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## 1. PREFACE

Founded in 1968 to serve the Jewish people, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (RRC) is dedicated to studying and teaching Judaism as an evolving religious civilization, and to advancing the universal freedom, justice and peace that are Judaism's core values.

Our mission is to train rabbis and other Jewish leaders to teach Torah in its broadest terms, and to strengthen leadership in congregations and other settings throughout the Jewish community in North America. For more than half of a century, the College has provided scholarship and training to strengthen that community, and to advance the growth of the Reconstructionist movement by spreading its ideas and ideals throughout the Jewish world.

For more information about the mission of RRC and its relationship to the other branches of the Reconstructionist movement, see RRC's catalogue and website.

## 2. DEGREES

### ***Rabbinical Degree***

Students receive the title "rabbi" and the Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters (M.A.H.L.) degree upon successful completion of the rabbinic program. RRC is authorized to grant the M.A.H.L. degree only in conjunction with rabbinic ordination: the two are not separable.

### ***Master of Arts in Jewish Studies***

The Master of Arts in Jewish Studies (M.A.J.S.) program offers a serious, graduate-level opportunity to delve deeply into Jewish history, thought, ethics and literature while searching for spiritual meaning and holiness. The M.A.J.S. provides students with a sound basis for later specialization, affording them a background in the full breadth of Jewish studies, including Hebrew language.

### ***Doctorate of Hebrew Letters***

Students or graduates of RRC who have completed their dissertation for a doctoral degree at a recognized university are eligible to apply for candidacy for the Doctorate of Hebrew Letters (D.H.L.) degree granted by RRC.

A student who wishes to be registered as a candidate for the D.H.L. degree must address a letter to the faculty requesting this status. The letter should be accompanied by a current transcript of the academic record from the student's university.

A student must submit a proposal for the D.H.L. dissertation to the faculty by May 15 of the academic year preceding that in which the D.H.L. candidacy is to be authorized.

Proposals for the D.H.L. dissertation should contain an outline of the areas to be discussed, a statement of the anticipated conclusions and a brief review of pertinent work already done in the area of the proposed study.

The D.H.L. dissertation must be related to the doctoral dissertation, developing the implications of the latter for Judaism or Reconstructionism.

After approval of the D.H.L. dissertation proposal, the faculty will designate a dissertation committee that will consist of a chairperson who will serve as both major advisor and reader, and one or two additional readers.

The candidate will confer at least two times per year with members of this committee. Once a proposal for the D.H.L. dissertation has been accepted by the faculty, candidates for the D.H.L. will be charged a fee per semester for faculty supervision.

Following acceptance by the committee, the D.H.L. dissertation in its final form must be submitted to the full-time faculty by April 1, accompanied by the dissertation committee's written recommendation for acceptance. Final approval of the dissertation and approval for the granting of the D.H.L. degree shall be authorized by a two-thirds vote of the regular faculty.

Two copies of the D.H.L. dissertation and one copy of the doctoral dissertation will be deposited in the library of RRC.

### **Master of Science in Nonprofit Leadership with the University of Pennsylvania**

RRC has an arrangement with the University of Pennsylvania's School of Policy and Social Practice's Master of Science in Nonprofit Leadership degree program, which provides RRC students who enroll in the program with special funding and accelerated opportunities. More information on this program can be found at: <https://sp2.upenn.edu/program/npl-ma-in-hebrew-letters/>

### **3. CREDIT HOURS**

One RRC credit unit represents three hours of student work, normally including a minimum of one hour of instructional time per week over a 15-week semester or the equivalent amount of work over a different period of time.<sup>1</sup>

For the purposes of RRC financial aid and other internal matters, RRC considers a minimum of nine credits over the course of a semester to be full-time.

### **4. RABBINICAL PROGRAM**

#### **Goals of the Rabbinic Curriculum**

The RRC rabbinic program is founded on the question: What competencies do 21st century rabbis need to create and sustain vibrant Jewish life, as well as to lead, inspire and support the communities they serve? The full list of competencies that constitute the aims of the curriculum are found in Appendix B, Competencies. In summary, the curriculum is designed to cultivate skills and knowledge that will allow students to be:

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<sup>1</sup> RRC semesters normally include the equivalent of 13 weeks of classes, reading days and finals.

- vessels of Torah who are deeply rooted in Judaism’s rich textual legacy and are able to share that legacy with others in ways that enrich their lives with meaning.
- sh’likhei tzibur (ritual leaders) who lead communities in meaningful and inspiring prayer and ritual as they move through the rhythms of the year and of their individual lives.
- self-aware models of strength and kindness whose actions and leadership model the value that all human beings are created b’tzelem Elohim (in the image of God). RRC’s curriculum cultivates students’ interpersonal skills and their growth in the middot (virtues and behaviors) that allow people to live up to this central and demanding Jewish value.
- effective and socially aware leaders who lead in all the settings in which Jews seek meaning and community, and who work for greater justice in the Jewish world and beyond. In order to train students for leadership roles in synagogues, nonprofit organizations and educational settings, the curriculum includes training and internship experiences that develop entrepreneurial, financial and organizational skills.
- healing and helpful pastoral caregivers who will accompany people in times of great joy and great sadness. At RRC, students learn from leaders in the fields of pastoral and spiritual care, and are supported by teachers, mentors and colleagues as they develop the inner resources that will allow them to support others in their times of need.

### ***Program Overview***

The rabbinic program is designed to meet the needs of students who enter RRC with a love of Judaism and a passion for serving the Jewish people, a strong undergraduate training in the liberal arts or sciences, and a demonstrated aptitude in the areas of social and emotional intelligence. Students who enter RRC with limited Hebrew skills begin with the Mekhinah Year, which prepares them to succeed in the five-year core program. Students who enter RRC with more extensive experience, knowledge or skills in the areas of Jewish studies, ritual or organizational leadership, and/or pastoral care modify the program to meet their current capabilities, needs and interests. Our instructors draw on best practices from traditional academic study, traditional Jewish learning, mindfulness practice, and pastoral and professional training to help students cultivate their intellectual, personal and professional growth and learning.

RRC’s ~~current curriculum, which launched in the fall of 2020,~~ is grounded in two core modalities of learning: a) nourishing and rigorous study of the Jewish legacy engaging academic and traditional approaches and b) field education-based practical rabbinics training in which students develop rabbinic knowledge and skills through action and reflection in intensive field internships. The structure of the curriculum reflects these two complementary modalities of learning.

### **Mekhinah Year**

RRC requires that some students complete one preparatory year of study before they are admitted to the five-year core program. The Mekhinah Year is designed to accommodate students who lack certain skills required to begin rabbinical study but appear to have excellent potential for service to the Jewish people.

The Mekhinah Year program focuses on intensive study of Hebrew language and literature. Students also devote substantial time to the study of Jewish practices—the halakhah of customs, ceremonies, life-cycle events and the calendar—and participate in a learners’ minyan. Successful completion of the Mekhinah Year qualifies students to continue in the College’s five-year rabbinical training program.

### Years 1-3

During the first three years of the program, students immerse themselves in the unfolding story of Jewish civilization by studying texts, traditions and lived experience of Jews from antiquity to the present. During these years, students also begin to cultivate pastoral, interpersonal and liturgical skills through field readiness courses that combine classroom study, field observation and service learning. These field readiness courses prepare students to learn and serve effectively in immersive field placements in years 4-5. While the most intensive field work happens in the latter years of the program, students begin to gain rabbinic experience through field readiness courses and less intensive internships in years 1-3. They also gain skills and experience and develop life-long relationships with colleagues and teachers through participation in RRC's rich on-campus community

### Years 4-5

After developing their skills and knowledge through academic and traditional modes of study, the focus of student learning shifts from the classroom to the field. During these years, students learn by doing. They continue to develop their practical rabbinics skills and integrate and apply their academic learning through intensive internships in a wide range of Jewish contexts. This field learning is supported and complemented by intensive supervision and ongoing coursework through a range of on-line modalities.

Throughout the program, students have opportunities to cultivate the personal and spiritual growth that will animate and sustain their work as rabbis. ~~Beginning in 2021-22,~~ All students will participate in immersive-community wide semi-annual retreats at RRC's Wyncote campus. These retreats will be an opportunity for connection, community building and learning across cohorts.

### Israel summer term program

RRC has a summer term program, in partnership with Bina: The Secular Yeshiva, located in Tel Aviv. This required program will combine classroom, experiential and service learning to help students better understand the role of the land and state of Israel in the Jewish civilizational project, especially in the modern and contemporary periods. The program will address the history of the contemporary state of Israel and will focus on fostering an understanding of the diversity of Israeli experiences and perspectives, including the experiences of Palestinians within Israel and the occupied territories. Students are expected to complete the Israel summer term program before entering year 4 of the program.

### CPE

All RRC students are required to do a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education. The cost of CPE is included in RRC tuition and RRC provides stipends for students completing CPE during the summer.

### ***Areas of study***

The RRC course requirements fall into four curricular categories:

Civilizational and Thought Courses: Civilization courses provide students with knowledge of the major civilizational characteristics of each period of Jewish history and acculturate students to the perspective of Judaism as an evolving religious civilization. In thought courses, students engage

with central genres and works of the Jewish theological and philosophical canon. Civilization and thought courses are normally taken in chronological order in the first three years of the program. Students can take the courses out of sequence with permission from the instructor. Students taking civilizational courses out of sequence may be required to complete background reading before the course begins to provide them with the necessary historical context.

Hebrew Courses: RRC's Hebrew curriculum consists of a four-course sequence that is designed to support students' textual facility and fluency. The Hebrew courses serve as pre-requisites for the text courses that they support.

Text Courses: RRC's text curriculum provides students with the skills to engage in life-long study of traditional Jewish texts, including Tanakh, Talmud, Midrash and Parshanut. In foundational text courses, students build their language skills and develop their ability to identify technical terminology, idioms, genres, and interpretive techniques, and to access and use basic lexica and reference materials. In more advanced text courses, students use these skills to engage more deeply with particular texts or genres. The text curriculum at RRC combines both beit midrash and seminar style study, allowing students to use a range of modalities to engage with texts in ways that are spiritually and intellectually nourishing.

Practical Rabbinics: RRC's practical rabbinics curriculum consists of field-readiness courses in years 1-3 in which students develop basic skills and knowledge in the areas of ritual leadership, education, communication, pastoral care and use of self that they will need to effectively learn and serve in immersive field placements in years 4-5. During years 1-3, all students are required to complete one unit of CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education). Students in years 1-3 are encouraged to participate in ~~non-credit~~ group supervision. For those students holding RRC sponsored internships, group supervision is required. During the latter years of the program, students' learning in the field will be supported and augmented by group and individual supervision and practical rabbinics classes.

## **5. REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION**

- Minimum of three years, full-time in person at RRC (72 credits) or its equivalent (most students complete the program in five to six years, spending at least three years in residency).
- Fulfillment of academic and professional requirements including successful completion of RRC's summer term Israel program and successful completion of one unit of Clinical Pastoral Training.
- Approval by the faculty

The Rabbinical Program graduation requirements ~~effective for students entering in 2020~~ consist of the following 120 credits:

### ***Course Requirements***

#### Civilization (15 credits)

- Biblical Civilization
- Rabbinic Civilization
- Medieval Civilization

- Modern Civilization
- Contemporary Israel Civilization Seminar (part of summer term Israel program)

#### Text (33 credits)

- Tanakh 1
- Tanakh 2
- Introduction to Rabbinic Literature
- Talmud 1
- Talmud 2
- Talmud 3 (Distribution Requirement)<sup>2</sup>
- Parshanut
- Midrash (Distribution Requirement)
- Jewish Mystical Texts (Distribution Requirement)
- Text and Practice (Distribution Requirement)
- Advanced Text / Advanced Bible (Distribution Requirement)

#### Thought (12 credits)

- Reconstructionism
- Medieval Thought
- Modern Thought
- Contemporary Thought

#### Hebrew (12 credits)

- Hebrew 1
- Hebrew 2
- Hebrew 3
- Hebrew 4

#### Practical Rabbinics (39 credits)

- Field-readiness courses: T'fillah 1-2, Life Cycle shiur, Life Cycle practicum, Year Cycle, Role and Responsibility of the Rabbi, Teaching and Learning, and Rabbinic Communication (12 credits)
- Clinical Pastoral Education (3 credits)
- Supervision in years 4-5 (12 credits)
- Practical rabbinics courses in years 4-5: Contemporary Jewish Landscape, Group/Admin, Work, Pastoral Counseling, ~~Leading Through Innovation/Entrepreneurship~~, and Rabbi as Spiritual Community Leader<sup>6</sup> (6 credits)
- Multifaith/Social Justice (distribution requirement) (3 credits)
- Senior experience (3 credits)

#### Electives (9 credits)

#### Additional Requirements include:

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<sup>2</sup> Distribution requirements are requirements that can be fulfilled through enrollment in one or more designated courses. The course listings in the course catalogue and each semester's course offerings identify which courses fulfill distribution requirements.

- Participation in weekly community davening (years 1-3)
- Participation in Community Limmud (years 1-3)
- Israel summer term program (to be completed by the end of year 3)
- Participation in semi-annual community wide immersive retreats
- Demonstration of basic liturgy skills (to be completed by the end of year 3)
- Completion of shadowing and congregational visits (to be completed by the end of year 3 Effective 2022-2023, all current Mekhinah and Year 1 students)
- Faculty approval of fitness for the rabbinate

### ***Participation in RRC Communal Davening and Learning***

Full-time students are required to participate in weekly davening, monthly Community Limmud sessions and other required RRC community events every semester of years 1-3. Students who remain in Philadelphia during years 4-5 are welcomed and encourage to attend these activities but are not required.

Part-time students who are not accelerating their RRC program are required to fulfill this requirement for six semesters. Part-time students who are accelerating their RRC program are required to fulfill one semester of participation in RRC davening and learning for each 12 credits that they earn at RRC, exclusive of credits earned during their senior year.

Students who spend a semester or a year in Israel during years 1-3 are exempt from weekly davening, Community Limmud and other required RRC communal events while they are in Israel.

### ***Basic Liturgy Skills***

By the end of Year 3, all students are assessed for basic liturgical competence covering:

- Weekly services (covered in Tefillah 1 and Learners' Minyan)
- Shabbat services (covered in Tefillah 2 and Learners' Minyan)
- Life-Cycle rituals (*sheva b'rachot*; *el malei rachamim* are covered in Life Cycle Shiur)
- Torah cantillation (self-taught or through an elective course)
- *birkat hamazon and hallel* (self-taught)

If students pass the above-mentioned courses, they do not need to do separate testing. Students who exempt from any of these courses must test. Demonstrating liturgical competence means being able to chant the appropriate nusach and main songs that are included in services and the life cycle rituals. Testing for competency can include recording the necessary pieces and sending them to the Director of Student Life or setting up times to chant or sing to the Director of Student Life. Students are assessed for:

- Fluent reading with correct pronunciation
- Ability to apply appropriate nusach, as well as contemporary melodies
- Phrasing conveying basic comprehension

There are some liturgy learning resources available on Populi, RRC's learning management system.



Students may not begin Year 4 until they meet the liturgy skill requirements. Students who spend both semesters of Year 3 in Israel may petition the FEC to extend the deadline for liturgy skills to the end of August preceding Year 4.

### ***Shadowing***

One of the best ways to learn about the rabbinate is to see the day-to-day work life of rabbis. All students are required to shadow rabbis for thirty hours, some of which may be completed through assignments in Practical Rabbinics courses. Shadowing must be completed by the end of Year 3 of the program.

Shadowing is observing a rabbi work and processing with the rabbi after the observation is complete. A student can shadow one or more rabbis with the total number of shadowing hours adding up to thirty. Some must be Reconstructionist rabbis, but other rabbis and clergy are also acceptable.

Shadowing plans should be discussed with one's advisor and should be finalized with the Director of Student Life. When the shadowing hours with one rabbi are completed, the student should have the rabbi directly email the Director of Academic Administration informing them of the number of hours that they were shadowed.

When all thirty hours are complete, the student should meet with the Director of Student Life to discuss what they learned and experienced.

Students are required to complete thirty hours of shadowing. This requirement began with students who were all Mekhinah and FYI students in 2022-2023 and extends to incoming students. Other students who are currently enrolled are encouraged to find ways to observe rabbis at work and will be supported in this by their advisors and the Director of Students Life, but they are not required to be shadowing rabbis.

### ***Congregational Visits***

Students are to attend services or other formal programs (e.g. Torah studies, community rituals) at four Reconstructionist congregations by the end of Year 3 of the RRC program. This requirement began with students who were all Mekhinah and FYI students in 2022-2023 and extends to incoming students.

Students may not begin Year 4 until they meet the liturgy skills, shadowing, and congregational visits. Students who spend both semesters of Year 3 in Israel may petition the FEC to extend the deadline for liturgy skills, shadowing, and congregational visits to the end of August preceding Year 4.

## ***Student Employment and Field Experience***

### **General Information**

Since its founding, RRC has been a leader in practical rabbinics training. Historically, students have developed their skills through coursework and employment in rabbinic contexts throughout their time at RRC. Our current curriculum builds on this historic strength and integrates best practices and exciting innovations in clergy training and other fields of professional education. In

the current curriculum, field education, which centers on learning by doing, is the guiding framework for practical rabbinics training.

*Practical rabbinics, field education and student employment in Years 1-3*

In the early years of the program, practical rabbinics training will center around field readiness courses. These courses help students develop the skills and knowledge they will need to continue to learn and serve in intensive field placements in the latter years of the program. While field-readiness courses center on beit midrash and seminar style learning, they also incorporate field observation, service learning and ample opportunities to learn from master practitioners in the field. In years 1-3, most students will also secure jobs or paid internships that allow them to both use and develop their rabbinic skills. Non-credit supervision groups are available for all students in years 1-3 and are required for students who hold RRC sponsored internships.<sup>3</sup> Supervision provides a valuable opportunity for students to reflect on their work experience with peers and a skilled practitioner/facilitator. Supervision is a place where students can trouble-shoot challenges, celebrate successes and maximize the rich learning that comes from their work.

*Practical rabbinics, field education and student employment in years 4-5*

In years 4-5, students will engage in immersive field education internships supported by individual and group supervision as well as ongoing practical rabbinics coursework. These paid internships can be in a wide variety of rabbinic contexts throughout North America. We anticipate that there will be internships available in congregational, campus, education, chaplaincy, and organizational settings. We also anticipate that there will be a variety of funding structures as is currently the case. Some internships will be fully funded by RRC; some will be sponsored jointly by RRC and placement site and still others will be fully sponsored by the placement site. More information about the principles and standards that are guiding the development of these field education internships is available on request from the office of field education.

Throughout the program, RRC provides a variety of services to support students as they gain professional skills through student employment and field experience. The director of field education is available to support students in their search for jobs, as well as their exploration of long-term goals and their development of professional skills. RRC supervisors, who facilitate group supervision, help students reflect on their work and glean as much learning as possible from their internship experiences. They also work with students' supervisors in the field to help students succeed in their placements and grow in their skills. Finally, advisors help students identify learning goals and areas for growth, and support students in their rabbinic identity formation.

RRC strives to make paid employment opportunities available in a wide range of settings. Employment opportunities give students hands-on training in different types of rabbinic roles, including congregational work, chaplaincy, college campus work, Jewish and multifaith organizational work, social justice organizing, educational work and life-cycle officiation. Additional volunteer opportunities are made available and managed by the director of student life.

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<sup>3</sup> Students who matriculated before 2020 can earn credit for supervision in any year of the program, but are still required to take supervision when placed in RRC sponsored internships, even if they have already fulfilled their supervision requirement.

The director of field education and fieldwork supervisors are available to help students with questions and concerns about finding employment and field experience. Students are encouraged to meet individually with the director of field education for assistance with professional skills, including writing a resume and cover letter, interviewing and contract negotiation; and with the practical rabbinics faculty concerning specific skill development for the actual fieldwork positions (e.g., liturgy skills, teaching skills, officiation at life-cycle rituals). RRC aims to work in partnership with students' employers. RRC asks each employer to provide a semi-annual written evaluation of the student's work, which is shared with the student.

The office of field education is responsible for recruiting and interacting with potential employers and posting job and internship opportunities of all types. The director of field education informs potential employers about RRC's placement procedures, provides models of different types of fieldwork opportunities, guides employers in the development of each position and suggests an appropriate compensation amount, according to RRC's salary guidelines. Throughout the process, the director of field education serves as a liaison regarding student needs and employer expectations. Once students are working in a position, the fieldwork supervisors are ordinarily the primary liaison to the employer.

Every other fall, the office of field education, in consultation with other constituencies of the College, establishes recommended salary guidelines for RRC student-employment and field-experience positions. All employers are urged to compensate students according to RRC guidelines. The director of field education will make every effort to see that each employer hiring a student will pay an appropriate salary relative to salaries in equivalent positions and will serve as a student advocate in this regard.

Students are to advise the director of field education of any concerns or problems in the job search as soon as such concerns or problems arise. If necessary, the director of field education may provide mediation between those posting a position and student rabbis applying for the position.

Graduating students seeking congregational placement work with the placement director of the Reconstructionist Placement Service. RRC's Office of Rabbinic Formation provides additional support for graduating seniors, particularly those seeking work in settings other than congregations.

