **Demographics:**

There are approximately 3,500 Jewish undergraduate students at Boston University, which is 15% of the entire student population. A typical Orthodox Minyan on Friday night will attract around 90 students, of which 35 have spent a year in Israel prior to enrolling at BU. Approximately 125 students identify as Orthodox.

## **Kosher Food:**

There is a kosher dining plan that consists of eleven meals every week and is slightly more expensive than the regular meal plan. Anyone not on the meal plan can eat at kosher dining, but there is a surcharge of \$3 (payable in “points” on one’s student card). The kosher café at Hillel also accepts points and is open in the mornings, evenings, and on Sundays. The university caters kosher meals for university events and trainings. Supervision is provided by Hillel Rabbinic staff (Rabbis Polak and Heller) and is nominally under the KVH (Rabbinical Council of New England).

## **Programming and Shiurim:**

There are many events offered each semester. Some include the Jewish Literacy Kickoff (a discussion about the importance of being literate from a Jewish and civic perspective), It Takes Two to Torah (a dinner and learning program), and Seminars in Jewish Experience (a series on various topics led by the JLIC rabbi, Rabbi Avi Heller).

Current Jewish learning opportunities at Boston University include: Ten Minutes of Torah, Run with the Rabbi (students get a chance to exercise their body and soul on 2-3 mile runs with Rabbi Avi Heller), Talmud, Jewish philosophy and Maimonides, Women’s Halacha, women and Judaism, and Prime Time Parsha (high-level Parsha Shiur).

## **Orthodox Community:**

The Orthodox Minyan has two representatives who are appointed to the Religious Life Council as well as a semi-official Gabbai. Creating an Orthodox Advisory Council is under discussion. There is a daily Minyan and regular Shabbat services.

Freshmen in the Orthodox community usually live in residence halls and brownstones within a five-minute walk from Hillel. Some students, however, live in South and West Campus which is further from Hillel, and can be up to a twenty minute walk away. Upperclassmen usually live in apartments in Brookline and/or South Campus.

The Orthodox community has remained fairly consistent in size over the past few years, though morning Minyan has grown stronger since Rabbi Heller arrived at BU and there is a marked increase in learning opportunities and Chavrutas since the arrival of the JLIC couple.

The Young Israel of Brookline is close to BU, and MIT, Northeastern and Harvard are all within walking distance. There is kosher food available in Brookline.

**Shabbat:**

There are sometimes scholars in residence or other events on Friday nights such as a comedian and/or a Tisch at Hillel or in student apartments. Students relax, hang out, or learn at Hillel throughout Shabbat. On Shabbat day there is a Shiur in the morning followed by Minyan at 9 am. This is followed by Kiddush and a short Dvar Torah and then lunch. Towards the end of Shabbat, students run a Seudah Shlishit and Havdalah service.

There is an Eruv around BU, which is an extension of the Boston community Eruv.

**Additional Resources:**

There is a Jewish Studies minor available through the Elie Wiesel Center for Judaic Studies on campus.

There is a Chabad on the edge of campus that attracts a small group of BU students as well as MIT and Northeastern students, and holds services during semester breaks. There are two Meor (Maimonides) rabbis who have some relationships with Orthodox students and occasionally invite them for Shabbat meals.

There is also an Aish presence and interested Orthodox students can help staff Aish trips.

“Since Rabbi Avi and Shira Heller have arrived on campus, you can see the obvious re-  
invigoration of the Orthodox community at BU as well as the other Jewish communities on campus.”

– Dan Hazony, ‘09