### ***Overview of Types of Employment and Field Experience***

#### **Congregational Positions**

Congregational internships generally involve multiple weekend-long visits, when the congregation is outside of the Greater Philadelphia area or a set number of weekly or monthly hours, when the congregation is in the Greater Philadelphia area. Congregational student rabbis lead prayer services, conduct adult and children's education activities, and build community. Some internships include work with the congregational board or committees, b'nai mitzvah preparation, pastoral counseling, or other rabbinic roles. Certain congregational internships require advanced skills and may be restricted to advanced students. Employment opportunities in congregations may also be offered for more limited roles, such as leading one or more prayer services or programs.

### **High Holiday Positions**

High Holiday positions are available leading services for adults, teens, and/or children in congregational, campus and community settings. Faculty members are available throughout the summer to help students plan for their High Holiday positions. High Holiday student rabbinic work may be one component of an ongoing position or may be free-standing.

### **Chaplaincy Positions**

RRC encourages all students to explore chaplaincy work, regardless of rabbinic vision. Paid chaplaincy internships are available in long-term care facilities, hospices and through local social-service agencies, and focus on providing pastoral care. Some chaplaincy internships also include service leading and teaching.

### **Campus Work**

Students have an opportunity to gain experience as campus professionals through work as Jewish student advisors or more specialized positions (e.g., Judaic educator) on local college campuses.

Some positions are developed and supervised jointly with Hillel of Greater Philadelphia. Campus-based positions enable the intern to learn about the campus rabbinate while working with college students on learning opportunities, social and cultural programs, prayer services, intergroup and social-justice projects, and individual counseling.

### **Social-Justice, Multifaith and Other Organizational Work**

Several RRC students work as employees or interns in a variety of Jewish community organizations, especially those focusing on social justice. In these jobs and placements, students participate in administrative, planning, educational or programming work. Students have served local communal agencies, such as federations and community centers, and national organizations. In addition, students have served as employees or interns at organizations that are not specifically Jewish but are engaged in social-justice or multifaith work.

### **Internships at RRC and for the Reconstructionist Movement**

Many students serve as part-time employees or as interns for RRC for various programs. On-campus internships offered annually include admissions and recruitment, student life and Beit Midrash. RRC also employs students to assist with projects of the Reconstructionist Movement. Students have provided service in such areas as education and congregational services. Work opportunities in youth and camping are also available through Havaya summer programs.

### **Education Positions**

RRC students serve in a variety of education jobs, including teaching students of all ages. RRC students might teach religious-school or adult-education classes or tutor b'nai mitzvah students. Frequently, they serve as education directors, provide family education or oversee children's services.

### **Life-Cycle Officiation**

RRC receives requests for student rabbis to officiate at one-time life-cycle events, such as baby-naming ceremonies, weddings, b'nai mitzvah or unveilings.

### **Community-Service Placements and Other Volunteer Positions**

Occasionally RRC receives requests for student rabbis to provide rabbinic services on a volunteer basis. These include opportunities to speak on a topic, to lead holiday services in a nursing home or to provide the invocation at an event. When available, these are posted through the office of field education or the office of student life.

### **Employment Application Procedures**

When employment opportunities are available, the office of rabbinic formation announces them via email. Positions for the following academic year generally begin to be listed in February and continue throughout the spring and summer. Each announcement includes application instructions. Generally, students are asked to express interest by sending their resumes (and cover letters, if applicable) directly to the employer. The employer interviews applicants and makes the hiring decision. Students must inform the office of rabbinic formation about any position they accept, whether or not the job has come through the RRC student-placement system. Failure to follow these guidelines as determined by the office of rabbinic formation may result in disciplinary action.

The director of field education may exercise discretion in modifying the student-placement process in cases in which a specific skill or degree of experience is required.

### **Appropriate Title for Student Rabbis**

Students who serve in internships are called upon to act in a variety of ways that are “rabbinic.” Although they cannot prevent those whom they serve from calling them by the title “rabbi,” in most situations it is not appropriate to call oneself “rabbi” until after graduation. “Student rabbi” is a suggested alternative. This is of concern in printed materials, including stationery, press releases and website copy.

### ***Israel Program***

#### **Israel and Reconstructionist Rabbinical Training**

RRC aims to train rabbinical students to understand and appreciate the importance of Israel in Judaism and Jewish life, in Reconstructionism, and for rabbinic leadership; to help them acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to speak about Israel with informed sensitivity to and for their diverse communities; and to help them enable others, Jews and non-Jews, to engage in constructive study, dialogue and action related to Israel.

#### **Israel Requirement**

While RRC encourages all rabbinical students to spend a semester or year living and studying in Israel, RRC requires all students to participate in our summer term Israel program before the beginning of year 4. The competencies and objectives to support the competencies of the Israel program are as follows:

#### **Competencies**

- Articulate the perspective of Judaism as a dynamic religious civilization.

- Demonstrate familiarity with the diversity of contemporary Jewish communities including an awareness of how group dynamics, power, privilege, authority affect the experience of various Jewish populations both in the mainstream and on the margins
- Articulate a personal, authentic spiritual/theological, professional and political vision.

### **Objectives to Support Competencies**

- Demonstrate familiarity with Israel's place in the history of Jewish civilizations and knowledge of the complexities of Israel and Israeli society. (Israel Civilization course)
- Demonstrate familiarity with practical resources based in Israel for use in the Reconstructionist rabbinate. (Independent study/internships/program trips in Israel)
- Articulate how Israel impacts upon their personal and spiritual/theological vision.

The Israel program, which is designed and implemented for RRC by Bina: The Secular Yeshiva, will combine classroom and beit midrash study with experiential and service learning to help students meet these objectives. Students will earn at least six credits during the summer term program. All students will fulfill the Israel Civilization Seminar requirement (3 credits). The allocation of the other three credits will depend on the details of the program as they develop and on students' individual educational choices.

Students who are enrolled at least half-time (minimum of six credits each semester) during the academic year prior to their Israel summer will receive a grant from RRC that will cover 100% of the tuition and fees for the six-credit academic program, which includes co-curricular activities. Participants are expected to pay for their own travel and living expenses. Students who choose to fulfill additional credits while in Israel will be charged on a per-credit basis.

### **Waivers / Accommodations**

The FEC considers petitions for waivers of the summer term requirement when a student can demonstrate significant personal hardship. In considering personal hardship petitions, the committee weighs the ideal fulfillment of all the objectives of the program against the mitigating factors presented. Personal hardship for this purpose does not include financial need.

Students requesting exemption from the Israel summer term as an accommodation for a disability should follow the procedure detailed in the handbook.

All students petitioning for a waiver of the Israel requirement must submit a petition to the FEC describing the grounds for the request. If approved, the student must complete an assessment of the three objectives for the program or provide evidence of prior equivalent work and submit it to the appropriate faculty member. Based on the assessments results, students will be required to complete a program of study in place of the Israel Summer Term. If the petition is granted, students must fulfill the individualized program of study before entering Year 4 in order to be exempt from the full Israel requirement.

## **Exemption Policy**

A student may petition the FEC for exemption from the Israel Summer Program if a student has spent at least five months in Israel within 5 years of matriculation and if they have demonstrated achievement of the three objectives.

## **Postponement Policy**

Students who want to postpone fulfillment of their Israel requirement beyond the summer term of Year 3 must submit a petition to the FEC describing the reason for the request before the end of the fall semester of Year 3. The petition must include the approval of the advisor.

## **Completion of Incompletes Before Departure for Israel**

Students going to Israel during the academic year can carry one incomplete. If the one-year deadline for the incomplete falls while they are in Israel, they have until the next incomplete date.

## **Wyncote-Based Program**

RRC is committed to exploring issues related to Israel and the Reconstructionist rabbinate in its Wyncote-based curricular and co-curricular programs, including required and elective courses, Community Limmud programs, practical rabbinics and advising.

## ***Fitness for the Rabbinate***

Successful completion of coursework and of other graduation requirements that ensure the development of intellectual and technical skills is a necessary part of preparation for the Reconstructionist rabbinate, but it is not by itself sufficient. The preparation for the rabbinate includes development of personal qualities, in addition to the fulfillment of curricular requirements. RRC expects its students to possess these qualities at a reasonable level. These qualities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Dedication to the Jewish people and rootedness in Jewish tradition
- Spiritual maturity and depth
- A commitment to ongoing self-care and personal growth
- Psychological stability and self-awareness, including the capacity to self-assess and recognize personal limits, and to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries
- Strong interpersonal skills
- The capacity to function well under conditions of high stress and uncertainty
- Good judgment, flexibility, and creativity
- Integrity, humility, gentleness, courage, kindness, reliability, and other traits of fine moral character

These aspects of fitness for the rabbinate are critical to faculty decisions about students in the program. Fitness for the rabbinate is essential not only for success while at RRC, but also for success as a rabbi. RRC has a special and weighty responsibility to those who will have contact with a graduate; to individual rabbis, the RRA and the RRC community; to congregations and organizations that a graduate might serve; and to society. RRC's judgments about fitness for the rabbinate are made with awareness of that responsibility.

## **Residency Requirements and Time Limits**

RRC is a residential study program until the final two years of the program. RRC requires students to be in residence for a minimum of four semesters. (Residency means that students are participating in classes and community events in person.) Students who elect to relocate for their final two years of study and who are still taking advanced level required courses online to progress through RRC's program are considered "enrolled" but not "in residence."

While most students take five to six years to complete the program (three or four of those years in residency to complete in-person required classes), students who have met some of the objectives of the curriculum through prior graduate study or professional experience, and who may therefore be exempted from some course requirements, may complete the program in less than five years.

Students who have met a significant proportion of the objectives of the curriculum through prior graduate study at other rabbinical programs or the equivalent, may receive the status of "advanced standing" upon enrollment. This determination is made by the vice president for academic affairs, or a designee, upon admission to the rabbinical program. Advanced standing students are nevertheless required to enroll and be in residence at RRC for a minimum of four semesters and earn at least 48 credits through RRC coursework. At times, there may be conflicts in course scheduling or other practical impediments. RRC cannot guarantee that advanced standing students will be able to fulfill all of their course requirements in four semesters.

Full-time students are expected to complete the program in no more than eight years. Students attending part-time must complete their coursework in no more than ten years.

## ***Recommended Experiences***

### **CPE**

In addition to the required unit of Clinical Pastoral Education, students may earn up to three elective credits for a second year (or equivalent summer) of a different CPE internship.

### **Spiritual Direction**

Students may earn .25 elective credits yearly for work in the College's spiritual direction program. Students may also participate in the programs without earning credit. This program involves hour-long monthly meetings with a spiritual director, with eight meetings between September 1 and June 30. A student who meets 8 times earns .25 elective course credits. Students may choose from among several spiritual directors. Each September, students are given the opportunity to meet the spiritual directors at a lunchtime program. The director of the Jewish spiritual direction program distributes a sheet on which students indicate their four choices in order of preference. The sooner students return the form, the more likely their preferences will be accommodated.

## **6. CUSTOMIZING THE STANDARD PROGRAM**

RRC encourages students to customize the standard program to meet their individual learning needs and aspirations. Options include independent studies at RRC, graduate courses at other institutions and participation in learning opportunities at non-credit-bearing institutions or with instructors outside of RRC. These customizations require petitions to the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) as detailed below. A FEC petition template can be found in the files section of



Populi. **All FEC petitions must be submitted to the FEC by the announced deadline in the semester before the proposed learning experience.** To submit a FEC petition, the student should email it to the Director of Academic Administration. The FEC will consider the petition at a meeting shortly after the announced deadline. In some cases, the FEC may ask the student to provide additional information relevant to the petition. The FEC decision regarding the petition will be announced to regular faculty members, who have the opportunity to ask questions or express concerns regarding the petition. In some cases, responses from faculty members will lead the FEC to reconsider its decision or to bring the petition to the full faculty for consideration. Once the decision is finalized, the student will be notified. If the FEC approves the petition, the student will receive credit upon completion of the experience and approval of the evidence of learning. All petitions to the FEC require approval from the student's advisor. For appeals of a FEC decision, see Section 22.

### ***Requests for Credit for Independent Study at RRC***

If a student wants to receive credit for independent academic study with an RRC instructor, they must write an independent study proposal PRIOR to the learning that lists: competencies that will be addressed, category of credit requested, number of credits requested, learning objectives; course content evidence of learning, RRC's supervising instructor; and advisor approval. The FEC will then review the proposal to determine that it meets the criteria for credit. If the FEC approves the proposal, the student can earn credit upon completion of the course and demonstration of learning as assessed by the RRC supervising instructor. If students want to receive credit for independent *chevrutah* study, the same policy applies. Students must submit the proposal to the FEC by the deadline of the semester preceding the planned Independent Study. Students may not engage in independent studies that cover material that our curriculum regularly offers. Independent studies and outside learning opportunities can count for elective credit or multi-faith or social justice credit only.

### ***Learning Opportunities Outside of RRC, Including Transfer of Credit Policy***

Students are encouraged to take advantage of learning opportunities outside of RRC that are appropriate to their interests and complement their coursework at RRC. Students pursuing learning experiences outside of RRC must fulfill at least 72 credits through study at RRC.

Students may petition to be granted equivalency credit for graduate courses taken at other institutions if the courses correspond to RRC course requirements. Petitions to the FEC should include the course syllabus, number of credits requested, a transcript from the institution at which the course was taken, and signed approvals of the student's advisor and the member of the RRC faculty whose area of expertise is relevant to the course.

Students may earn up to 23.5 credits through direct assessment. These include credits awarded through assessments of prior learning at the time of matriculation and credits earned through outside learning while the student is at RRC.

If, during the program, a student wants to earn credit through an experience outside of RRC that is not a standard academic course, they must request PRIOR to the experience and write a proposal that lists: competencies that will be addressed, category of credits requested, number of credits requested, learning objectives, course content, evidence of learning, RRC's supervising

instructor and advisor approval. The student will work with the relevant RRC instructor to determine the evidence of learning. The FEC will then review the proposal to verify that it meets the criteria for credit and is relevant to the student's rabbinic training. If the FEC approves the proposal, the student can earn credit upon completion of the proposed experience and demonstration of learning as assessed by the RRC supervising instructor. Students must submit the proposal to the FEC by the deadline of the semester preceding the planned outside experience.

### ***Distinction between Independent Study vs. Outside Learning***

<b>Independent Study</b>	<b>Outside Learning</b>
RRC provides the educational experience.	Educational learning is provided <b>outside of RRC.</b>
Student typically meets every few weeks with instructor to <b>discuss material.</b>	Student must <b>validate the learning</b> with a RRC supervising instructor.
Evidence of learning is usually a project or paper.	Evidence of learning is usually a project or paper.
<b>Cost:</b> current RRC tuition credit rate (typically applicable for part-time student or full-time student who exceeds 15 credits/semester).	May earn up to 23.5 credits through outside learning

### ***Applying for Exemption from Requirements While at RRC***

A student may apply to be exempted from course requirements based on knowledge that the student possesses. In such cases, the student must meet with the appropriate faculty member, who will administer an assessment that measures whether a student has met the learning objectives of the course. If the faculty member determines that the student has done so, the faculty member informs the director of academic administration and the vice president for academic affairs.

If the instructor determines that there is less than 66% (2/3) alignment between the prior course and the RRC course or if a student demonstrates less than 66% (2/3) achievement of the objectives, the student will need to take the RRC course.

If there is 66% alignment, but still are significant gaps, the student can do a one-credit independent study and will be charged for it. It is up to the discretion of the instructor whether the student can fulfill the independent study by participating in the relevant class sessions or whether the student needs to do reading and demonstration of learning independently. If there is 80% or more alignment, the student will either receive equivalency credit (based on transfer) or exemption (based on assessment). In skills-based courses, a student who has demonstrated mastery of most of the course objectives may still be required to demonstrate mastery of missing skills before being exempted from a course.

Approved transfer credits fulfill RRC course requirements but do not necessarily serve as prerequisites for subsequent courses. In some cases, students will be required to take a placement test to place into a subsequent RRC course.

### ***Requests to Take Courses Out of Sequence***

If a student wants to take a course out of sequence, they will discuss the request with their advisor. If the advisor thinks the request is reasonable, the student will ask permission from the relevant instructor/s, who have the authority to approve or deny the request. The approval to take a course out of sequence does not obligate RRC to schedule courses to accommodate scheduling problems that result in subsequent years. Students may find it necessary to do equivalent coursework outside RRC.

## **7. M.A.J.S. PROGRAM**

### **M.A.J.S Specific Requirements**

Requirements for the Master of Arts in Jewish Studies (M.A.J.S) are the following:

- satisfactory completion of all academic coursework
- a master's essay or project: a coherent and original work that reflects the student's insight and learning, planned with and guided by a faculty adviser over the course of a semester

The M.A.J.S. program offers a serious, graduate-level opportunity to delve deeply into Jewish history, thought, ethics and literature while searching for spiritual meaning and holiness. The M.A.J.S. provides students with a sound basis for later specialization, affording them a background in the full breadth of Jewish studies, including Hebrew language.

The program is designed to serve students with a variety of personal and professional objectives, including individuals who:

- are in the process of learning about Judaism and want to intensify their learning at a level not available in most adult-education programs
- prefer to learn in an environment that encourages exploration of a subject's religious significance and spiritual potential, rather than in a setting that emphasizes only academic "objectivity" and precludes personal engagement
- have already achieved a significant level of Jewish learning and now wish to study Torah in an open, academically rigorous environment
- are planning careers as Jewish professionals and want to deepen their background first
- are considering embarking on doctoral work in Jewish studies that will require narrow specialization

Classes are taught by rabbinical school faculty and are attended by rabbinical students. Love of Torah is enhanced by a commitment to viewing Jewish teachings and traditions through a contemporary lens. Hebrew-language requirements support the study of Jewish texts in their original language. The College integrates academic learning with the exploration of spiritual significance and personal meaning. M.A.J.S. students may participate in many of RRC's community programs, including worship and celebration.

Students in the program will:

- achieve advanced Hebrew-language proficiency to support a lifetime of ongoing text study

- gain a substantial mastery of areas that interest them, particularly in Jewish history, thought and literature
- deepen their Jewish sense of self and advance their spiritual growth
- integrate the academic and personal aspects of the course of study through a master's essay or project, developed with the help of a faculty adviser

### ***Admissions Policies and Procedures***

Applications are available via the Department of Admissions. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate or provide the following:

- a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, and an academic record that demonstrates the potential to complete quality graduate-level study
- a proficiency in Hebrew equivalent to at least one year of college-level Hebrew study, as determined by an examination administered in conjunction with the admissions interview
- familiarity with the basic concepts of Reconstructionist Judaism
- academic and personal references
- a three-page statement (double-spaced) discussing their intellectual and religious development, reasons for applying to the program, personal and/or professional goals and, if determined, their academic areas of focus within the M.A.J.S. program or ideas for the final paper or project
- \$50 application fee

A personal interview with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and two members of the regular faculty is required.

Applicants must submit all materials to the Admissions Office no later than May 15 before the fall semester in which studies are to begin. When circumstances permit, applications submitted by November 1 will be considered for a program that begins during the spring semester, though entering in the fall semester generally is preferable.

### ***Degree Requirements***

The M.A.J.S. program is a two-year program for those who enroll full-time. Students may also enroll on a part-time basis.

Forty-two credits are required, including the following:

- Six credits in Jewish history/civilization; and six credits in Jewish thought
- Reconstructionism 1 (3 credits)
- Twelve credits of electives, including one course in which texts are studied in the original Hebrew or Aramaic
- Twelve credits in modern, biblical and/or rabbinic Hebrew (each student will be placed at an appropriate level based on a Hebrew-language examination, and students whose Hebrew competence is equivalent to that required for completion of the rabbinical program will be exempt from this requirement)
- A three-credit master's essay or project, planned with and guided by a faculty adviser, in which the student spends a semester integrating the materials studied into a coherent and original work that reflects the individual's insight and learning

### ***Designing an Individual Academic Plan***

Upon admission, the student will be assigned a faculty adviser by the vice president for academic affairs. The adviser will meet with the student at least once each semester to reflect upon the student's progress and plan an individualized academic program that will culminate in the master's essay/project.

The shape of the program and the cluster of courses the student chooses depends on their interests. For example, the program might focus on a period of Jewish history (such as biblical, rabbinic or modern), a discipline in Jewish studies (such as Jewish history, Jewish mysticism, Jewish ethics or Jewish feminism) or a theme (such as covenant, community or prayer). Although no such specialization is required in course selection, the master's essay/project will provide an opportunity for personalized consideration of themes that have emerged from coursework. Examples of master's essays/projects include "The Use of Classical and Contemporary Images of the Matriarchs in Creating a Feminist Jewish Consciousness," "The Hasidic Approach to Prayer and Meditation," "What Is Jewish Art?" and new rituals (e.g., a Tu B'Shevat seder).

### **Co-Curricular Activities**

An orientation program is held before the first day of classes each fall. Other co-curricular programs for rabbinical students are often open to M.A.J.S. students.

## **8. CLASS OBJECTIVES AND PROCEDURES**

### ***Syllabi***

All RRC syllabi identify the competencies the course cultivates; the goals and learning objectives of the course; class requirements; and evidence of learning that will serve as the basis for the student evaluation. ***Syllabi, along with course materials, must be posted by a deadline no later than two weeks before the start of the semester.***

### ***Textbook Purchases***

Students are responsible for obtaining required reading for all RRC courses. Whether the student buys such books, borrows them, or uses them regularly in an institutional library is at the student's discretion. A list of books recommended or required for purchase for all courses is posted online prior to the final registration deadline.

### ***Preparation for Classes***

Instructors may expect an average of two hours of preparation from students for one hour of class time.

### ***Attendance and Class Participation***

Attendance and class participation are significant factors in evaluation student performance.

### ***Written Requirements***

Instructors shall design their course requirements to promote the achievement of the course objectives and the purposes of the RRC curriculum, as outlined above. Written work during the semester should not exceed the regular time allotments for preparation.

### ***End-of-Semester Requirements***

- There should be no mid-semester exams unless the projected time required for their completion falls within the hours-per-week guidelines of course preparation.
- No classes should be held during Reading Week.
- All end-of-semester written requirements should not exceed 10 pages, should ask students to work with readings that have already been assigned for week-by-week preparation and should not require additional research.

### ***Evaluations of Students***

Instructors are urged to construct all other major assignments, class presentations, and in-class and take-home exams in a way that considers how the projects relate to the development of rabbinic expertise.

Instructors are expected to provide regular feedback to students throughout the semester so that they are aware of how they are doing. The final deadline for instructors to submit grades and evaluations and to return final written work with comments is three weeks after the last day of the semester.

For rules governing return of work submitted late, see Section 12, Policies for Grades of Incomplete.

### ***Student Evaluations of Courses and Instructors***

Course evaluation forms will be distributed to students via an online survey at the final class meeting of the semester. Students will be allotted 15 minutes of class time to complete the online evaluation form. Instructors shall not see course evaluations until after they have submitted evaluations of students to the registrar.

Course evaluations shall be kept on file by the vice president for academic affairs and shall be reviewed routinely by the instructor and the vice president for academic affairs. Course evaluations are also reviewed as part of tenure and post-tenured faculty peer review processes. At the discretion of the vice president for academic affairs, other members of the RRC community may, upon request, see the evaluations.

### ***Assignments for the First Week of Classes***

Unless a syllabus is posted and distributed to students by the date set as the deadline, an instructor cannot expect students to prepare for the first week of classes in the semester.

## **9. REGISTRATION**

### ***Scheduling of Classes***

Each semester, the director of academic administration circulates titles and descriptions of the course offerings for the following semester. Students are asked to provide a list of courses they plan to take in the following semester.

### ***Registration***

Once the schedule is finalized, students are asked to register. When course enrollment exceeds the maximum number of students the class can hold, a waiting list is created. For required courses or courses that fulfill distribution requirements, priority is given to students according to their projected graduation date. Students are notified if they are on such a list and contacted as soon as space becomes available.

### ***Cancellation of Courses***

If enough students do not sign up for a course, the course may be canceled. RRC makes every effort not to cancel courses that are normally taken in a specific semester of the program. If RRC cancels a required course for low enrollment, RRC is obligated to make sure that each student who needs the course for graduation has an opportunity to take it.

### ***Number of Courses***

Each student may enroll in up to 15 credits per semester. A student who wants to enroll in more than 15 credits pays the per course rate for additional courses. For the purposes of this policy, fall semester includes January extension to the fall courses and spring semester includes summer courses.

### ***Auditing***

Students may audit courses with the permission of the course instructor. Students may register to audit a maximum of two courses per semester. If enrollment for a class is full, priority will be given to students taking the course for credit.

### ***Restrictions on Enrollment in Senior-Year Classes***

Enrollment in Senior Experience courses are restricted to graduating seniors.

### ***Add and Drop***

A student may drop a course any time prior to the add/drop deadline set by the College by informing the instructor and the director of academic administration. In order to register for a course after the first meeting, a student must have the approval of the instructor and must inform the director of academic administration of the intent to register.

If a student drops a course by the deadline they are not charged for the course. The add/drop deadline will be established on each yearly calendar. To withdraw after the add/drop deadline, a student must submit a request to the FEC. The request should include the reason for withdrawal and a statement indicating the student's academic standing in the class. The instructor's signature is required.

If a student withdraws from a course after the add/drop period, a grade of W will appear on the student's transcript.

In all cases, it is the student's responsibility to keep current on tuition-refund schedules. Tuition refunds for students are given on a prorated basis. Students who withdraw from a class before the add/drop deadline receive a full refund. Students who withdraw before the end of the fourth

week of classes receive a 50 percent refund. Students who withdraw before the end of the seventh week of classes receive a 25 percent refund. Students who withdraw after the seventh week of class do not receive any refund. Refunds are calculated based on the day of withdrawal. If a student withdraws from a class after the add/drop deadline as a result of a serious illness or medical condition that arose during the semester, they may request a tuition credit by speaking with the vice president for academic affairs.

### ***Elimination of Programs***

Degree, certificate, or diploma programs will be phased out in an orderly fashion if RRC deems it advisable to do so. RRC will make every effort to provide opportunities for students who have begun a particular program to complete it.

## **10. EXCHANGE AGREEMENTS**

### ***United Lutheran Seminary***

RRC students in good standing are eligible to register for courses at the master's level. A student interested in a course is responsible to contact the ULS Registrar's office to ensure that the course is open for enrollment and that the student has satisfied any pre-requisites of the course. It may be necessary in some cases for the student to obtain permission from the course instructor(s). The student is to obtain a course description for the course and assurance of the amount of academic credit awarded. Upon confirmation of the ULS registrar, the student will register the course at RRC ideally three weeks before the start of the course. Tuition will be paid by ULS. Any additional course costs or fees for services by ULS are the responsibility of the student. Upon successful completion of the course, the ULS registrar will submit the student's final grade to RRC for student credit.

## **11. LEAVE POLICY**

### ***Leave of Absence***

- A student may request a leave of absence for personal reasons.
- A written request for a leave of absence must be submitted to the FEC by May 15 of the academic year preceding the expected leave. An appearance before the FEC may follow.
- Students must resolve all incompletes before re-entering RRC.
- A leave of absence is granted for one year. A student on leave may petition the FEC (according to the guidelines set forth above) for up to two additional years' extension on the leave. A student not returning to RRC after the third year of leave must apply for re-admission.
- Students who are not carrying incompletes who wish to enroll in RRC courses for credit during a leave of absence may do so with permission of the instructor. Tuition for these courses will be at a per-credit rate.



## 12. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC EVALUATION OF STUDENTS

### ***Academic Integrity***

Students accepted for study in the rabbinical program are presumed to be of exemplary moral character. They are honor-bound to adhere to the highest academic standards, eschewing academic dishonesty in all forms, regardless of the circumstances involved.

Academic dishonesty is an act of deceit in the fulfillment of a student's obligations to the academic community. It includes, but is not limited to:

- **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the act of presenting the work of another as if it were one's own. It includes quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, or utilizing the published or unpublished work of others without proper acknowledgment. Any unacknowledged use of another's ideas constitutes plagiarism, including material derived from books, articles, other student papers, the Internet, and radio or TV broadcasts.
- **Improper Use of One's Work:** The improper use of one's own work includes, for example, submitting portions of the same academic work for credit in more than one course without permission of the instructors.
- **Fabrication:** Fabrication is the intentional falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic assignment.
- **Cheating:** Cheating is the act of deceiving, which includes such acts as looking at another student's exam (during the exam), using any prohibited aids (including one's own notes) during exams or whatever else is deemed contrary to institutional norms, including special rules designated by the professor in the course.

When a faculty member has information that a student has or may have violated academic integrity in a course that they are teaching or supervising, the faculty member will discuss it with the student and will then report any violation to the vice president for academic affairs. The faculty member, in consultation with the vice president for academic affairs, may choose to: give a warning without further penalty; require the rewriting of an assignment containing plagiarized material; give a LP for the course; or fail the student in the course. If a faculty member announces a failing grade in the course as a possible result of academic dishonesty, the student receiving such a penalty will not be permitted to withdraw from the course; the student transcript will reflect a permanent F.

Any member of the faculty or academic administration who encounters matters of academic dishonesty must report such cases to the vice president for academic affairs. Acts of academic dishonesty may result in disciplinary action up to and including probation or dismissal from the College.

### ***Academic Evaluation***

#### **Grading System**

The instructor assumes responsibility for the ongoing evaluation of student work during each semester. In cases of student deficiency, the instructor is strongly encouraged to meet with the student in a timely manner to discuss ways of remedying the situation. The substance of this meeting should be recorded in a memo for the student's file, with a copy sent to the student and the student's advisor.

At the end of the semester, instructors are asked to evaluate the student in terms of the following: progress towards course objectives; progress towards development of primary competencies; rabbinic formation and development (areas of strength and areas for growth); and additional feedback. Students may receive the following grades as part of the evaluation of their coursework at the end of each semester:

**(P) Pass**

The grade of pass indicates that a student has fulfilled the stated course requirements (e.g., attendance, assignments, chevrotah requirements, etc.), and has satisfactorily met the learning objectives of the course.

**(LP) Low Pass**

The grade of Low Pass is given to indicate that a student has not fully met the course objectives and/or has not fulfilled the stated course requirements (e.g., attendance, assignments, chevrotah requirements, etc.), but will not be required to retake the course. Permission to retake or rewrite the work additional times to earn a grade of Pass is at the discretion of the instructor. If a student receives a low pass in a course that is a pre-requisite for a subsequent course, they may be required to do remediation before taking the subsequent course.

If the student submits the work by the last day of the semester in which they were enrolled in the course, and if the grade of LP is submitted by the instructor after the semester's deadline for submitting grades, the student will have an additional semester to resubmit the work.

**(F) Fail**

A failing grade is given to indicate that a student has not met minimal course requirements. In the case of a required course, students must retake the course (or its equivalent) or do additional work as determined by the instructor and the vice president for academic affairs.

**(XF)**

When a student who has received a grade of F in a course re-takes the course and passes it, the original grade will be changed to a grade of XF, and the original grade will not be grounds for keeping the student on academic probation. This grade would also not be included in calculation for satisfactory academic progress.

**(AU) Audit**

Students may register to audit courses with permission of the instructor, who will determine requirements for auditing the course. A student may request permission from the instructor to change from audit status to credit status. This request must be made by the 12th week of classes.. Part-time students who convert an audit to for credit enrollment will be billed for the course at the per-credit rate. If the conversion to credit puts a full-time student over 15 credits for the semester, they will be billed for the credit overage at the per credit rate.

**(W) Withdrawal**

This grade indicates that the student withdrew from the course after the end of the drop/add period. For more information on withdrawals, see Section 9, Registration, Add and Drop.

### (I) Incomplete

When a student does not satisfactorily complete all the required work for a course by the end of the semester, they may ask the instructor for a grade of Incomplete and complete an extension form.

### (AF) Administrative Failure

When a student misses a deadline for completion of assigned work without submitting an approved extension form, the student's grade will be changed to an AF by the registrar. If the instructor approves an additional extension, the AF is changed to an incomplete and all policies relating to the grade of incomplete apply. If the work is subsequently completed and the AF is changed to a grade of P, a written record of the circumstances of the grade change will be placed in the student's file. If the student does not resolve the AF or incomplete by a year from the end of the course, the AF is changed to an F and the student is expected to retake the course. At the discretion of the instructor, the student can petition the FEC to demonstrate achievement of the objectives through assessment. In such cases, the FEC will take into account the broader context of the student's performance and progress toward graduation. This route should be reserved for exceptional cases.

An AF will be treated as an incomplete in the context of policies regarding limitations on registration and satisfactory academic progress.

### **Policies for Grades of Incomplete**

When students complete course requirements on time, instructors are expected to submit grades and evaluations and to return written work with comments three weeks after work is submitted or three weeks after the last day of the semester, whichever comes last.

Required work for a course must be completed by the date designated by the instructor. If a student cannot complete the course work by the deadline or if the work is unsatisfactory, the student may request an extension. The instructor is not obligated to grant an extension. Extensions may be granted by the instructor for up to one year from the end of the semester in which the course was taken. The length of the extension appropriate under the circumstances will be determined by the instructor but is limited by leave policies and senior deadlines.

If the instructor grants the extension, the student must submit an incomplete extension form to the instructor. The instructor should then submit the extension form, signed by both the instructor and the student by the deadline for student evaluations.

If the student does not complete the work for a course and does not present to the instructor an extension form, the instructor may complete an extension form without the student's signature by the date required.

All work in courses for which a student has received a grade of Incomplete must be completed no later than one year after the end of the course. After a year, any grade of incomplete not resolved will become a F on record. The student and the instructor may agree to one of the following five dates for the submission of work: Aug. 10, Oct. 10, March 10 and the last day of each of the terms. The instructor must then submit a grade and an evaluation form, and return the work submitted with comments within three weeks of the due date. (Graduating seniors who miss the March 10

deadline must submit the work by the final date for submission of work by seniors.) If a student will not be able to submit work by the date agreed upon on the Incomplete extension form, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and submit a new Incomplete extension form with a new agreed-upon date (if the instructor agrees), signed by the student and the instructor on or before the old deadline. If the assignment is not satisfactorily completed by the designated time or if an extension is not requested, the student will receive a grade of AF.

Students with one incomplete cannot enroll for more than more than 12 credits. Students with two incompletes cannot enroll for more than 10 credits. If a student has outstanding work in more than two classes, they may not attend classes in the program. (To attend classes, outstanding work must have been submitted but not necessarily yet evaluated.) If the student completes the overload by handing in the outstanding work after the start of the semester, they will only be allowed to enroll in those courses in which they have missed no more than two classes and may do so only with the permission of the instructor. Students notified within two weeks of handing in their outstanding work that their work is not passing will again be treated as having an incomplete unless they receive a grade of LP or F. If this results in a student carrying more than two incompletes, they will be barred from attending classes.

All grades of Incomplete/AF must be removed and outstanding requirements in liturgy skills must be completed before a student is permitted to begin the senior year of study. The deadline for completion of all work is August 10. Under no circumstances will a student be permitted to begin the senior year unless all outstanding work is completed before the first day of classes.

***Rising seniors must complete any outstanding work by August 10. In addition, seniors may not carry any incomplete into their final semester. Seniors may not attend classes if they have not completed all work by the beginning of the semester.***

Seniors must satisfactorily complete spring-semester requirements no later than one month before the date of graduation. Students are required to continue preparing for and attending class after the senior deadline for the submission of assignments.

### **Appeal of Grades**

A student who believes that they have unfairly received a grade of LP or F may initiate an appeal by proceeding as follows:

- The student shall speak directly with the instructor and may request that a written record of that conversation be placed in their student file. If the student chooses, a regular faculty member of the student's choice may be invited to join that discussion.
- If the student and the instructor cannot come to an agreement, the student can appeal in writing to the vice president for academic affairs. After receiving the written appeal, the vice president for academic affairs shall set up a meeting to discuss the grievance among the student and the vice president for academic affairs and two regular faculty members, one chosen by the student. The vice president for academic affairs and the two regular faculty members shall then meet with the instructor. The three may choose to play a mediating role in resolving the dispute before they decide. If mediation proves unfruitful, the three shall investigate in a preliminary way to determine if there are reasonable grounds for an appeal. If the majority of the committee does not find reasonable grounds, the vice president for academic affairs shall so advise the student and the instructor in

writing. If the instructor is the vice president for academic affairs, then the president shall appoint another member of the regular faculty to serve in their place.

- If mediation fails and the majority finds reasonable grounds for the appeal, then the three shall serve as an arbitration panel and shall conduct a thorough investigation, at the conclusion of which the student and the instructor shall be advised in writing of their binding decision.
- This appeal process, beginning with step (a), must be initiated no later than two months after receipt of the grade.

### **Academic Probation and Dismissal**

Academic probation is considered a warning to students that they are in danger of becoming subject to dismissal unless their academic work improves. A student may be placed on academic probation under any of the following circumstances:

- Receiving one F.
- Receiving two LPs.
- A faculty decision that the student's academic performance warrants probation.

If a grade of F or LP is subsequently changed or replaced as a result of the student's additional work for the course, the student's probationary status will be reviewed.

Students may be subject to academic dismissal under any of the following circumstances:

- Receiving two Fs from two instructors.
- Receiving three LPs from more than one instructor and in more than one semester.
- Persistent probationary status.
- A faculty decision that the student's academic performance warrants dismissal.

Although the above factors for academic probation and dismissal apply generally, each student's academic performance and progress will be evaluated individually, and decisions about academic probation and dismissal will be made on an individual basis.

**N.B. Regardless of a student's status at RRC, they must have successfully completed 75% of attempted credits in order to be eligible for federal direct student loans.**

### ***Non-Academic Evaluation***

#### **Feedback to Students**

The faculty is interested in both the academic progress of students and students' personal development as future rabbis. Thus, the faculty is encouraged to discuss with the students not only course evaluations, but also other information pertaining to their participation in the life of the RRC community. This discussion may then be written up for inclusion in the student's file. Accordingly, faculty and staff members are encouraged to write for the student file reports of a student's activities, both inside and outside of the College, so that the file more adequately reflects the whole person. All those aware of the student's external work should encourage letters from employers and supervisors in locations where the student serves as an intern.

All such reports should first be discussed with the student, and the student should be provided with a copy of what is then written for the file. The student may choose to place a response in the

file. If a student wants a particular item removed from the student file and the faculty member does not agree, the student can appeal to the director of rabbinic formation or other designated faculty member; if mediation does not resolve the conflict, the student can appeal to the vice president for academic affairs for a final determination about whether the item should remain in the file.

### **RRA Guidelines**

The faculty considers students bound by all Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association (RRA) guidelines for RRA members. Students who want to question any RRA guidelines should channel concerns directly to the RRA. Some RRA guidelines appear in Appendix A to this handbook.

### **Non-Academic Probation, Suspension and/or Dismissal**

The faculty of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College reserves the right to dismiss a student at any time for cause.

Except in extraordinary cases, it will be the practice before dismissal to place the student on non-academic probation, for a period to be determined by the faculty, during which a supervisory faculty committee is appointed to work with the student about the faculty's concerns. The student may choose to invite their faculty advisor to any or all the student's meetings with the supervisory faculty committee. When invited, the faculty advisor will attend without speaking. It should not be presumed that the faculty advisor will automatically advocate on the student's behalf at subsequent faculty deliberations.

Extraordinary circumstances may warrant immediate expulsion. The faculty reserves the right to determine whether a period of non-academic probation is appropriate in any given situation. If the committee and the regular faculty believe that the concerns are remediable, the student may be suspended for a period of time, definite or indefinite, and given the option to apply for re-admission at the end of that period or when the concern has been adequately addressed.

When a student is placed on non-academic probation, the faculty will treat that fact as confidential.

When a student is dismissed on non-academic grounds, it will not be treated as confidential.

When a student is suspended on non-academic grounds, the faculty will decide whether or not to treat the situation as confidential on a case-by-case basis. (The decision about whether non-academic suspension is to be kept confidential is based on factors such as, and including, the following: the likelihood of the student doing harm to others in the RRC community; the message the College wants to deliver to the RRC community; the moral issues involved; the potential damage to the reputation of RRC and to colleagues; and legal obligations/potential RRC liability.)

The procedure described in this paragraph is under review (2023-2024). As part of the faculty's final consideration of the suspension or dismissal of a student, a hearing will be held by an ad hoc committee approved by the regular faculty. The committee will include the president of the Reconstructionist Student Association or, if the RSA president cannot serve, another student designated by the RSA president. The committee shall be convened on a case-by-case basis as the situation warrants. The committee will make a recommendation to the regular faculty.

### **Student Review Procedures**

Students are admitted to RRC with the understanding that the faculty will review the progress of each student in the spring semester of the Mekhinah year, Year One and Year Three. The purpose of these reviews is to evaluate students in both academic and non-academic ways, to offer positive and negative feedback, and to determine the student's eligibility to continue in the program. Faculty members must not share information about any student or student status outside the regular faculty. The review process is described in the following sections.

### **Beginning of Spring Semester**

The vice president for academic affairs and the director of student life will hold a meeting with students to explain the review procedures and answer student questions. At this time, the vice president for academic affairs announces to students that reviews are being conducted and invites students to meet with their advisors to provide additional information and context, and/or to submit a written self-evaluation. Advisors should be prepared to schedule a meeting with any student who requests one.

### **January through February**

The students' advisors will assemble and review the following:

- Students' audits, tracking progress towards fulfillment of graduation requirements.
- Student evaluations from courses.
- Evaluations from work supervisors.
- Additional contents of students' academic and correspondence files.
- Update from the director of student life on the students' participation in non-academic activities at RRC.

The director of student life will also inform the full faculty and academic administration staff of the students who are being reviewed and will request feedback on these students.

If there is not sufficient information about a student's work performance, the advisor/director of student life will contact the work supervisor to collect additional information on the student's work performance.

The advisors will then write a review report summarizing the students' academic and job performance, as well as community involvement. This review report should focus on the student's progress towards achievement of the rabbinic competencies and should include both areas of strength and areas for growth, as well as any concerns raised by the material under review.

### **Late February through Early March**

Advisors will meet with the director of student life to review the draft review reports and will make a recommendation based on them. In consultation with the vice president for academic affairs, they can recommend either:

- Pass a student without reservation.
- Pass a student, detailing specific concerns (academic and/or non-academic) and recommendations for improvement.
- Set up a supervisory committee for a student (based on academic and/or non-academic issues).

- Place a student on academic and/or non-academic probation with a committee (if lack of improvement is serious enough to warrant consideration of dismissal).
- Dismiss a student from RRC. (Students do not have to go through the supervisory stage to be placed on probation or to be dismissed.)

If they believe that they may recommend a supervisory committee, probation, or dismissal, they must offer the student the opportunity to provide them with input before they finalize the recommendation. The student may bring one faculty member or fellow student to the meeting to provide personal support. If it is determined that a recommendation of a supervisory committee, probation or dismissal is in order, the student has a right to provide a written statement to be appended to the report before it is voted on by the regular faculty.

### **March/April**

The regular faculty receives a written report on each student containing the recommendation. If a faculty member disagrees with a recommendation about a student, they should inform the director of student life before the scheduled faculty meeting. At the March/April faculty meetings, the regular faculty votes as a group to endorse the recommendations for “pass.” Other recommendations are reviewed by the faculty. The regular faculty votes on each of the other recommendations separately, either endorsing the recommendation or sending it back for revisions. In most cases, if a notice of probation, dismissal or appointment of a supervisory committee is to be sent, the student’s advisor will be asked to speak with the student in advance of the mailing.

The vice president for academic affairs sends out letters to the students regarding their supervisory committees, probation committees or dismissal within seven calendar days of the faculty meeting. These letters must specify initial objectives and goals.

The vice president for academic affairs sends out “passing” review letters within 30 calendar days of the last faculty meeting in which reviews are considered.

Students who are in Israel for their full Year 3 will have their Year 3 review postponed until the fall semester of their Year 4.

### **Year 4 Review Only (Spring Semester)**

At the end of the spring semester, Year 4 students who have passed the Year 3 review will be reviewed to determine if they have fulfilled the academic requirements necessary to enter the senior year.

## **13. GRADUATION**

### ***The Senior Year***

***All grades of Incomplete/AF must be removed, and outstanding requirements in basic liturgy skills, shadowing, and congregational visits must be completed before a student is permitted to begin the senior year of study. The deadline for completion of all work is Aug.***



**10. Under no circumstances will a student be permitted to begin the senior year unless all outstanding work is completed before the first day of classes.**

### ***Approval for Graduation***

Seniors are required to complete all requirements for spring-semester courses by a date, announced by the College, which falls approximately one month before graduation. Approval for graduation occurs at a regular faculty meeting shortly thereafter.

### ***Faculty Signing of Diplomas***

All members of the regular faculty in a given academic year shall be invited to sign the diplomas of graduating seniors. A faculty member shall not have the option to sign some, but not all, the diplomas in a given year. A faculty member who signs in any one year must sign in all subsequent years.

### ***Graduation Terminology***

RRC uses the terms *tekes hatarat hora'ah* and "graduation" to describe the granting of the title "Rabbi." However, if the use of the terms *semichah* and "ordination" will aid communication in referring to one's having received *hatarat hora'ah* from RRC, it is correct and appropriate to use these terms.

### ***Names on Diplomas***

During the fall semester of senior year, prospective graduates will be asked how they want their names to appear on their diplomas. Only legal names may be used on the English portion of the diploma because it is a legal document.

## **14. ADVISING SYSTEM**

The advisor provides academic and personal support, mentorship and serves as an address for reflection on rabbinic formation over the course of a student's time at RRC both when formally scheduled and when a student would find it useful. The advisor supports students' learning and the development of the competencies needed to complete the RRC program. The advisor works to ensure that students gain experience in a wide range of rabbinic pathways. They work with students to help synthesize and understand the feedback that has been offered from all sites of cultivation, including courses and fieldwork. In the advising process the advisor works with the student to gain the skills necessary for self-assessment. Students and Advisors should meet for a minimum of two meetings over each academic year.

For more information, please refer to the advisor handbook and the advisor-advisee handbook.

### ***Ethical Privacy Guidelines***

Although advisors are generally obliged to maintain confidentiality about personal matters discussed by an advisee, the advisor must comply with all mandatory reporting laws. In addition, the advisor reserves the right—in the case of personal revelations concerning violations of the law, violations of stated RRC policy or other matters putting an advisee’s fitness for the rabbinate in question—to place the needs of the community above the advisee’s need for privacy. The advisor should clearly state to the advisee at the beginning of the advising relationship that confidentiality is not absolute, and the advisor should attempt to repeat the point when an advisee begins to venture into areas about which the advisor would not want to maintain confidentiality.

If an advisor determines that it is necessary to disclose something that an advisee has told the advisor in confidence for the reasons stated above—with the exception of mandatory reporting cases—the advisor should inform the vice president of academic affairs. If it is agreed that further disclosure is necessary, the advisor should first tell the advisee of the need to disclose and offer the advisee the opportunity to make the disclosure. Only if the advisee refuses to do so or prefers not to do so may the advisor disclose the confidence.

## **15. MORDECAI M. KAPLAN LIBRARY**

The library houses books, journals and other print materials, electronic and multimedia resources, computers, printers, a photocopier/scanner, and study desks and carrels. Library resources and staff members are present to support students’ academic needs. All matriculated students, once registered with the library, have the privileges and responsibilities enumerated below. Modifications to library procedures can be found in the files section in Populi.

### ***Use of Library***

The library accommodates various activities including silent, independent work; *chevruta* study; individual and small-group instruction; and computer and photocopier use. For such multipurpose use to succeed, library users are asked to be considerate of one another and to follow these guidelines:

- Cooperate with instructions indicating which areas of the library are reserved for *chevrutah* study, independent study, and totally quiet study.
- Do not use cell phones or other electronic devices (except with headphones) anywhere in the library.
- Minimize the use of computers, printers, and photocopiers when others are waiting to use them.
- Observe directions for replacing all materials and supplies used.
- Maintain the cleanliness of the library by not bringing in any food. Drinks in spill-proof containers are allowed.

### ***Library Circulation***

- The circulation period for library resources is six weeks for matriculated students. No limit is placed on the number of items that may be borrowed. Materials may be renewed in person, by phone, or email, as long as no one else is requesting them.
- Periodicals, reference books, Beit Midrash books, and special file collections, computer software and CD-ROMs do not circulate.

- Reserve books may be checked out of the library for two hours at a time and at the following times: 3:00 pm on Monday through Thursday (due back at 9:00 am the following morning); and two hours before the library closes on Friday (due back at 9:00 am on Monday morning).
- Borrowers' identities are confidential. If another borrower requires checked-out material for immediate research needs, the library staff will arrange for its recall for a limited period. The materials will then be returned to the original borrower if so desired.
- Students are expected to return all outstanding library materials after the end of the spring semester. However, the library remains open all summer, and students may check out library resources as needed for the standard six-week period.
- Borrowers are responsible for the condition and prompt return of all materials borrowed. Students will be charged for any damage to or loss of library materials. Fines for overdue materials are also imposed to ensure student compliance with circulation periods.
- Students who fail to return library materials or fail to pay any incurred fines in a timely manner will have their circulation privileges suspended.
- Graduating students must return all library materials and/or settle any outstanding library bills in order to receive their diplomas.

### ***Course Reserve Resources***

- Most course readings are available to students online while they are enrolled in a course. Students may make copies of these readings for their individual use.
- All required resources for courses—i.e., those students are required to purchase, as well as any materials specifically requested by instructors—are placed on reserve in the library each semester for student use.

### ***Photocopier, Computers and Printers***

- The library photocopier/scanner is available for student use.
- Computers and printers are available for student use in the library (via an assigned password) at no charge. Students may access their RRC email accounts, the Internet and other computer applications on library computers.

### ***Reciprocal Library Agreements***

- Interlibrary Loan (ILL) reciprocal agreements with other libraries enable the Kaplan Library to borrow most books and journal articles from libraries throughout the country at no charge to library patrons. However, depending on budget and staff constraints it may be necessary to limit the number of items requested.
- Students are expected to pick up and return ILL materials promptly. Renewals may be possible, but the Kaplan Library must adhere strictly to the lending library's due date or risk losing its ability to borrow from them. Students are liable for the cost of any ILL items damaged or lost.
- The Kaplan Library's membership in the Southeast Pennsylvania Theological Library Association (SEPTLA) gives students on-site and (usually) borrowing privileges at 19 theological libraries in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Information on these libraries is available on request.

### ***Materials Selection Policy***

- The faculty director of each academic department is responsible for submitting acquisition requests to the library staff after consulting with other instructors and soliciting input from students.
- Students should make their suggestions for acquisitions to the appropriate member of the faculty or directly to the library staff. Such suggestions are welcome and will be carefully considered.
- Final purchase decisions are made by the library director, based on the necessities of ensuring adequate support of all facets of RRC's curriculum and complying with budget guidelines.

Students are welcome to bring comments, suggestions and requests concerning the library to their student representatives or directly to the library director.

## **16. INTERNAL GOVERNANCE**

### ***Decision-Making Authority***

The regular faculty has the ultimate responsibility for passing legislation. The regular faculty is composed of full-time faculty members, full-time academic administrators who have worked at RRC for one year, and part-time faculty members who have taught at RRC for at least one year and who agree to attend regular faculty meetings and serve on faculty committees. However, when the regular faculty initially passes a piece of legislation that affects students, passage is not final until the faculty solicits and considers student reactions. After student suggestions are received, the regular faculty reconsiders the legislation and may revise it in light of those suggestions. Student input is solicited through the standing faculty-student committees.

If the student representatives on the relevant student faculty committee feel that the student body is likely to support the policy in substance and detail, they can recommend "fast-tracking" the policy. In these cases, the relevant administrative department or student representatives of the relevant committee will distribute the proposed policy to students via email and solicit their feedback. If there are no substantial objections and no requests for wider student discussion, the faculty is then free to take a final vote on the policy. If there is substantial concern about the policy, then the issue will be brought to the full student body either at an RSA meeting or at a separate meeting convened at a time when most students are available.

If the faculty or members of the relevant committee feel that a proposed policy is likely to be more controversial, the policy will be distributed to students and put on the agenda of an RSA meeting, or a separate meeting will be convened. These discussions will be facilitated either by the relevant academic administrator/faculty member or by members of the relevant committee.

### ***Standing Faculty-Student Committees***

#### ***Va'adat Kehillah***

The *Va'adat Kehillah* (Community Committee) is charged with attending to our communal rituals (daily and holiday services), communal *Shabbatot*, holiday celebrations and other moments of communal celebration (life-cycle moments). *Va'adat Kehillah* will:

- be the primary address for conversations around spirituality and spiritual life at the college, and for establishing a weekly calendar for spiritual practice opportunities at RRC.
- advise and support the director of student life around the organizing of communal events such as *Shabbatonim*, Community Limmud programming, and other learning opportunities.
- explore and promote ways for the RRC community to live in “Jewish time” during the course of the academic year.
- take into consideration Jewish holidays in its planning, including Rosh Chodesh, Elul, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, Simchat Torah, Hanukkah, Tu B'Shevat, Purim, Pesach, Yom Hashoah, Yom Ha'atzmaut, Lag B'Omer and Shavuot.

The committee is composed of two students (elected by the students), two faculty members (elected by the faculty) and the director of student life who serves as the chair. Faculty and student representatives serve for one-year terms. The work of this committee should draw upon and develop skills in listening and pastoral work, ritual creativity, administration, and community organizing.

### ***Va'adat Limmud***

The *Va'adat Limmud* (Curriculum Committee) is charged with monitoring and evaluating RRC's curriculum; proposing curricular changes for consideration by the faculty; and responding to curricular changes proposed by the faculty. It is also the site for faculty-student discussions regarding student concerns about their educational experiences, classroom policies, course preparation time and course requirements, as well as other issues directly related to the educational experience of students and faculty in Wyncote and in Israel.

The committee is composed of two students (elected by the students); two faculty members, at least two of whom are full-time and one of whom teaches rabbinic arts (elected by the faculty); and the vice president for academic affairs.

Faculty and student representatives serve for one-year terms. The vice president for academic affairs will chair this committee. The work of this committee should draw upon and develop skills in strategic visioning, academic evaluation, research, and pedagogy.

### ***Va'adat Keshet***

The *Va'adat Keshet* (Liaison Committee) is charged with facilitating communication among students, faculty, and academic administrators, and serves as the central hub for communication among and between the various committees.

*Va'adat Keshet* will:

- act as an overall coordinating body of the committee work of the other vaadot. The chair of the *Va'adat Keshet* is the “go to” person for any requests or needs from ad hoc committees as well.
- serve as a forum to communicate and share concerns between faculty, administration and students regarding specific policies or broader issues in the RRC community that do not fall under the purview of one of the other committees.
- consider initially approved legislation from the faculty that does not fall under the purview of one of the other committees.

The *Va'adat Keshet* is composed of RSA student officers, the director of student life, the director of rabbinic formation, and the vice president for academic affairs. The vice president for academic affairs will chair this committee.

## **Ad-Hoc Faculty-Student Committees**

### **Search Committees**

Search committees for openings in full-time faculty and academic administrator positions shall be constituted on an ad hoc basis when the need arises. These committees shall have one student representative elected by the student body. The Search Committee reports and makes recommendations to the president of RRC.

### **Israel Safety Committee**

If the current political situation in Israel is raising significant safety concerns for students or faculty, the vice president for academic affairs will convene an ad hoc Israel safety committee charged with deciding whether the FEC may accept "safety concerns" as a legitimate reason for granting petitions for exemption from the Israel-year requirement for the following academic year or from a required summer of study in Israel for the upcoming summer. The Israel Safety Committee is chaired by the vice president for academic affairs (or her/his proxy) and is composed of the president, the director of student life, one member of the board of governors, the director of the Israel program, two members of the regular faculty and two students, one of whom is studying in Israel. Students serve as consultants, but do not vote on this committee.

### ***Reconstructionist Student Association (RSA)***

The RSA is the student association of RRC. All matriculated students can join by paying annual dues. Regular meetings of the RSA are held during *Tzotchei Tzibur*, approximately once each month while classes are in session, and are chaired by the RSA president, who sets the agenda.

The RSA holds elections to fill the following positions for the coming academic year: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, two representatives to the *Va'adat Keshet*, one board of governors representative (must be in, or beyond third year of study at RRC), two representatives to the *Va'adat Limmud*, two representatives to the *Va'adat Kehillah*, one representative to the *Tikkun Olam* Commission, one representative to the Joint Israel Commission, and when necessary, two representatives to the Israel Safety Committee (one at RRC and one, if applicable in Israel) and one student to each search committee.

### ***RSA Statements***

Internal statements by the RSA aimed at influencing College policy are welcome. Preferably, they should be accompanied by an explanation of the reasons for the vote and the vote tally.

As a matter of courtesy, and in the interests of the collective institutional welfare, individual students and the RSA should advise a member of the RRC administration when contemplating signing or issuing a public statement that may be controversial. Although the ultimate decision about action remains with the individual student or the RSA, it is expected that the effects of such action on the collective welfare of RRC and the Reconstructionist movement will be considered seriously.

### ***Political Endorsements***

Because of RRC's tax-exempt status, the College and its constituent bodies, including the regular faculty, the RSA and committees, may not take part in a political campaign for or against a candidate for office, nor can the College or its bodies devote a substantial amount of time or money to lobbying or otherwise attempting to influence legislation.

## **17. CALENDAR**

### ***Calendar Committee***

Each fall the vice president for academic affairs shall appoint a committee—chaired by the director of academic administration and consisting of volunteers from the faculty, students and administration—to work on a calendar for the academic year that begins two years later. That committee shall explore the various options for the calendar, and the student and faculty representatives shall solicit input from faculty and students. The representatives will share any feedback received with the calendar committee, which shall then propose a calendar for approval by the faculty no later than its January meeting so that the calendar can be approved 18 months in advance.

### ***Calendar Structure***

The calendar shall provide 13 class meetings per semester for each course that meets once per week and a minimum of 26 class meetings per semester for each course that meets twice per week. Summer sessions for incoming students and/or returning students will be scheduled as needed. The calendar shall include a reading period of at least four calendar days for the winter and spring semesters. Normally, the final day of exams occurs no sooner than 10 days after the last regularly scheduled class day. When possible, the calendar will include one to two scheduled make-up days.

## **18. PROGRAMS**

### ***Confidentiality***

For each community discussion program, the planning committee will designate a confidentiality rating and a definition of “community” for that program and will publicize its decision about confidentiality in advance of the meeting.

### **Levels of Confidentiality**

- Confidentiality of topic under discussion (operational security).
- Complete confidentiality. Nothing discussed during the community discussion may be shared with anyone who was not present.
- Confidentiality of individuals but not of nature of discussion. Nature of discussion may be shared with anyone who was eligible but not able to attend, though statements and opinions of individuals may not be shared. For example, it is permissible to share with students in Israel or someone who was sick that “some students felt x” or “many students felt y.”

- Limited confidentiality. Opinions and statements of individuals may be shared with those eligible but unable to attend the community discussion.
- Nature of discussion may be shared with anyone, but statements and opinions of individuals may not be shared.
- Open.

### **Defining the “Community”**

- Those who attend the discussion.
- Matriculated students directly affected by the particular policy or topic of discussion and regular faculty of RRC are eligible to attend the discussion.
- Students, faculty, administrators and support staff of Reconstructing Judaism.
- Students, faculty, administrators, support staff and visitors.

In any given case, if it is permitted to tell someone about a discussion, the person communicating will be expected to advise the person being told regarding the level of confidentiality in which the information must be kept. The level of confidentiality and the definition of community will be announced at the meeting/program. Anyone who is unable or unwilling to abide by that level of confidentiality and that definition of community will be asked to leave before the program begins. Individuals who stay will then be bound on their honor to observe the level of confidentiality and the definition of community set for that program by the facilitators.

### ***Scheduling Programs***

All student and faculty activities must be noted in advance on the official College calendar, which is kept by the office of the director of student life.

### ***Lunch Programs***

Lunchtime programs must be cleared with the director of student life and entered on the student programming calendar.

### ***Community Limmud***

Community Limmud programs occur monthly during the academic year. Their content is determined by the Kehillah Committee. Community Limmud programs address the cultivation of rabbinic knowledge, skills and competencies not fully addressed elsewhere in the curriculum and support the strengthening of RRC community. Community Limmud programs can also address issues that need timely attention within the RRC community.

### ***Tzorchei Tzibur***

This time slot is reserved for RSA, faculty and standing committee meetings. These meetings are scheduled, and the calendar is circulated before the start of the academic year. If necessary, a revised spring meeting schedule may be circulated at the start of the spring semester.

### ***After-Hours College-Sponsored Activities***

College-sponsored, non-course activities and programs that are scheduled in the evening or on weekends or holidays shall normally be open to the members of students' and faculty's households.



## 19. PRIZES

### ***The Rabbi Kenneth Berger and Aviva Berger Memorial Prize in Practical Rabbinics***

Through the generosity of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, the Rabbi Kenneth Berger and Aviva Berger Memorial Prize in Practical Rabbinics is awarded annually at the graduation ceremony to a fourth- or fifth-year student who exemplifies those qualities of rabbinic service that enhance the quality of congregational life.

The vice president for academic affairs appoints a panel of three faculty members, including a faculty member of practical rabbinics, which nominates one or more candidates for the prize. The regular faculty is then asked to ratify the choice when a single nominee is presented or to choose between several nominees presented by the panel.

### ***The Evelyn R. Mehlman Jewish Music Award***

In memory of Evelyn R. Mehlman, z"l, whose dedication to Judaism and to Jewish music was unparalleled, and who brought light to everyone she befriended, a prize is awarded annually at the graduation ceremony to a full-time RRC student who advances the study or performance of cantorial or seriously intentioned music addressed to Jewish themes. The award may be withheld in a particular year if no qualified student can be found.

Practical rabbinics instructors nominate the recipient of the award. The regular faculty ratifies the nominee.

### ***The Ann Pinkenson Prize in Rabbinics***

Through the beneficence of the Pinkenson family, the Ann Pinkenson Prize in Rabbinics is awarded at the graduation ceremony to a student who has excelled in the study of rabbinic literature and civilization.

The vice president for academic affairs appoints a panel of three faculty members, including the chair of the Department of Rabbinic Civilization, which nominates one or more candidates for the prize. The regular faculty then is asked to ratify the choice when a single nominee is presented or to choose between several nominees presented by the panel.

### ***The Yehuda Berger Prize for Excellence in Biblical Studies***

This prize is awarded from time to time to a student who demonstrates significant scholarly mastery of, and insight into, biblical civilization and biblical texts.

This prize is named in memory of Yehuda Berger, an intellectual, a scholar of Jewish contributions to civilization, and dedicated teacher and a mentor to teachers, who was deeply committed to the Jewish people. He helped found, lead and shape Congregation Beit Simchat Torah of New York City, where he was highly respected and widely loved, and where he is still fondly remembered.

The prize winners are nominated by a committee consisting of RRC faculty in the field of Bible and ratified by the regular faculty. If, at any time, only one Bible faculty member is active, the vice president for academic affairs will invite an additional member of the academic faculty to serve on the committee.

### ***The Edith G. and A. Walter Socolow Writing Prize***

Through the beneficence of the children of Edith G. and A. Walter Socolow, the annual Socolow Writing Prize is awarded to a student for a superior and well-presented paper or essay, submitted as part of the RRC course of study during the previous 12 months. It must be an articulate work, excellent in its conception, method, content and style.

The vice president for academic affairs invites submissions by students several months before graduation. The vice president for academic affairs appoints a three-person panel of judges to evaluate the submissions and choose the award winner. The panel includes one representative from each of the following bodies: the faculty, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, and the board of governors. The faculty representative screens the submissions before they are sent to the alumni and board judges.

### ***The Alice Stein Prize in Contemporary Jewish Civilization***

Through the generosity of the Joseph F. Stein Foundation, the Alice Stein Prize is awarded annually at the graduation ceremony to a student who creates an innovative project that explores relevant cultural and social issues, including but not limited to issues of gender, race, class and identity. A variety of formats will be considered if the project includes a clearly stated application to the reconstruction of contemporary Jewish life.

Each year, the vice president for academic affairs invites submissions several months before graduation. The vice president for academic affairs appoints a three-person panel of judges to evaluate the submissions and choose the award winner. The panel includes one representative from each of the following bodies: the faculty, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, and the board of governors. The faculty representative screens the submissions before they are sent to the alumni and board judges.

### ***The Yaakov Gladstone Award for Fine Teaching***

Through the generosity of Dr. William H. Fern, the Gladstone Award honors the memory of Yaakov Gladstone, z"l, whose life exemplified fine teaching in the fullest sense. The award is presented annually at the graduation ceremony to a member of the faculty, nominated by students and chosen by student ballot, who exemplifies fine teaching.

Eligibility extends to all faculty members, both full- and part-time, who have completed at least one full consecutive year of teaching, either full- and/or part-time, at RRC at the time the recipient is chosen. For all practical purposes, this means that all candidates for the award will be in at least their second consecutive year of teaching at the time of the selection. No faculty member may receive this award more than once within any five-year period. In rare cases in which the judging authority wishes to recognize equally exceptional teaching by two faculty members in the same year, the award may be divided, and the five-year rule applies to both.

The selection of the recipient is made by secret ballot by all students currently enrolled and in good standing who have completed at least one semester of their studies at the RRC, i.e., and are enrolled at least in their second semester, full- or part-time, at RRC.

The selection process is conducted under the auspices of the Reconstructionist Student Association (RSA). The officers of the RSA assume responsibility for preparing an appropriate slate of nominees in whatever manner they deem best. The officers may achieve this either by themselves or through a committee they appoint. They further assume responsibility for conducting a fair and tactful election, preparing a certificate or letter of award, selecting a representative of the RSA to present the award at graduation, and ensuring that the public presentation will reflect the honor that the award confers.

This process may be modified from year to year. At appropriate times during the year, the president of the RSA notifies the director of student life of the progress of the RSA in this matter.

The president of RRC is responsible for administering the endowment and issuing the award check. Each year the director of student life, no later than Tu B'Shevat, delivers to the officers of the RSA a list of all faculty members who meet the criteria for eligibility that year, and a list of all students eligible to vote. At that time, the director of student life meets with the appropriate officers or representatives of the RSA to review the award process and the experience of the previous year with the goal of helping the RSA conduct and, if possible, improve the process for the current year.

The nomination and election processes are held in such a manner that (a) nomination as a candidate for the award will be considered in itself a mark of honor and distinction regardless of any final choice, and (b) the feelings of all eligible faculty members will be kept in mind. The officers or appropriate committee of the RSA is encouraged to issue a set of suggested standards of fine teaching (which may vary from year to year) to help stimulate and crystallize thinking among voters. However, each voter is expected to privately develop their own criteria for fine teaching before voting for the award recipient.

The recipient receives a certificate or a letter, suitable for framing, showing the names of RRC, the award, the recipient and the RSA as the awarding body; the date of the award; the recipient's teaching qualities and contributions giving occasion for the award; and the signatures of the officers or committee members of the Rabbinical Student Association authorizing the award.

The award is presented to the recipient publicly at the annual commencement by a signatory of the award certificate. The oral portion of the presentation includes a description of the recipient's teaching qualities and contributions that the award recognizes.

### ***The Rabbi Devora Bartnoff Memorial Prize for Spiritually Motivated Social Action***

Through the generosity of the members of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, the Rabbi Devora Bartnoff Memorial Prize for Spiritually Motivated Social Action is awarded annually at the graduation ceremony to a third-, fourth- or fifth-year student whose rabbinic work best demonstrates how ru'akh hakodesh (sacred spirit) inspires tikkun olam (social action).

The vice president for academic affairs appoints a panel of three faculty members who confer with an RRA representative designated by the president of the RRA. They solicit nominations for the prize from members of the regular faculty, choose from among the nominees and present their selections(s) to the regular faculty. The regular faculty is then asked to ratify the choice, when a single nominee is presented, or to choose between several nominees presented by the panel.

### ***The Fred Louis Stamm Memorial Prize***

Through the generosity of the family of Fred Louis Stamm, z"l, the Stamm Memorial Prize is awarded annually at the graduation ceremony to a student who writes an essay that most contributes to the field of Jewish History and Culture. The essay must consist of original research written during the previous year, focusing on any period of Jewish history and culture.

Each year, the vice president for academic affairs invites students to submit for consideration essays and papers in the field of medieval and modern Jewish history and culture. The vice president for academic affairs appoints two members of the faculty to evaluate the submissions and nominate the award winner, who is then ratified by the regular faculty.

### ***The David Fern Memorial Award for Outstanding Contributions to the RRC Community***

The David Fern Memorial Award for Outstanding Contributions to the RRC Community is awarded annually at the graduation ceremony to a member of the RRC faculty, administration or staff who has made a positive difference in the life of the RRC community, enabling its scholars and leaders to achieve more effectively their goals of Torah study, creating Jewish community, service to the Jewish people and professional service. Recipients of this award are not eligible to receive it again for five years.

Each January, the director of student life solicits from faculty, administration, staff, and students written nominations for this prize. Nominations should specify the contributions to the RRC community that have earned consideration for this award. The nominations are circulated to all matriculated students, by whose vote this recognition is awarded.

### ***The Lillian Fern Memorial Award for Outstanding Student Contributions to the RRC Community***

The Lillian Fern Memorial Award for Outstanding Student Contributions to the RRC Community is awarded annually at the graduation ceremony to a matriculated student who has made a positive difference in the life of the RRC's community, enabling its scholars and leaders to achieve more effectively their goals of Torah study, creating Jewish community, service to the Jewish people and professional service. Recipients of this award are eligible to receive it only once.

Each January, the director of student life solicits from faculty, administration, staff, and students written nominations for this prize. Nominations should specify the contributions to the RRC community that have earned consideration for this award. The nominations are circulated to all members of the regular faculty, administration, and staff, by whose vote this recognition is awarded.

## ***RSA Prizes***

Each year the Reconstructionist Student Association honors students for their contributions to tikkun olam at RRC and in the wider community. In addition, the RSA awards the Ruakh Akheret prize for a student contribution to the spiritual well-being of the RRC community.

## **20. FERPA RIGHTS**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. These rights are as follows:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day RRC receives a request for access. Students should submit, to the director of academic administration, a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The director of academic administration will arrange for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. RRC is not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for students to review the records. RRC may charge a fee for copies.
- The right to request the amendment of the student's education record that the student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Students should write to the executive vice president indicating which RRC official is responsible for the record, clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed and specifying why it is inaccurate or misleading. If RRC decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, RRC will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing. If, after the hearing, RRC decides not to amend the record, the student has the right to place a statement with the record, setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is defined as a person employed by RRC in an administrative, supervisory, academic or support staff position; a person or company with whom RRC has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor or collection agency); a person serving on the board of governors; or someone assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, RRC discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. Other exceptions include the following: specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes; appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student; organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school; accrediting organizations; individuals complying with a judicial order or a lawfully issued subpoena; appropriate officials in cases of health or safety emergencies; and state and local authorities pursuant to specific state law.

Students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by RRC to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

The following is the name and address of the office that administers FERPA:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

RRC may disclose, without consent, “directory” information such as a student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, dates of attendance, and photograph and other biographical information. However, RRC will inform students about directory information and allow students approximately two weeks at the beginning of each academic year to opt out of disclosure of such information. Students who opt out will not be included on the list of RRC students.

## **21. COLLEGE VOICE AND IMAGE POLICY**

So that we may promote our institution with authentic visuals, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (RRC), and the assigned licensees and representatives thereof, may photograph or video students/employees and use their likenesses or photos or videos or audio of them. Photography/videography may occur anywhere on campus or at any college- or movement-sponsored event off campus where individuals congregate and do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy (for instance, no photo shoots will occur in restrooms), and could take place during classes, events, lunch, davening, etc.

Photo/video shoots that take place in classrooms are to be done only with advance permission from the instructor and will be minimally disruptive; unless otherwise agreed-to by the instructor, the only equipment permitted into the classrooms is the camera. Photo/video shoots that take place at Community Limmud will also be done with minimal interruption, and only with advance permission from the organizer/facilitator. Photo/video shoots may take place without any prior notification in public spaces at RRC or at any college- or movement-sponsored event off campus where individuals congregate and do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy.

The rights to the material gathered are held solely by RRC for use without restriction. This includes (but is not restricted to) distribution via email, on the internet, including (but not restricted to) [www.rrc.edu](http://www.rrc.edu) and social media. Purposes for using a student’s likeness/photo may include but are not limited to marketing, advertising, and promoting the college and/or the Reconstructionist movement.

Photos/videos captured by RRC and the assigned licensees and representatives thereof, that contain images of students who do not want their image published will either be cropped to exclude that individual or will not be used.

We will circulate this policy to all current students and faculty each year. Students or faculty members who do not want their image used will be given an opportunity to opt out for each year.

Thank you for your cooperation. You are helping us to showcase and promote the exciting work being done here, and hopefully enticing the next generation of rabbinical students to apply.

*To opt out, please notify:*

Cyd Weissman

Vice President for Innovation and Engagement

CWeissman@ReconstructingJudaism.org

215.576.0800 ext.257

## **22. GRIEVANCE AND APPEALS POLICIES**

### ***Appeals to Faculty Executive Committee Decisions***

A student wishing to petition for a modification in the regulations or the reversal of a decision of the faculty or of the FEC must submit a petition to the vice president for academic affairs. The vice president for academic affairs will determine whether the FEC should consider the revised petition or whether it should go to the full faculty for review. In the latter case, whenever possible, petitions will be considered at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the regular faculty. If the faculty deems it warranted or necessary, it may invite the student to discuss the matter in person.

### ***Grievance Policies (Under review 2023-24)***

#### ***Dialogue***

The RRC community is committed to settling conflicts amicably through direct conversation whenever possible. When a student has a conflict with anyone in the community, attempting to resolve it through direct dialogue should be the first course of action whenever that is feasible.

In the event that a student has a grievance<sup>4</sup> against a member of the regular faculty, another instructor, an academic administrator or a supervisory committee<sup>5</sup> that cannot be resolved through direct, private conversation, they should act according to the following sections.

#### ***Informal Mediation***

The student should speak first with their faculty advisor, who will attempt to help the student determine the best way to proceed. If the grievance is against the faculty advisor, the student should speak to the director of student life instead.

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<sup>4</sup> The grievance could include, but is not be limited to, the following examples: the instructor's treatment of a student, the instructor's reluctance to assist a student, and a faculty member or advisor's violation of confidentiality. In the event that the student has a grievance about a course evaluation, they should follow the Appeal of Grades policy (see Section 12, Appeal of Grades). In the event of a grievance regarding sexual or other types of harassment, the student should follow the Harassment-Free Environment policy. Only academic and co-curricular grievances are covered under this procedure.

<sup>5</sup> The term "faculty member" is used in what follows to include "a member of the regular faculty, another instructor, an academic administrator or a supervisory committee."

Unless the student or the faculty advisor deems it inappropriate, the student and the faculty member should try to resolve the conflict in an informal face-to-face conversation with the help of the faculty advisor or another mutually acceptable mediator.

### ***Formal Mediation of a Grievance***

Should the conflict remain unresolved, the student should speak with the director of rabbinic formation to begin a formal grievance procedure. The request for a formal grievance must state the nature of the grievance, describe the events on which it is based and bear the signature of the person who is filing the grievance. The director of rabbinic formation will immediately notify all parties to the grievance and will invite them to submit a written account of their version of the events that led to the grievance. The director of rabbinic formation will do fact-finding, which will include meeting with the parties. The director of rabbinic formation will serve as mediator, talking with each party and trying to help the parties come to a resolution of the grievance. The director of rabbinic formation will try to facilitate a resolution as quickly and privately as possible and should keep written records of the process. The director of rabbinic formation will then also record the written resolution of the grievance and have it signed by the parties to the grievance. Copies of the written resolution will be provided to both parties and will be kept on file in the offices of the director of rabbinic formation and the vice president for academic affairs.

### ***Convening a Beit Din to Arbitrate a Grievance***

At any point, any of the three (the student, the faculty member, or the director of rabbinic formation) may initiate a *beit din* proceeding. This may be because a resolution of the grievance has not been reached, because a resolution of the grievance has been breached or because new issues between the parties have arisen that, in the opinion of any party or the director of rabbinic formation, cannot be dealt with through the processes described in sections a-c above.

In the event that the director of rabbinic formation or the vice president for academic affairs becomes aware that there is more than one student with a grievance about a similar issue or incident against the same faculty member, the vice president for academic affairs may at her or his discretion convene a single *beit din* to address the grievances.

### ***Beit Din Procedures***

A *beit din* is initiated with a written request to the vice president for academic affairs. When such a request is made, a *beit din* of three will be convened. It will be chaired by the vice president for academic affairs. The two parties will each select one of the remaining members of the regular faculty to serve on the *beit din* and sign a form acknowledging that the decision of the *beit din* cannot be appealed to RRC's faculty, administration or board of governors. If a person selected refuses to serve, the nominating party selects another member of the regular faculty. All documentation will be forwarded from the director of rabbinic formation's office to the vice president for academic affairs. The *beit din* will review the written mediation materials; speak to the two parties and to the director of rabbinic formation; and collect any additional data, including interviewing other people the *beit din* deems appropriate<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> With regard to students, the *beit din* may consult any employee of RRC, but it must obtain a student's written permission before it may consult RRC students and people outside of RRC.



The members of the *beit din* will keep the proceedings confidential, except as necessary for inquiries made as part of the proceedings. Any employee of the RRC who is consulted as part of the proceedings must keep such communication confidential.

The *beit din*'s decision will begin with a statement about the propriety of the complaint and whether it is supported by evidence. It may also require rectification of past injury, education, counseling, requirements for future conduct and/or admonition, among other things. In addition, it can recommend disciplinary action. A copy of the *beit din* report will be placed on file in the offices of the director of rabbinic formation and of the vice president for academic affairs.

The *beit din* may decide to place notice of the existence of the report in the file of any person whom it deems to be at fault.

The vice president for academic affairs is responsible for monitoring compliance with the decision of the *beit din*. A faculty member's failure or refusal to comply with the decision of the *beit din* is malfeasance if it is not corrected after the faculty member has been warned; this would constitute grounds for further disciplinary action. In such a case, the vice president for academic affairs will use their discretion to determine whether further action requires that the *beit din* be reconvened.

While the matter is pending, decisions about class attendance will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

### ***Special Situations***

In the event that there is a grievance with an RRC employee who is not on the faculty (e.g., non-academic administrators, other RRC staff), the student should speak with the director of rabbinic formation, who will guide the student towards mediation and, if mediation fails, in determining the appropriate grievance procedure. In the event of a grievance regarding sexual or other harassment, the student should follow the procedures outlined in the harassment-free workplace policy.

If the grievance is against the director of rabbinic formation, then the vice president for academic affairs mediates, and in the event of a *beit din* procedure, the president appoints someone other than the vice president for academic affairs to chair the *beit din*.

If the grievance is against the vice president for academic affairs, the president appoints both the mediator and the chair of the *beit din*.

### ***Efficient Procedure***

For the benefit of all involved, the grievance procedure must proceed as quickly and efficiently as possible.

## **23. TUITION, FEES AND FINANCIAL AID**

For information regarding tuition, fees, and financial aid, see the current tuition schedule and our guide to student finances on our website. This information is also in the Files section of Populi.

## 24. ADMISSIONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### ***Entrance Requirements and Desired Attributes at Admission***

The Admissions Committee determines a candidate's suitability for RRC based upon a thorough review of all application materials, including the application form, the written self-assessment, resume, academic record, letters of recommendation and personal statement. No candidate will be admitted without a personal interview with the Admissions Committee. We do not require the GRE.

RRC welcomes applications for admission to the rabbinical program from candidates who meet RRC's admissions requirements and who believe they possess the desired attributes, as follows:

**Jewish:** Born of at least one Jewish parent and raised as a Jew, or a Jew-by-choice. For Jews-by-choice, conversions by all denominations accepted.

**Jewish Commitments:** Actively demonstrates engagement with God, Torah and the Jewish people. Models commitment to Jewish community and continuity in personal, familial and communal life. Engages in Jewish practice thoughtfully, with respect for tradition.

**Hebrew:** Facility with Hebrew equivalent to one year of college-level Hebrew study or higher, as demonstrated by placement exam administered by RRC in conjunction with the admissions interview.

**Educational Background:** Must hold an undergraduate degree from an accredited institution of higher learning. Transcript must show solid academic abilities.

**Critical Thinking/Intellectual Curiosity:** The ability and willingness to analyze and synthesize information, as well as the desire to seek out new ideas and ways of thinking to make appropriate and reasoned decisions.

**Service Orientation:** Maintains a sense of community and selflessness. Looks for opportunities to work with and serve others. Motivated by a desire to "give back" and help others.

**Leadership:** The ability and confidence to articulate a compelling vision and to help a group determine its goals, as well as develop and implement the appropriate strategies to achieve them.

**Interpersonal Skills:** Connects with others, demonstrates empathy and works well as part of a team. Understands group dynamics and establish and maintain appropriate boundaries with others.

**Listening/Communication:** Actively engages in conversation with others. Is articulate in expressing ideas in a coherent manner. Makes an active effort to listen to words spoken by others and accurately interprets their meaning.

**Resilience/Stress Management:** The ability to work under pressure; effectively deal with challenging situations; and handle multiple responsibilities/tasks at one time. Utilizes effective self-care strategies.

**Openness:** Seeks out and accepts constructive criticism or feedback. Is reflective and willing to admit mistakes and demonstrate humility. Looks for opportunities for personal growth.

**Character:** Lives life according to core beliefs. Demonstrates maturity, integrity and authenticity in the face of conflicting demands, and consistently makes good judgments. Is viewed by others as reliable, trustworthy, flexible, moral and likable. Possesses a spiritual maturity and depth.

**Suitability for Reconstructionist Judaism:** Has made a sincere effort to learn about a Reconstructionist approach through exploration of Reconstructionist resources, engagement with a Reconstructionist rabbi and, whenever possible, experience with at least one Reconstructionist community.

Age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, race, color, ancestry, national origin, handicap and disability will not be determining factors in the considerations of the Admissions Committee. The College, under the auspices of the Admissions Committee, also reserves the right to conduct a psychological evaluation of candidates.

### ***Re-Admission***

A student who leaves RRC in good standing and who does not return to RRC immediately after an approved personal leave of absence must apply for re-admission according to the following procedures:

- They shall send a letter to the director of admissions and recruitment requesting re-admission to RRC.
- They must submit to the director of admissions and recruitment (a) two letters of reference from Jewish professionals, employers, colleagues and/or academic instructors whose contact with the student is coordinate with the period of non-enrollment; (b) a written statement detailing the reasons for the original leave, the decision not to return at the end of the leave, and the reasons for desiring re-admission.
- They will be invited to a meeting with the vice president for academic affairs, the director of admissions and recruitment, and a member of the regular faculty. The committee shall decide if the student's petition for re-admission should be granted.

### ***Enrollment***

Students are normally admitted for matriculation only into the fall semester.

### ***Transfer to the M.A.J.S. Program***

When a student in the RRC rabbinic program applies for admission to the Master of Arts in Jewish Studies (M.A.J.S.) program, their admission to the M.A.J.S. program will include withdrawal from the rabbinic program.

## **25. HOUSEKEEPING RULES AND REGULATIONS**

### ***Smoke-Free Environment***

Smoking is prohibited on RRC's campus.

### ***Parking***

Students may park in any spot not reserved for faculty, executive or administrative staff.

- To the left, as you face the building, are two spaces for drivers with physical disabilities. To use one of these, you must obtain an RRC permission placard for your dashboard.
- To the right, as you face the building, are two short-term spots that may be used for 15 minutes. Please leave flashers ON.

Spots in front of the library are reserved for drivers with disabilities (1) and carpools (2) as assigned by the carpool coordinator.

### ***Restricted Areas***

The Ziegelman Study (AMZ) may be used only for prescheduled programs. The Hadar Kehillah may be used for worship and study if it has not been reserved for a program. Except during prescheduled programs, it shall not be used for eating. Those using it should be careful not to disturb the arrangement of its chairs.

### ***Dining Area and Food***

The kitchen is kosher and may be used by the RRC community. Every individual is expected to assume personal responsibility for the cleanliness of the building. RRC reserves the right to limit eating to certain areas of the building.

### ***Kashrut Policy***

Out of respect for the Jewish dietary laws, all Reconstructing Judaism-sponsored communal meals must be certified kosher or vegetarian (fish is permitted, excluding shellfish). This includes all catered events on and off-campus and potluck meals. All food stored, cooked and/or reheated in the main kitchen or consumed in any public or communal area inside the building (e.g., kitchen, lounge, classrooms) should follow these same restrictions.

### ***Security Policies and Procedures***

The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College is responsible for compliance with the College and University Security Information Act and Chapter 33 of the Regulations of the State Board of Education of Pennsylvania. A copy of the relevant statutes is available from the office of the executive vice president.

Complaints regarding compliance with the College and University Security Information Act should be filed with the executive vice president, who will investigate the complaint and attempt to resolve the problem with the complaining party. Upon resolution, the complaining party will be informed that if they continue to believe that the act is being violated, they may file a complaint with the office of the attorney general and shall be given the address of the office of the attorney general.

If a member of the RRC community is a victim of a crime on campus, the incident should be reported directly to the Cheltenham Township Police at 215-887-6220. RRC requests that the victim reports the occurrence to the president or executive vice president. This information will be included in the institution's annual report to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

### ***Email/Internet Policy***

The following policy governs the use of all RRC-owned computers and email systems, electronic communications, telephones, voicemail systems and Internet access via RRC computers and/or data lines.

These systems are the property of RRC. Individuals who use them should not expect privacy regarding any information owned or controlled by the College. The systems are primarily for business and research purposes, and not for improper use. Messages are stored. They are not necessarily deleted by pressing the Delete key. No one may use any RRC system to create a hostile or discriminatory College environment. Harassing, threatening or discriminatory messages are prohibited. RRC retains the right to access transmitted and stored communications, and to monitor use at any time to enforce the policy, to prevent harassing or threatening messages, for investigations, for security/system checks, for maintenance, and for enforcement of all other RRC policies and procedures. Although email can be an informal mode of communication, it should be treated as any other final work product that could be read in the future by unsympathetic third parties. Misuse of any system is subject to discipline, including separation. RRC's leniency regarding email/Internet procedures in the past will not excuse future email/Internet violations.

### ***Breastfeeding/Lactation***

Students who are lactating will be provided with reasonable time to express milk as frequently as needed for at least one year after the birth of a child. RRC will provide a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion. Spaces currently designated for this purpose are as follows:

- Room 213 (when not in use for podcasting: schedule is posted)
- the first-floor phone booth

If none of these spaces are available, please ask Cheryl Tyson, Director of Human Resources and Administration (Room 202 ext. 130), or Robert Chavez, Director of Operations (Room 201 ext. 111), to find you a private space for lactation.

## **26. NEPOTISM POLICY**

To avoid conflict of interest that may result when students engage in formal educational experiences with relatives, certain procedures must be followed. In addition, procedures should be in place that allow affected students and faculty members to not participate in formal educational experiences together if either the student or the faculty members believes that the experience will be unproductive or potentially damaging to the relationship.

### ***Admissions Process***

When a student who has a relative on the faculty is admitted to the college, the director of rabbinic formation or the VPAA (vice president of academic affairs) will have a conversation with the student that provides an opportunity for the student to express any concerns they might have. The VPAA will also explain the parameters of the nepotism policy at this time.

### ***Credit-Bearing Courses***

Students may participate in courses and other educational experiences taught/facilitated by a relative. If a student wants to participate in such a course, the VPAA will have a conversation with the instructor to determine whether the instructor thinks that they can effectively teach the student in the given class. If the instructor is willing to have the student in class, the student and the instructor will meet with the VPAA to articulate what modifications, if any need to be made regarding assessment of the learning objectives of the course. In all cases, formal assessment, including, but not limited to, the final student assessment will be done by another faculty member. The instructor and the VPAA will determine the identity of the other faculty member and will inform the student and director of academic administration.

In these cases, the student's advisor will check in with the student before the mid-semester mark and the VPAA will check in with the faculty member in the same time frame. If either the student or the faculty member feels like the conflict of interest is impinging significantly on the student's learning or is damaging the relationship, the student will be able to withdraw from the course without penalty. The student and the instructor will together determine how the student can complete their progress towards the course objectives.

A faculty member or other institutional official will recuse themselves from any discussion or vote relating to whom the student is related. The faculty member or institutional official will state publicly the reason for the recusal.

For the purposes of this policy, a relative is considered to be anyone with whom the faculty member has a close, personal relationship, such as a spouse or partner, member of the same household, parent grandparent, child or grandchild, sibling, aunt or uncle or a spouse, partner or child of any of the foregoing. If the college enrolls a student who has a relationship with a faculty member that does not fit into one of these categories, but that the faculty member feels may present a conflict of interest, the faculty member will inform the VPAA. If the VPAA affirms that there is a significant conflict of interest, the procedures stated here will apply.

### ***Bias in Evaluations Due to Relationships***

RRC expects both faculty and students to avoid situations where a faculty/student personal or family relationship could bias evaluations or teaching situations or could create the appearance of bias. In case of doubt about such a situation, students and instructors should contact the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Those persons have the authority to decide whether there is a conflict or appearance of one, and how the situation will be managed.

## **27. STUDENT/FACULTY COUPLES**

No member of the RRC faculty is permitted to develop a sexual relationship, a partnership or an exclusive affectional relationship with an RRC student, regardless of whether that student has ever enrolled, is enrolled or will ever enroll in a class taught by that faculty member.

## 28. DRUG- AND ALCOHOL-ABUSE PREVENTION

RRC prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students on its property or as part of any of its activities.

Any student who violates the standards in the paragraph above may be subject to immediate disciplinary sanctions consistent with local, state and federal law, up to and including immediate termination or expulsion, referral for prosecution and/or referral to a drug-abuse assistant or rehabilitation program. In deciding what action to take, RRC will take consider the nature of the violation, the student's current job assignment, the student's record with RRC and other factors relevant to the impact of the student's conduct upon RRC's activities.

A student who is convicted of any offense, under any federal or state law involving the possession or sale of a controlled substance, for conduct that occurred during a period of enrollment for which the student was receiving any federal loan, grant or work assistance shall not be eligible to receive any grant, loan or work assistance from the date of that conviction for the period of time specified in the following table:

If convicted of any offense involving:

- The possession of a controlled substance, ineligibility period is:

First offense	1 year
Second offense	2 years
Third offense	Indefinite
  
- The sale of a controlled substance, ineligibility period is:

First offense	2 years
Second offense	Indefinite

As a condition of initial and continued matriculation, a student must inform the institution of any criminal drug-statute conviction or any violation no later than upon application or five days after such a conviction or violation, whichever is earlier.

RRC maintains a competent referral network for drug and alcohol counseling, treatment and rehabilitation. Any student who feels that he or she has a drug- or alcohol-abuse problem is encouraged to seek assistance.

The cost for medical or rehabilitative treatment for substance abuse is the responsibility of the individual student.

Participation in a medical rehabilitative program will not preclude RRC from also taking any disciplinary action against the student that may be appropriate. Furthermore, a student who leaves a rehabilitative treatment program before proper discharge may be subject to immediate discipline, including termination or expulsion.

This program of drug prevention will be reviewed biannually to determine its effectiveness and to implement changes in the program if needed; and to ensure that the sanctions noted above are consistently enforced.

## **29. HARASSMENT-FREE ENVIRONMENT AND TITLE IX POLICIES**

Every member of our community has the right to work and study in a setting free of harassment. Reconstructing Judaism's Harassment-Free Environment and Title IX policies apply to all Reconstructing Judaism community members – board, faculty, students, employees and lay volunteers – including anyone located on or visiting campus. In the case of Title IX related offenses, the scope may include individuals present both on and off campus, whether or not at a College-sponsored event, and when at least one of the parties involved is a Reconstructing Judaism community member.

### ***Title IX & Sexual or Gender-based Harassment***

Reconstructing Judaism prohibits harassment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. As an academic institution that receives federal funding, Reconstructing Judaism aims to be in compliance with Title IX. Prohibited under Title IX are the following offenses: sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic and dating violence, stalking, rape & statutory rape, sexual exploitation and incest. While it is not possible to list all circumstances that may constitute sexual or gender-based harassment, certain conduct, if unwelcome, may constitute sexual or gender-based harassment depending upon the totality of the circumstances, including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness.

### ***Affirmative Consent***

Harassment refers to unwelcome conduct. Reconstructing Judaism is a proponent of affirmative consent, which is the best protection against allegations of unwelcome conduct. It is the responsibility of the person initiating or escalating physical or sexual activity to gain verbal consent, in advance, to confirm that their desired interaction is consensual. Without expressed affirmative consent, the ability to reasonably determine if consent was obtained or communicated is much more challenging.

Complaints that may relate to the areas listed above fall under Title IX and should be submitted to the institution's Title IX coordinator. The director of human resources also serves as the institution's Title IX coordinator. If the complaining party is uncomfortable speaking directly to the Title IX coordinator, they may have any support person of their choosing make a complaint on their behalf. If the coordinator determines that the complaint meets Title IX criteria, a Title IX trained investigator will undertake an investigation, which may include discussion with the complaining party, discussion with the respondent, and discussion with any potential witnesses. Depending on the investigation's assessment of the severity of the conduct determined to have occurred, such action might include education, separation, a reprimand, suspension or termination.

### ***Interim Measures***

Also known as accommodations, interim measures are available upon receipt of a report of sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic and dating violence, stalking, rape & statutory rape, sexual exploitation and incest and prior to the resolution of a complaint, as appropriate. Available interim measures include, but are not limited to, restrictions on contact between a complainant and respondent ("no contact" orders); changes in academic situations; academic



support; and escort services. If appropriate, the Title IX coordinator generally will offer interim measures upon receipt of a qualifying report. Individuals requesting additional interim measures or experiencing difficulty obtaining interim measures that have been approved should immediately contact the Title IX coordinator.

If the coordinator finds that the complaint is not one that falls under the Title IX definitions, the coordinator will inform the complainant that they may make use of the regular harassment reporting procedures.

All members of the Organizations' staff and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" under Title IX and are required to report knowledge of any incidents of sexual and gender-based harassment, sexual violence, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking to the Title IX coordinator, whether or not they are directly involved with the complaint.

A Responsible Employee (RE) must also inform a complainant of their rights under Title IX. Rights under Title IX are as follows:

Before a person "reveals information that they may wish to keep confidential," a RE should make every effort to ensure that the complainant understands:

- the RE's obligation to report to the Title IX coordinator or other appropriate school officials (names and other relevant facts such as the date, time, and location)
- the option to request that the College maintain confidentiality/make no investigation, which the College will consider but cannot guarantee; and
- the option to report confidentially by speaking to their spiritual director, mental health professional or sexual assault resource center (this option is only available if disclosure has not already occurred)

If a complainant discloses to a RE prior to an RE's opportunity to inform the complainant of their rights under Title IX, the RE should do so immediately following disclosure.

An RE should also tell the complainant that the complainant is not obligated to file an official report or complaint with the Title IX coordinator, but that the coordinator will most likely reach out to them upon receipt of the information from the RE. The RE should also inform the complainant that the College prohibits retaliation.

Any questions regarding Title IX procedures, obligations or training should be directed to the Title IX coordinator/director of human resources.

### ***Non-Sexual or Non-Gender Based Harassment***

Reconstructing Judaism also prohibits harassment on the basis of race, color, age, disability, marital or partnered status, parental status, ancestry, national or ethnic origin, alienage and citizenship, status as a veteran, religion, or any other protected category. Examples of such harassment could include (a) making inappropriate comments or remarks regarding one of the classes listed above (b) creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment by such conduct; (c) other unwelcome/inappropriate verbal or physical conduct such that they have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive work environment.

Any Reconstructing Judaism community member who believes that they have experienced this type of non-sexual or non-gender-based harassment, or a community member who has made a complaint that does not fall under Title IX, they should report the conduct to the executive vice president or to the director of human resources. If the complaining party is uncomfortable speaking to any of these people, they may designate a staff member, a member of the regular faculty or a member of the student body to make a formal complaint to one of these people on their behalf. An investigation of the complaint, including discussion with the complaining party, will be undertaken by the administration, and appropriate action will be taken by the human resources administrator in conjunction with executive leadership. Depending on the investigation's assessment of the severity of the conduct determined to have occurred, such action might include education, separation, a reprimand, suspension or termination.

### ***Investigation and Adjudication***

In some cases, investigation and adjudication will be conducted internally, meaning by trained staff members of Reconstructing Judaism. The Title IX coordinator/director of human resources will strive to keep the complainant and respondent updated to the degree that it is possible and will aim to do so within a reasonable time frame.

The Organization reserves the right to use an external investigator at any time and may choose to do so because of conflicts of interest and/or the severity of the allegation.

### ***Administrative Leave***

In cases of a complaint against an employee of Reconstructing Judaism, depending on the nature of the complaint, the Organization reserves the right to place the employee on administrative leave, whether paid or unpaid, as allowed by law.

### ***Confidentiality***

Reconstructing Judaism is sensitive those wishing to keep complaints confidential. Though complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed when it would impede a thorough investigation and adjudication, Reconstructing Judaism will effort to keep the circle of people who are involved in the investigation process as small as possible.

### ***Anonymous complaints***

Reconstructing Judaism encourages those who feel they have been subject to a violation of the harassment-free environment or Title IX policies to make a formal complaint so that appropriate next steps can be taken. There are times, however, when a complainant may wish to make an anonymous complaint. This should be done by way of letter without return address or other identifying information. Please note that Reconstructing Judaism may be limited in its ability to conduct an investigation and come to an appropriate resolution if it cannot determine the specifics needed to do so, which is the case with many anonymous complaints.

All complainants, regardless of the type of harassment, have rights that include consulting an attorney, reporting to police, and reporting to the EEOC, if applicable. The process outlined in

these policies in no way seeks to limit the freedom and constitutional rights of those involved with a harassment complaint.

Retaliation against any complainant, respondent or witness involved with a harassment complaint, and retaliation against such individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a harassment complaint, is prohibited and subject to disciplinary action.

### **30. ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

RRC prohibits discrimination on the basis of race; color; age; disability; sex; sexual orientation; gender identity; gender expression; whether married, partnered or not; parental status; ancestry; national or ethnic origin; alienage or citizenship; or status as a veteran in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, employment policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other RRC-administered programs and activities. RRC prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion, except where religion is a bona fide occupational qualification or qualification for admission to a program of study. Inquiries or complaints concerning the application of this policy may be addressed to the executive vice president at 215-576-0800 ext. 150. Complaints also may be addressed to the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education.

### **31. SNOW EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

Reconstructionist Rabbinical College will remain open, if at all possible, on all scheduled class days. Even when weather conditions are severe, every effort will be made to keep the college open in the belief that it is in the best interest of the students. However, the administration is concerned about the safety of all students, staff and visitors. We encourage everyone to use caution traveling safely to and from our campus and buildings.

On occasion, weather may be so extreme the College will close altogether or implement a late start/early dismissal option. The following information outlines the communication procedures that will be followed if such school closures or delays become necessary.

- The director of operations will monitor all weather alerts from the National Weather Service, Montgomery County and Cheltenham Township, as well as local news channels.
- If the director of operations determines that weather conditions are too adverse, which might impact the safety of the students and staff, they will contact the executive vice president and recommend that the college close early, open two hours late, or remain closed.
- When a decision is made concerning adverse weather conditions, the college will implement notification to all students and staff using the “OneCallNow” alert system. This system will contact all employees and students using email, text and/or cell-phone alerts. The alerts will inform all parties if the college closes early, opens two hours late or remains closed. The administration will also post the information on RRC’s website and to RRC students’, faculty’s, staff’s and board’s Facebook page.

### **32. STUDENTS WHO ARE VETERANS**

## **Leave**

Leave of absence is granted only to students who wish to temporarily interrupt their training for personal reasons. A request for leave must be made in advance in writing; time away from school will be considered an unexcused absence. The Veterans Administration will be notified immediately when a veteran student is granted a leave of absence.

## **Late Fee**

RRC ensures that it will not impose any penalty, including the assessment of late fees, the denial of access to classes, libraries, or other institutional facilities, or the requirement that a covered individual because of the individual's inability to meet his or her financial obligations to the institution due to the delayed disbursement funding from the Veterans Administration under chapter 31 or 33.

## **33. DISABILITIES AND ACCOMMODATIONS POLICIES**

### ***Introduction***

Pertinent laws and regulations

- Accommodations for disabilities at the post-secondary education level are mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and implementing regulations and various provisions in state law. Section 504 requires all that all federally funded programs, including educational programs where students receive federally guaranteed loan funds, provide accommodations to all "otherwise qualified" persons who self-identify as having any disability that "substantially limits one or more major life activities."

How a disability "substantially limits one or more major life activities" and requires accommodation

- The law has defined learning as one of the "major life activities." The courts have determined that not every impairment is substantially limiting, and that each need for accommodation must be made on a case-by-case basis. The key factor is the effect of the impairment on the individual's life as determined by assessment—using both clinical judgment and objective evidence such as testing—which shows the individual to be significantly impaired when compared to the average person. The assessment should be completed by an appropriately qualified professional and should both address the current impact of the disability on academic performance and provide a rationale for all recommended accommodations. The assessment is at the student's expense.
- Common forms of accommodation include modified test-taking, interpreters, note-takers and physical access.

Identifying students with disabilities

- If, in the admissions process, an applicant formally discloses having a disability, the admissions office, with the student's permission, notifies the disabilities coordinator upon the applicant's acceptance to the school and commitment to enroll. The disabilities coordinator will then contact the student to inquire about accommodations and academic-adjustment needs.
- Students who do not mention having a disability during the admissions process may contact the disabilities coordinator at any time if they require academic adjustments.

## ***Procedures***

- The ADA coordinator is the executive vice president. The disabilities coordinator is the vice president of academic affairs.
- Students with disabilities who require accommodations should seek assistance with the disabilities coordinator.
- Documentation should be brought to the disabilities coordinator. It must be on letterhead, dated and have a diagnosis, and should list recommendations for accommodations. Additional details regarding necessary documentation are described below and may also be issued by the disabilities coordinator.
- Students should request support services as early as possible.
- The disabilities coordinator will review the documentation and will make a determination in consultation with other staff members as to what, if any, accommodations will be provided.
- The disabilities coordinator will ensure that disability-related documents are kept confidential and are shared with college personnel on a limited and need-to-know basis only. Ordinarily, disability documentation will not be released to a third party without the consent of the subject of the documentation except as authorized by law.
- The disabilities coordinator will provide the student with a letter regarding the requested accommodation(s) for course instructors or other relevant personnel. The letter is valid for one year only. A student with accommodations must meet with the disabilities coordinator prior to the beginning of each year. Either the student or the disabilities coordinator may request a meeting at any time.
- Grievance Procedure
  - All ADA complaints, excluding those filed against the disabilities coordinator, shall be addressed to the ADA coordinator. All ADA complaints filed against the ADA coordinator shall be addressed to the vice president for academic affairs.
  - A complaint shall be in writing, contain the name and address of the person(s) filing it, and briefly describe the alleged violation.
  - A complaint shall be filed within 180 days after the complainant becomes aware of the alleged violation. (Allegations of discrimination related to events before this grievance procedure was in effect will be considered for processing on a case-by-case basis.)
  - An investigation, as may be appropriate, shall follow the filing of the complaint.
- The investigation shall be conducted by either the ADA coordinator or the vice president for academic affairs, depending upon the nature of the grievance. These rules anticipate informal but thorough investigations, affording all interested persons and their representatives an opportunity to submit evidence relevant to a complaint.
  - A written determination as to the validity of the complaint and a description of the resolution shall be issued by either the ADA coordinator or vice president for academic affairs, and a copy will be forwarded to the complainant.
  - The ADA coordinator shall maintain the files and records of the complaints.

## ***Documentation Requirements for Medical Conditions, and Affective and Anxiety Disorders***

### **Documentation Prerequisites**

The documentation requirements listed in this section apply to all forms of disability except ADHD, learning disabilities, and cognitive impairments. The policies in this section apply to medical conditions including but not limited to visual impairment, hearing impairment and physical impairment.

Documentation must include the name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator, information about licensure or certification, the area of specialization, and state or states in which the individual is authorized to practice. Documentation should be completed by a licensed medical practitioner, psychiatrist or licensed psychologist who has direct knowledge of the disability. All reports must be on letterhead and must be typed, dated and signed by the evaluator.

### **Documentation Must Be Current**

Documentation must be current. Documentation will presumptively be considered current if it was written within the past 36 months. Because the provision of reasonable accommodations and services is based upon RRC's assessment of the current impact of the disability on academic performance, it is in a student's best interest to provide recent and appropriate documentation. RRC reserves the right to require periodic updates of documentation.

It is important to recognize that accommodation needs can change over time and are not always identified through the initial diagnostic process. Conversely, a prior history of accommodations does not, in and of itself, warrant the provision of a similar accommodation.

If documentation is inadequate in scope or content or does not address the individual's current level of functioning and need for accommodations, re-evaluation may be required.

### **Documentation Necessary to Substantiate the Diagnosis Must Be Comprehensive**

- To properly document a need for accommodations for individuals with medical conditions, clinicians shall use the appropriate medical testing.
- The profile of the student's strengths and weaknesses must be shown to relate to functional limitations that may necessitate accommodations.
- Markers of the diagnosis are less well-established for mood and anxiety disorders than for other medical illnesses or conditions. Therefore, confidence in the validity of the diagnosis increases in direct proportion to the ability to document the presence of the following:
  - A characteristic pattern of clinical symptoms that meet DSM-IV criteria
    - Mood disorders
    - Anxiety disorders
    - Adjustment or stress disorders are unlikely to form the basis for an ADA accommodation request because of their transience
  - Documentation of the characteristic age of onset and course of illness for each disorder

Test anxiety is not a psychiatric disorder: therefore, test anxiety is not sufficient evidence of a mental illness as classified by DSM-IV. The patient must meet the criteria for generalized anxiety disorder or one of the other anxiety-related illnesses.

The report must include a specific diagnosis of the disability. The diagnostician should use direct language in the diagnosis of the disability, avoiding such terms as “suggest” or “is indicative of.”

Each Accommodation Recommended by the Evaluator Must Include a Rationale.

- The evaluator must describe the impact of the diagnosed disability on a specific major life activity, as well as the degree of impact on the individual. The diagnostic report must include specific recommendations for accommodations that RRC can reasonably provide.
- The documentation must include any record of prior accommodations or auxiliary aids, including information about specific conditions under which the accommodations were used and whether or not they benefited the individual.
- If no prior accommodations were provided, the evaluator must include an explanation of why no accommodations were needed in the past and why accommodations are needed at this time.
- The disabilities coordinator will make the final determination as to whether appropriate and reasonable accommodations are warranted and can be provided to the student.

### ***Documentation Requirements for Attention-Deficit Disorder/Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD)***

#### **Documentation Prerequisites**

Documentation must include the name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator, information about licensure or certification, the area of specialization, and state or states in which the individual is authorized to practice. Documentation should be completed by a psychologist, psychiatrist or other relevantly trained medical doctor who has direct knowledge of the disability. Comprehensive training in the differential diagnosis and the full range of psychiatric disorders, as well as direct experience with an adolescent or adult ADHD population is essential. It may be appropriate to use a clinical team approach consisting of a variety of educational, medical and counseling professionals with training in the evaluation of ADHD. All reports must be on letterhead and must be typed, dated and signed by the evaluator.

#### **Documentation Must Be Current**

- Documentation must be current. Documentation will presumptively be considered current if it was written within the past 36 months. Because the provision of reasonable accommodations and services is based upon RRC’s assessment of the current impact of the disability on academic performance, it is in a student’s best interest to provide recent and appropriate documentation. RRC reserves the right to require periodic updates of documentation.
- It is important to recognize that accommodation needs can change over time and are not always identified through the initial diagnostic process. Conversely, a prior history of accommodations does not, in and of itself, warrant the provision of a similar accommodation.
- If documentation is inadequate in scope or content or does not address the individual’s current level of functioning and need for accommodations, re-evaluation may be required.
- Changes may have occurred in the individual’s performance since the assessment, or new medications may have been prescribed or discontinued, which would make

necessary an update in the evaluation report. The update must include a detailed assessment of the current impact of the ADHD.

### **Documentation Necessary to Substantiate the Diagnosis Must Be Comprehensive**

- The particular profile of the student's strengths and weaknesses must be shown to relate to functional limitations that may necessitate accommodations.
- The evidence of current impairment must include the following:
  - **Statement of Presenting Problem:** A history of the individual's presenting attentional symptoms should be provided, including evidence of ongoing impulsive/hyperactive or inattentive behaviors that significantly impair functioning.
  - **Diagnostic Interview:** The information collected for the summary of the diagnostic interview should consist of more than self-report because information from third-party sources is critical in the diagnosis of ADHD.
  - **Relevant Testing Information:** Neuropsychological or psychoeducational assessment is important in determining the current impact of the disorder on the individual's ability to function in academically related settings. The evaluator must objectively review and include with the evaluation report relevant background information to support the diagnosis. Test scores or subtest scores alone should not be used as a sole measure for the diagnostic decision regarding ADHD. Selected subtest scores from measures of intellectual ability, memory functions tests, attention or tracking tests or continuous performance tests do not in and of themselves establish the presence or absence of ADHD. Checklists and surveys can serve to supplement the diagnostic profile, but in and of themselves are not adequate for the diagnosis of ADHD, and do not substitute for clinical observations and sound diagnostic judgment. All data must logically reflect a substantial limitation to learning for which the individual is requesting the accommodation.
  - **Identification of DSM-IV Criteria:** A diagnostic report must include a review and discussion of the DSM-IV criteria for ADHD both currently and retrospectively and must specify which symptoms are present (see DSM-IV for complete criteria).
  - **Specific Diagnosis:** The report must include a specific diagnosis of the disability.

The diagnostician should use direct language in the diagnosis of the disability, avoiding such terms as "suggest" or "is indicative of." The report must include a specific diagnosis of ADHD based on the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria. Individuals who report only problems with organization, test anxiety, memory or concentration in selective situations do not fit the prescribed diagnostic criteria for ADHD.

### **Each Accommodation Recommended by the Evaluator Must Include a Rationale**

- The evaluator must describe the impact of the diagnosed ADHD on a specific major life activity, as well as the degree of impact on the individual. A detailed explanation as to why each accommodation is recommended must be provided and should be correlated with specific functional limitations determined through interview, observation and/or testing. The diagnostic report must include specific recommendations for accommodations that RRC can reasonably provide.
- The documentation must include any record of prior accommodations or auxiliary aids, including information about specific conditions under which the accommodations were used and whether or not they benefited the individual.



- If no prior accommodations were provided, the evaluator must include an explanation of why no accommodations were needed in the past and why accommodations are needed at this time.
- The disabilities coordinator will make the final determination as to whether appropriate and reasonable accommodations are warranted and can be provided to the student.

### ***Documentation Requirements for Learning Disabilities (LD) and Cognitive Impairments***

#### **Documentation Prerequisites**

Documentation must include the name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator, information about licensure or certification, the area of specialization and state or states in which the individual is authorized to practice. Documentation should be completed by a licensed psychologist or licensed or certified school psychologist who has direct knowledge of the student and their disability. All reports must be on letterhead and must be typed, dated and signed by the evaluator.

#### **Documentation Must Be Current**

- Documentation must be current. Documentation will presumptively be considered current if it was written within the past 36 months. Because the provision of reasonable accommodations and services is based upon RRC's assessment of the current impact of the disability on academic performance, it is in a student's best interest to provide recent and appropriate documentation. RRC reserves the right to require periodic updates of documentation.
- It is important to recognize that accommodation needs can change over time and are not always identified through the initial diagnostic process. Conversely, a prior history of accommodations does not, in and of itself, warrant the provision of a similar accommodation.
- If documentation is inadequate in scope or content or does not address the individual's current level of functioning and need for accommodations, re-evaluation may be required.
- Changes may have occurred in the individual's performance since the assessment, or new medications may have been prescribed or discontinued, which would result in the necessity of an update in the evaluation report. The update must include a detailed assessment of the current impact of the LD.

#### **Documentation Necessary to Substantiate the Diagnosis Must Be Comprehensive**

The particular profile of the student's strengths and weaknesses must be shown to relate to functional limitations that may necessitate accommodations.

Testing must be comprehensive in the assessment of a learning disability. Testing must include assessment of cognitive ability, achievement and information processing. The following list is provided as a helpful resource but is not intended to be definitive or exhaustive.

#### **Aptitude/Cognitive Ability:**

- Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-III (WAIS-III)
- Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised: Tests of Cognitive Ability
- Kaufman Adolescent and Adult Intelligence Test
- Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale (4th ed.)

The Slosson Intelligence Test-Revised and the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test are primarily screening devices that are not comprehensive enough to provide the kinds of information necessary to make accommodation(s) decisions.

**Academic Achievement:**

- Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults (SATA)
- Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK)
- Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised: Tests of Achievement
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)

**Information Processing:**

- Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude-3 (DTLA-3)
- Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude-Adult (DTLA-A)
- Information from sub-tests on the WAIS-R or Woodcock-Johnson Psychoeducational Battery-Revised: Tests of Cognitive Ability, as well as other relevant instruments, may be useful when interpreted within the context of other diagnostic information.

**Documentation Must Include a Specific Diagnosis**

The report must include a specific diagnosis of the disability. The diagnostician should use direct language in the diagnosis of the disability, avoiding such terms as “suggest” and “is indicative of.”

Nonspecific diagnoses, such as individual “learning styles,” “learning differences,” “academic problems,” “computer phobias,” “slow reader” and “test difficulty or anxiety” in and of themselves do not constitute a learning disability.

**Each Accommodation Recommended by the Evaluator Must Include a Rationale**

- The evaluator must describe the impact of the diagnosed disability on a specific major life activity, as well as the degree of impact on the individual. A detailed explanation as to why each accommodation is recommended must be provided and should be correlated with specific functional limitations determined through interview, observation and/or testing. The diagnostic report must include specific recommendations for accommodations that RRC can reasonably provide.
- The documentation must include any record of prior accommodations or auxiliary aids, including information about specific conditions under which the accommodations were used and whether or not they benefited the individual.
- If no prior accommodations were provided, the evaluator must include an explanation of why no accommodations were needed in the past and why accommodations are needed at this time.
- The disabilities coordinator will make the final determination as to whether appropriate and reasonable accommodations are warranted and can be provided to the student.

**APPENDIX A - RECONSTRUCTIONIST RABBINICAL ASSOCIATION CODE OF ETHICS**

***STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND FUNCTION***

The vocation of the rabbinate requires engagement with Jewish tradition, with the contemporary context, and with professional standards of behavior. The members of the Reconstructionist

Rabbinical Association affirm our commitment to act in an ethical manner consistent with the highest principles of Judaism, particularly in relationships with our congregations, congregants, and colleagues. This Code of Ethics thus serves three fundamental purposes:

- **It provides moral guidance reflecting professional standards of behavior.**
- **It serves as an educational resource for rabbis, employers and lay people regarding those standards, and their application to appropriate rabbinic conduct.** Statements in the document using “should,” “may,” “obligation” and “urged” deal with categories that are primarily educational. Complaints to the RRA Ethics Committee regarding such categories will normally be responded to with educational information for the rabbi as well as with words of caution. Repeated complaints may result in additional action by the RRA Ethics Committee. The standards described in Section III (“Obligations to Self and Family”) are advisory and not subject to action by the RRA Ethics Committee beyond education.
- **It acts as a code of behavior for which RRA members can be held accountable by the RRA Ethics Committee.** Violations of conduct (whether of commission or omission) that are described in this document as “unethical,” “unacceptable,” “violation(s)” or “breach of ethics” or are denoted by “**must**” are subject to action by the RRA Ethics Committee in accordance with procedures established by the RRA; these are in bold print.

#### **PREAMBLE**

- By virtue of the authority and responsibility vested in us as rabbis, we accept a sacred trust before God, the Jewish people and humanity. That sacred trust ought to be reflected in all that rabbis do and say. This Code of Ethics frames the moral principles and conduct of Reconstructionist rabbis.
- A fundamental principle of Jewish conduct is that human beings are created b’tselem Elohim (in the image of God). Treating each person as having infinite value, as a subject and not an object, is central to Jewish ethics.
- Rabbis are responsible for their moral conduct. Many aspects of rabbinic moral conduct are addressed in this Code, but no code, no matter how thorough, can anticipate every behavior and regulate it. Sound personal judgment will inevitably play a role in ethical behavior.
- Jewish principles, values, and conduct form a complex, interactive web embodying the moral aspect of Jewish civilization. Rabbis are advocates for Jewish moral life as well as its custodians and protectors. These roles, as well as norms of professional behavior, should be reflected in our actions and speech.
- Preservation of rabbinic-congregant relationship. The rabbi-congregant relationship depends upon a mutual expectation that the relationship will remain primarily professional and pastoral. Effective rabbinic work of necessity involves conveying empathy, connection, and warmth to congregants, which can sometimes blur rabbi-congregant boundaries. We recognize the humanity of rabbis and congregants, and the existence of unavoidable and difficult dilemmas in negotiating rabbi-congregant relations. Nonetheless, a rabbi is primarily responsible for establishing and preserving appropriate boundaries that ensure the integrity of the rabbi congregant relationship.

(NOTE: In this document, “congregation” may also refer to a *havurah*, school, Jewish organization or other institution served professionally by a rabbi. “Congregant” may also refer to a student, counselee, lay person, or another person served professionally by a rabbi.)

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

- Rabbis are often perceived as *kley kodesh* (conduits of holiness). The rabbinic roles we fill—pastors, teachers, counselors, worship leaders and Jewish authorities—convey special responsibility. For many Jews, rabbis are not only symbolic exemplars when in these roles, but at all other times as well. With rabbinic authority to teach Torah and represent the Jewish people comes special responsibility to set a moral example and avoid morally damaging any part of Jewish life or of general society.
- The rabbinate is not only a profession. It is a sacred vocation. We have an obligation to protect both the dignity of the Reconstructionist rabbinate and the sacredness of Jewish tradition.
- Integrity in speech, conduct and relationships is essential.
- As public figures, we should be especially conscious of the importance not only of avoiding impropriety but also of avoiding *marit ayin* (the appearance of impropriety).
- Reconstructionist rabbis represent not only the rabbinate and the Jewish people but also the Reconstructionist movement. Our conduct and principles should reflect the commitments of the Reconstructionist movement and bring credit to it. Our conduct and speech should also reflect respect for the organizations of our movement (JRC, RRC, and RRA); criticisms and disagreements with them should be offered *l'khaf zekhut* (with the assumption of honorable intentions).
- We have an obligation to offer *tokhekha* (moral feedback and admonition) when we become aware of improprieties, whether those of a colleague, an organization or another individual. *Tokhekha* might involve urging those involved to seek help appropriate to the situation, as well as to change subsequent actions. Only through a covenant of shared responsibility and a joint effort can we uphold Jewish communal standards.
- A rabbi who has direct knowledge of a serious violation of the Code has an obligation to report it to the RRA Ethics Committee Chair.
- Exploitation of rabbinic status for improper personal, professional or financial gain brings discredit to the rabbi and the rabbinate.
- The special role of the rabbi brings fiduciary responsibilities that have both legal and moral implications.
- Any action that involves a violation of the principles stated above is unethical.

## **OBLIGATIONS TO SELF AND FAMILY**

- Our obligations to ourselves and to others can be met only if we exercise sufficient self-care. Each person has an obligation to preserve his/her own *b'riyut* — physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.
- Physical health depends upon regular exercise, proper diet, sufficient sleep and regular medical checkups. These should be a regular part of a rabbi's schedule.
- Emotional health depends upon many factors, including finding sufficient time for maintaining friendships and other nurturing relationships, pursuing interests that provide satisfaction and meaning, and having sufficient opportunity to gain perspective on one's life. Rabbinic careers often place unusual strain on our emotional lives. When a rabbi has concerns regarding his/her own psychological wellbeing, s/he should seek professional counseling, the advice of colleagues, and other forms of support.
- As spiritual leaders, we depend upon our spiritual resources, which easily become depleted. Each of us finds spiritual renewal in different ways. These might include prayer,

meditation, study, aesthetic and natural experiences as well as other activities that deepen and enrich our spiritual lives. Disciplined and balanced engagement with spirituality is a necessary part of our daily lives.

- Rabbis have a primary responsibility to our families. We need to reserve sufficient time, attention and energy to maintain strong relationships with them. The responsibilities of rabbinic work inevitably result in occasional conflicts between work and home commitments. To minimize conflicts between professional and familial obligations, rabbis should strive to arrange our work and home responsibilities and schedules in cooperation with both employer and family.
- Addictions are disorders that disrupt effective human functioning. It is imperative for a rabbi to recognize addiction in any form and to seek appropriate treatment immediately. Many addicts remain in recovery for the rest of their lives. Designing a suitable support system if one is a recovering addict is critically important.

### ***SUBSTANCE ABUSE***

- Substance abuse damages our physical and emotional health, and it has a negative impact on the family and community as well. Abuse of alcohol and drugs is unethical and destructive.
- Rabbis engaged in substance abuse should seek treatment.

### ***DOMESTIC ABUSE***

- Domestic abuse is unacceptable in all its forms: emotional, physical, financial and sexual. A rabbi engaged in abusive behavior must take immediate responsibility for specific harmful actions as well as for the intimidation and control that cycles of abusive behavior inflict on others. A rabbi who engages in domestic abuse, becomes aware of the impulse to do so or receives comments identifying his/her personal behavior as abusive, should seek professional help immediately in order to protect the safety of his/her family. Accepting accountability to others is an essential step in changing abusive behavior.
- A rabbi who is a victim of domestic abuse should seek help as soon as possible.

### ***ORGANIZATIONAL/CONGREGATIONAL OBLIGATIONS***

- The relationship between a rabbi and the congregation or organization (hereafter, organization) rests on a brit (covenant) that is the basis for mutual trust and respect. We commit ourselves to serving the organization, its purposes and its members (including all its service and program participants) to the best of our ability. The organization, its leaders and its members can be expected to reciprocate by recognizing the rabbi's unique role and by looking out for the rabbi's welfare.
- The basic terms of rabbinic employment are usually described in a contract or letter of agreement, often with a job description attached. The rabbi is obliged to honor the terms of this agreement as interpreted by the Reconstructionist Placement guidelines, by RRA policies and by law. Many organizations have employment codes that define the rules for employment. Such a code is binding on a rabbi as well.
- The rabbi can be held accountable by an organization and/or by the RRA for actions or inaction that violates the covenantal relationship, the contract, the employment code and/or principles of Jewish ethics.

- The rabbi-organization relationship depends on respecting the special role of the rabbi that stems from training and responsibility. This *k'vod harav* is justified by the rabbi's learning, commitment, caring and good judgment. Avoiding *halbanat panim* (embarrassment or shame) to a rabbi or to other professionals or volunteers is a critical aspect of maintaining *kavod* (honor and dignity) in the covenantal relationships that should characterize the organization.
- When signing controversial public letters or taking controversial public stands without the official endorsement of the organization, a rabbi may do so on the rabbi's own behalf. If doing so does not violate the stated policy of the organization, a rabbi may use the organization's name "for identification purposes only." Rabbis should be aware that our actions reflect upon our organizations and should notify our presidents or professional supervisors when we sign public statements. An organization may have legitimate concerns if its leaders believe that a rabbi's public actions are having a substantial adverse effect on it.

### **TRUTH AND HONEST REPRESENTATION**

- Jewish tradition places a strong emphasis on telling the truth. Each rabbi has the responsibility to be a *dover emet* (a truth-teller).
- When placing commercial announcements of professional rabbinic services in any medium, the rabbi should ascertain that the services announced do not violate any rule of the professional associations of which the rabbi is a member. Such announcements of services must be in good taste and without exaggeration or competitive statements of any kind. Announcements must not state a rabbi's fees for services. Any use of commercial advertisement must reflect the dignity of the rabbinate.
- Rabbis are often asked to provide credentials, biographical statements and curricula vitae, and to describe their education, training, and experience. Any misrepresentation or exaggeration—regardless of whether it is related to employment—is a breach of ethics.
- Rabbis are called upon to speak, teach and write. In doing so, we often draw upon the work of others. It is important to observe the principle of meticulously citing our sources, quoting *b'shem omro* (in the name of the author). We must avoid claiming the work of others as our own. Failure to do so constitutes *g'neyvat da'at* (a form of theft).
- *L'shon hara* (gossip) and *rekhilut* (statements that defame or create conflict) should be avoided because they undermine trust, cause humiliation and disrupt community life. Sharing private information about people without their explicit permission is *l'shon hara*. Occasionally sharing private information may be necessary, but in general this ought to be avoided not only in speech and formal writing, but also in all forms of electronic communication, such as email, chatrooms and listservs, as these have the capacity for even greater destructiveness. Rabbis should monitor their own actions as well as act to diminish or remove *l'shon hara* and *rekhilut* from communal life.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

- Rabbis must maintain confidentiality of private communication except when that involves a significant threat of substantial harm to the speaker, to another person or to the community or institution. Honoring that obligation is critical to maintaining the trust of individuals and the community.

- Exceptions to the obligation of confidentiality include reporting required by law (which may vary somewhat in each state or province), such as incidents of suspected abuse or molestation of children or elders. Rabbis are obligated to become familiar with the reporting required in their locale. Even where there is no legal requirement, such reporting is obligatory in matters of *pikuah nefesh* (saving a life) and *lo ta'amod al dam rey'ekha* (acting to protect others).
- Occasionally for personal or professional reasons a rabbi may wish to divulge confidential information where the rabbi is not obliged to do so. A rabbi can resolve this conflict of interest only by obtaining the permission of the people involved.
- The rabbi who seeks the confidential advice of another professional in handling a difficult situation or in professional supervision is not considered to be violating the commitment to confidentiality provided that reasonable precautions, such as withholding names and unnecessary personal information, are followed.
- When rabbis are members of a professional care team (e.g. in a hospital or agency setting, or when several rabbis serve the same congregation), they may share confidential information as needed and/or as determined by their organization's regulations. Even in team settings, rabbis should balance confidentiality and rabbinic care, sharing only the minimum amount of confidential information needed in a specific situation.
- The development of diverse means of data storage and communication has heightened the likelihood that information will be inadvertently and inappropriately shared. Access to computers containing private data should be carefully controlled, and such confidential data should never be communicated by e-mail.
- When a rabbi leaves a congregation, the rabbi should review confidential files and excise those containing records of pastoral counseling sessions and private congregant information. Files that are legitimately the property of the congregation and those that may be important in any future proceeding should be preserved.

### **FINANCIAL TRUST**

- Two basic Jewish principles in financial dealings are to avoid all forms of dishonesty and to disclose all potentially relevant information regarding a transaction with which one is involved.
- It is improper to exploit pastoral or professional relationships for undue personal or familial financial gain.
- Rabbinic compensation and expense reimbursement should be made clear by contract. In order to avoid potential future difficulties with employers, rabbis should avoid additional non-contractual financial arrangements with them, including borrowing money, co-signing loans and jointly entering into business ventures. Rabbis considering such arrangements are encouraged to consult the RRA staff and legal and financial advisors. When a rabbi has received a loan or mortgage funding from an organization or congregant(s), it must be fully repaid in a timely way.
- When a rabbi has access to organizational funds, the rabbi is obliged to avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Rabbis must follow the organization's procedural rules for expenditures, spending only in support of the purposes of the organization and avoiding any personal or familial benefit from such expenditures.
- Rabbis with discretionary funds are obliged to use the funds for legitimate charitable purposes, to keep a proper accounting of the income and expenditure of the funds and to comply meticulously with relevant law and tax regulations. Because these change over

time, rabbis must regularly check the shifting standards of compliance. Rabbis should ensure that their discretionary funds are audited annually, with the outside auditor providing a statement to the Board regarding the propriety of accounting and expenditures. Discretionary fund expenditures may not be used for the benefit of the rabbi or the rabbi's family, or for the rabbi's professional expenses.

- All citizens have an obligation to pay taxes. The obligations of clergy are complicated by housing allowances, income from emoluments and honoraria, professional expenses and insurance and retirement arrangements. Therefore, rabbis should obtain expert guidance and must follow the principle of disclosure regarding their taxes, complying with all applicable laws in reporting tax liabilities and paying them.

### ***PASTORAL OBLIGATIONS***

- Rabbis have an obligation to meet the pastoral and life cycle needs of those whom they serve when that is part of the rabbi's job description, unless doing so violates the rabbi's professional standards or personal religious practice. Expectations regarding a rabbi's pastoral obligations should be shaped in part by recognition of the rabbi's obligations, health and other commitments. We have a secondary pastoral responsibility to those with whom we come into contact through fulfilling our professional obligations. Meeting the needs of those for whom we do not have a direct professional responsibility has lower priority than our responsibilities to our organizations and our own families.
- Those whom we serve, including congregants, students, clients and others (hereafter, "congregants"), can occasionally misinterpret behavior that is intended to communicate caring as an inappropriate blurring of boundaries. Rabbis should be attentive to the complexities of transference and countertransference. We are obliged to be especially sensitive to the danger of misperception and to avoid behavior such as forms of touch and closeness that could reasonably be misconstrued.
- If rabbinic concern is misconstrued as romantic or sexual interest, the rabbi must state unequivocally that such a relationship is not possible. In such a situation, the rabbi is strongly urged to seek advice from colleagues and/or other professionals.
- Because pastoral counseling requires privacy, rabbis should strive to avoid situations that might lead to inappropriate behavior or suspicion of such behavior when counseling an individual. Counseling sessions should take place when others are in the building (preferably in a room with a window or where a door can be left ajar) or in public places such as a well-lit coffee shop or public park; use of automobiles for this purpose should be avoided. Rabbis should not meet students or counselees, whether adults or children, alone in their homes or in the rabbi's home, except for pastoral visits to people who are house-bound and those with serious illnesses. Even in these cases, the rabbi should consider bringing someone on the visit or timing it so that someone else is at home if the visit may raise any question of the rabbi's intent or action. In some situations, there are organizational rules, legal rulings or professional codes limiting the use of these approaches that take precedence over these recommendations.
- When the counseling needed exceeds our expertise or the time that we can allot, we have an obligation to refer to appropriate professionals.
- The relationships between rabbis and congregants involve multiple roles. Rabbis should attempt to prevent any tensions or hostilities from affecting pastoral relationships. To accomplish this, a rabbi may need to explain to a congregant that despite their conflict



over policy, practice or particular conduct, the rabbi will do his/her best to serve the pastoral needs of the congregant and family.

### ***SEXUAL ETHICS***

- It is unethical for a rabbi to engage in sexual or other harassment. Sexual harassment can involve deliberate or repeated seductive speech, sexual comments, gestures or physical contacts. It may include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This applies to verbal, written and electronic communication.
- It is unethical to engage in, or attempt to engage in, sexual activity with a minor, with an unwilling adult or with an adult who has a limited capacity to give full and informed consent.
- Rabbis are expected to honor the sexual and emotional boundaries of all covenanted relationships—both their own and those of other people.
- Any emotionally intimate and/or romantic relationship between a rabbi and a congregant is problematic and has the potential to become unethical even if no sexual activity is involved. Such a relationship may compromise and consequently might necessitate terminating the rabbi/congregant relationship, with the congregant or the rabbi having to withdraw from the synagogue in order to continue the relationship. Rabbis need to be aware of the risks involved for both parties in such relationships. Rabbis are strongly urged to seek guidance from colleagues or other professionals before beginning such a relationship.
- When a rabbi has had a significant pastoral, counseling or teaching relationship with a congregant, a considerable amount of time must pass before the relationship can be allowed to become romantic or sexual because of the power imbalances between rabbis and congregants. Until then, such a relationship is unethical even if welcomed by the congregant. The rabbi bears responsibility for not exploiting the pastoral relationship. In addition to the time lapse—which in some cases may require waiting a year or more—joint counseling may be advisable. The rabbi should seek advice from a senior colleague recommended by the Ethics Committee in exploring the propriety of the relationship for both parties. The congregant should be encouraged to consider whether the congregant is freely entering a new stage in the relationship. Some states and professional organizations prohibit sexual relationships for longer periods following the termination of a pastoral or counseling relationship; it is the rabbi's responsibility to know the applicable rules.
- A rabbi in a non-congregational and non-pastoral professional role may want to begin a romantic and/or sexual relationship with a volunteer in the same agency or organization. Such relationships are not usually unethical, but they do carry risks in regard to conflicts and the appearance of conflicts regarding professional roles and functions. Many organizations and agencies have personnel codes that regulate such relationships. A rabbi involved in such a relationship should disclose it to appropriate staff members and/or lay leaders if there is the possibility of a conflict of interest or the appearance of one. Rabbis are strongly urged to seek the guidance of professional colleagues regarding issues that may arise as a result of such relationships before entering into one.
- Any sexual or romantic relationship between colleagues or co-workers is fraught with risks for both parties. These risks include ambiguity about roles, effects on relationships with lay leaders and other staff members, and the future of both parties in the congregation. Ethical and professional risks are greatly magnified if one colleague is the supervisor or

perceived superior of another. Rabbis are strongly urged to seek guidance from colleagues or other professionals before beginning a relationship with a colleague or co-worker.

- Rabbis share holiday and Shabbat celebrations with congregants and socialize with them in both formal and informal settings. Social activities that create situations of potential inappropriate intimacy with coworkers or congregants have dangers against which rabbis must guard. It is best to avoid such situations. When that is not possible, vigilance is needed to avoid damage to the relationship as well as potential impropriety.

### ***RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RABBIS AND OUR COWORKERS***

- Rabbis frequently have formal responsibility for supervising other staff members. Even when that is not the case, we often mentor others, which is an important aspect of our work. Such mentoring often is a mix of Jewish teaching, coaching about difficult situations, providing personal support and helping with career development. In mentoring, conflicts can arise between organizational obligations and commitment to coworkers (e.g. information learned in mentoring that could negatively affect a mentee's promotion). All conflicts of interest must be disclosed to the mentee to avoid unfairness. Both when supervising and when mentoring, a rabbi should balance encouragement with constructive criticism.
- Achieving the mission of the organization requires cooperation among all staff members. This is possible only when there is sufficient communication to coordinate programmatic and administrative responsibilities and to provide information that each staff member needs to function effectively and efficiently. Rabbis should establish high expectations regarding cooperation and communication among those whom we supervise. Whether in supervisory roles or not, we should exemplify careful, caring communication and teamwork.
- Professional colleagues should support each other in our work whether or not we share an organizational setting. Helping colleagues to be effective in their work and to receive the recognition they deserve for their efforts is a professional expectation. When close cooperation is not possible because of conflicts of interest, every effort should nevertheless be made to avoid undermining colleagues or their institutions.
- When a conflict arises between the rabbi and staff members or colleagues, a frank conversation should take place without delay in an effort to resolve the conflict. If that fails, those involved should go to a supervisor or select a mediator to help in resolving the conflict. Unresolved conflicts sow distrust and disharmony, and every effort should be made to heal the damage to the relationship. If the conflict is between supervisor and supervisee, after a frank exchange of views the supervisee should usually accede to the decision of the supervisor. If it is a matter of ethics or of organizational or personal importance, or if the supervisee believes there is a pattern of unfair treatment, the supervisee has the right to appeal to the supervisor's supervisor. This should be undertaken with extreme caution because of the damage to relationships and credibility that is likely to result.
- When there are several rabbis working together, it is the responsibility of the senior colleague, or of co-colleagues, to ensure that each rabbi has appropriate duties. These duties should fit each rabbi's job description and provide sufficient opportunity for making a meaningful contribution to the organization, for visibility and for professional growth and satisfaction. When tasks are mutually regarded as onerous, these should be fairly divided.

A senior rabbi's colleagues should provide all information that may be relevant to the function of the senior rabbi. The senior rabbi establishes policy for the clergy of the congregation and decides their role in policy making. Acting out of mutual respect, support and concern helps to set the tone needed to maintain a *kehillah kedosha* (a holy community).

### **SUCCESSOR AND EMERITUS RABBIS**

- It is the obligation of a rabbi who is becoming emeritus or leaving an organization to provide as much orientation and information to the incoming rabbi as possible. This includes (but is not limited to) organizing and passing on formal records, pastoral information, organizational and ritual policies and concrete information about scheduling, calendar and the like. The departing rabbi should support the transfer of religious leadership to the incoming rabbi.
- The incoming rabbi has an obligation to treat predecessors and the emeritus rabbi with *kavod* and courtesy. Recognizing the emeritus rabbi on formal occasions, listing the emeritus on stationery and printed materials and preserving the record of earlier rabbis' tenures and accomplishments are required parts of *kavod*.
- The new rabbi is the religious leader of the congregation. The emeritus and/or predecessor rabbis should officiate at life-cycle events of their former congregants only with the explicit permission of the new rabbi. Without the prior consent of the new rabbi, the rabbi who is leaving must not make commitments prior to the new rabbi's arrival to officiate at events in the congregation or life-cycle events of congregants that will occur after the rabbi's arrival.
- The new rabbi may choose to invite the emeritus to speak from the pulpit, teach a class or otherwise participate in the leadership of the congregation. While the emeritus rabbi may only participate if there is such an invitation, the emeritus rabbi has the right to decline any invitation.
- Former and emeritus rabbis and their families are obliged to avoid interfering in the organizational and personal relationships of succeeding rabbis. Even when leaders or members of the organization actively seek their opinion, support or intervention, former and emeritus rabbis are obligated to practice circumspection and avoid involvement, particularly in areas of controversy or conflict.
- Rabbis naturally have a major role in the hiring and retention of their assistants or co-rabbis. However, their role in the hiring of their successors is very limited. The Reconstructionist Placement Guidelines provide specifics in this regard.

### **RELATIONSHIPS AMONG ORGANIZATIONS AND CONGREGATIONS, RABBIS AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS**

- Invitations to speak from the pulpit, address a major gathering or officiate at a life-cycle event at congregation where one is not the rabbi must be proffered or confirmed by the rabbi of that congregation or the rabbi's duly authorized representative before such invitations can be accepted. When a congregational rabbi will be away for more than a day, the rabbi should provide the congregation with a list of rabbis who can be asked to officiate during that absence. The rabbi, back-up rabbis and congregation should reach an agreement as to whether an honorarium for a back-up rabbi is expected and, if so, who is responsible for payment.

- If a rabbi is asked to officiate at a life-cycle event involving a member of another congregation or members of other congregations, the officiating rabbi should arrange for timely notification of the other rabbi(s) concerned. When members of multiple congregations are involved, the rabbi should make a reasonable effort to notify all relevant colleagues.
- Rabbis and their congregants should avoid inviting members of other congregations to join theirs. This avoids *hasagat g'vul* (improper crossing of political or economic that it causes. boundaries) and the rancor that it causes.
- Rabbis have an obligation to comply with the rules of all professional organizations to which they belong.
- In communities where there are multiple Jewish organizations, rabbis should strive to create and sustain positive relationships among professional colleagues and organizations.

### **RABBINIC SERVICES**

- Rabbis have an obligation to meet the pastoral needs and officiate at the life-cycle events of the members of the organizations we serve when that is part of our job descriptions, unless those needs conflict with the religious practices or professional standards of the rabbi. When scheduling conflicts (including vacations and days off) force a referral, a rabbi should offer several choices where possible. When religious practices or professional standards prevent officiation, the rabbi should provide several referral possibilities if doing so does not involve a violation of conscience or professional practice.
- Full-time congregational rabbis must not charge their congregants for counseling or performing life-cycle events for residents of the congregants' household. If, following officiation, a congregant chooses to make a donation to the rabbi's discretionary fund or to another *tzedaka* in the rabbi's honor, it is normal practice to accept such a donation. If a gift is made to the rabbi personally, the rabbi should exercise caution, as accepting such gifts may create the appearance, expectation or actuality of undue influence. Many rabbis choose not to accept such gifts personally; those who do accept gifts should be attentive to tax consequences.
- Whether part-time rabbis can accept emoluments from their congregants, and if so whether the amounts are fixed, is subject to the rabbi's contract. Rabbis should ensure that congregants are regularly reminded of these arrangements. When a rabbi is providing service that is in excess of the terms of the contract, it is just for the rabbi to be suitably compensated.
- If nothing in a rabbi's job description or contract precludes it, rabbis may officiate at the lifecycle events of people other than their congregants or provide other rabbinic service for them. In such cases, it is customary for rabbis to receive an appropriate honorarium. To avoid misunderstandings, fees to be charged should be stated clearly and in writing at the outset. Given the possibility of unseemly misunderstandings, it is best that there be a letter of agreement that specifies the terms of the rabbi's participation, including timing and location, cancellation arrangements, the terms regarding fees and expenses and other specifics.
- In the rare instance that a rabbi cannot honor a commitment to officiate, the rabbi must notify those involved at the earliest possible moment and must provide the names of suitable colleagues who are available to step in and officiate.

- The *mitzva* of *hakhnasat hager* (welcoming potential converts) is a rabbinic responsibility. Fulltime congregational rabbis should not accept fees for tutoring a potential *ger* (convert) or serving on a bet din for *giyyur*. Rabbis must not accept a fee (but can suggest an act of *tzedaka*) from a convert for leading a bet din for conversion or serving on one. This does not preclude a community from compensating members of its bet din. The direct expenses involved, such as the *mikva* fee, can be borne by the convert, but nothing should be allowed that would even hint of any motive for the conversion other than its being done *l'shem shamayim* (for the sake of divine service).

## **SECULAR LAW AND GOVERNANCE**

- Rabbinic tradition has long proclaimed that *dina d'malkhuta dina* (that secular law is binding upon Jews). Rabbis should support an orderly, just society that can pursue the goal of everyone living harmoniously and safely in their diversity.
- As citizens, we have an obligation to set an example by becoming familiar with policy issues and candidates, voting and participating broadly in the process of government. As rabbis and public figures, we have a responsibility to add our voices to public debate on issues of concern when we deem it appropriate to do so. When addressing political issues or participating in political campaigns, rabbis should be careful to avoid endangering the tax-exempt status of their organizations by adhering to the regulations regarding such participation by individuals, organizations and their leaders.
- An exception to our obligation to follow secular law is instances of conscientious objection and civil disobedience. Often a valid test of whether an act of law-breaking involves civil disobedience or conscientious objection is whether a rabbi involved is prepared to publicize the act and be arrested for it.

## **VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES**

- Rabbis are religious leaders with obligations to the Jewish community and beyond it. Like all members of the Jewish community, we have an obligation to work for the broader welfare. Even when our professional and familial obligations are substantial, we are still called *l'taken olam b'malkhut Shaday* (to improve the world through expanding God's presence in it).
- Rabbis are often voluntary leaders in communal organizations. When in this role, we must exercise our fiduciary responsibilities with care, both for the sake of the organization and its mission, and for the preservation of the honor of the rabbinate.

## **TESHUVA**

- Jewish tradition recognizes the reality of *yetzer hara*. It is unrealistic to expect perfection of ourselves. But we ought to strive toward exemplary conduct.
- When we fail to measure up to our own standards, it is critical to recognize this. Acknowledging moral failings, errors in judgment, accidental errors and any other kind of misconduct is the classical starting point of *teshuva*.
- Sincere apologies should be made as soon as possible to those who have been wronged and/or hurt. In offering apologies, we should seek input about how to make up for the damage caused to all concerned. Where appropriate, public apologies are indispensable parts of the *teshuva* process.

## **INTEGRITY OF THE RABBINATE**

- It is incumbent upon rabbis to avoid harm to the people they serve by staff members and volunteers. To that end, rabbis should advocate for congregational or organizational policies that build communal safeguards such as background checks and reference checks. Rabbis who have hiring authority in the organizations in which they work should ensure that the backgrounds of potential employees are checked to protect the safety of both minors and adult congregants.
- In the case of hiring a colleague, rabbis must inquire of the relevant rabbinic and professional organization(s) to determine if there have been any ethics actions relevant to the kind of employment under consideration.
- Rabbis must not hire employees when their previous records suggest the potential for harm in the situation for which the employee is being hired. Particular caution is urged in the case of rabbis who are not members of an association that requires its members to be bound by a comprehensive code of ethics. Similarly, caution is urged in the case of rabbis currently suspended or expelled by rabbinic organizations, or who have resigned when such actions were under consideration.

## **APPENDIX B - COMPETENCIES**

### ***Be a vessel of Torah***

- A-1. Articulate the perspective of Judaism as a dynamic religious civilization.
- A-2. Demonstrate textual competencies with regard to the following texts and genres: Tanakh, Mishnah, Midrash, Talmud, Parshanut, Codes, Jewish Thought, Kabbalah, Hassidut, Siddur, and Modern/Contemporary Literatures; demonstrate knowledge of *halakha/minhag*.
- A-3. Effectively articulate relevance and resonance of Jewish texts, customs and historical experiences in a variety of settings. These include pastoral encounters, campus, school, and pulpit, in the public square, and the wider world.
- A-4. Articulate the Jewish values and narratives that mandate justice and dignity for all people and apply them to contemporary situations.

### ***Demonstrate the personal and spiritual grounding for effective and ethical Jewish leadership***

- B-1. Articulate a personal, authentic spiritual/theological professional and political vision.
- B-2. Demonstrate the ability to elicit and integrate feedback, the capacity for reflection, and the self-awareness necessary to perform effectively in a range of communal and rabbinic settings.
- B-3. Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical and pastoral dimensions of rabbinic situations and respond in ways that demonstrate *middot tovot*.
- B-4. Demonstrate the ability to adapt one's attitudes and strategies in an environment of fast-paced change.
- B-5. Demonstrate a reflective and dynamic relationship with Jewish practice.

### ***Demonstrate the professional skills and knowledge for effective and ethical Jewish leadership***

- C-1. Demonstrate familiarity with key components and theories of organizational systems and organizational behavior.
- C-2. Demonstrate familiarity with a variety of leadership styles and how their leadership is an expression of Reconstructionist Judaism.
- C-3. Demonstrate awareness of power and privilege in a range of rabbinic settings and use this awareness to navigate systems effectively and deploy rabbinic power ethically and effectively.
- C-4. Demonstrate familiarity with principles of participatory decision-making and apply them to resolve challenges.
- C-5. Enact principles of multifaith engagement and multi-ethnic engagement.
- C-6. Demonstrate the entrepreneurial skills needed to respond to the landscape of the Contemporary Jewish community.
- C-7. Demonstrate knowledge and skills necessary to conduct worship and rituals in ways that honor and uphold tradition and meet the needs of those one serves.
- C-8. Present ideas, sermons and other forms of communication with clarity, persuasion, and Jewish content.
- C-9. Demonstrate ability to teach in formal and informal settings in ways that are informed by familiarity with curriculum design and principles of educational development.
- C-10. Demonstrate an awareness of diversity of Jewish experience and expression and the ability to create Jewish experiences and community that honor and incorporate that diversity.

### ***Be a healing and helpful presence***

- D-1. Demonstrate skills and knowledge pertinent to the fields of counseling and pastoral care.
- D-2. Provide appropriate support, directions and referral in pastoral context.
- D-3. Communicate clear boundaries.
- D-4. Demonstrate the ability to facilitate difficult conversations, to cultivate community, and to guide communities into action.