

New Faculty

In Fall 2026, Yeshiva College welcomed two new faculty members: **David Sclar** (Jewish History) and **Shira Weiss** (Jewish Philosophy). **Levi Adelman** (Psychology), **Tzvi Benoff** (Jewish Studies), **Nam Chul Kim** (Biology), **Dov Lerner** (Jewish Studies) join the fulltime faculty at Stern College for Women. **Jung Yeon Lee** (Statistics) will be teaching at both campuses. **Fred Fontaine**, Director of Electrical & Computer Engineering Initiatives at Katz School of Science and Health, will also be teaching undergraduate courses.

Awards, Promotions, Retirements

Ed Berliner (Physics) was made a life member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

Charlotte Fiehn (English) completed an MFA at Lindenwood University in August and earned an LLB with First-Class Honours from The Open University (UK).

David Glaser (Music) has retired after 30 years teaching at Stern College for Women.

Shalom Holtz (Bible) has assumed the Denenberg Chair in Biblical Studies at Yeshiva College.

Michelle Levine (Bible) and **Marnin Young** (Art History) were both promoted to Full Professor at Stern.

Research

The Lavinda Lab at Stern, run by **Olga Lavinda** (Chemistry), recently received access to advanced national computing resources through the NSF-funded ACCESS program, as well as research support through Anthropic's AI for Science initiative, expanding the computational capabilities available for AI-enabled scientific investigation. The lab develops computational and AI-enabled approaches at the intersection of chemistry, biochemistry, and structural biology, with an emphasis on translating AI-generated molecular predictions into testable biochemical hypotheses. An important part of this work is AI literacy: training students to use emerging AI tools critically and responsibly and to evaluate their outputs against chemical and experimental evidence.



Presentations

Irina Catrina (Chemistry) presented a poster in July at the Post-Transcriptional Gene Regulation Gordon Research Conference in Portland, Maine. Her poster was titled “A study of RNA variant-specific localization in the fruit fly egg chamber.”

Gabriel Cwlich (Physics) was one of four invited speakers at the Symposium on System Approaches to Modern Transportation, in the context of the conference XLVI Dynamics Days Europe, in Lisbon, Portugal (July 2026). Cwlich is also a member of the planning committee of the 15th International Conference on Complex Networks and its applications, that will take place in Granada, Spain, in December 2026. In that same conference he will present the work, “Multi-Wave Cascading Failures in Spatial Networks: The Motter-Lai Model Applied to Traffic Jams,” (Nissim Farhy, Sergey V. Buldyrev and Gabriel Cwlich).

Rebecca Cypess presented the lecture “Susanna in the Ghetto: The Literary-Poetic Work of Devorà Ascarelli” at the conference “Jews, the Arts, and the Mediterranean, 1450–1750” at the Medici Archive, Florence, Italy, in June.

In July, **Charlotte Fiehn** (English) presented “Situating Weirdness in Elizabeth von Arnim’s *Vera* (1921) and *Introduction to Sally* (1926)” in the UK at the Weird Modernisms conference, jointly hosted by the British Association for Modernist Studies and the Modernist Studies Association. She will be presenting at the Jane Austen Society of North America (JASNA) Annual General Meeting in October and the North American Victorian Studies Association (NAVSA) conference in November.

Steven Fine (Jewish History) presented at two conferences. “Theology Covert and Overt: Christian, Jewish and Classicist Visions of Ancient Jewish Art,” was the keynote presentation at the Second Symposium Around Jewish Engagements with Antiquity, in Palermo, Italy, July 2026. He also presented “Communication between the Indian Ocean Region and Jewish Palestine in Roman Antiquity,” at the conference on “Maritime Connections: Jews across the Indian Ocean,” Jindal India Institute at the O.P. Jindal Global University, Delhi, India, February 16–18, 2026.



Marian Gidea (Math) gave an invited talk at the “New and Classical Trends in Celestial Mechanics” workshop, hosted by ITAM, Mexico City, (June 3–5, 2026); he also presented a recent work at the BIRS Workshop on “Hamiltonian Systems and Celestial Mechanics” in Oaxaca, Mexico (June 8–12, 2026), and he delivered a series of lectures on “Arnold Diffusion in Celestial Mechanics” at the CIME Summer School “New Challenges in Celestial Mechanics,” held in Cetraro, Italy, July 6–10, 2026. [Photo at right]



Elizabeth Goldman (Psychology) was a panelist for “Social Robots: What Does Responsible Education Leadership Look Like?” (available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YgDKb72D0go>). Check It Labs organized the panel, which featured educators, policymakers, and researchers who discussed how technology should be used in classrooms and other settings to support learning. At the Cognitive Development Society, she organized a pre-conference workshop entitled, “Children and Technology: Emerging Scholars, Emerging Methods, Emerging Directions.” This workshop brought together established researchers and emerging scholars to discuss innovative techniques for studying how children learn from and interact with technological devices. In May, Goldman presented “Do children believe robots have a Theory of Mind?” (co-authored with YC alum Harry Meister and SCW alum Miriam Sheinson), at the symposium on “Minds, Machines, and Learning: How Children Reason about and Learn from Social Robots” at the Annual Convention of the Association for Psychological Science.

On April 29, **Elyse Granik** (Speech Pathology and Audiology) and **Alyssa Schuck** (Biology) hosted “A Panel of Orthodox Jewish Women in Healthcare” for pre-health majors at Stern. The panel included psychiatrist Dr. Halana Rothbort, pediatric dentist Dr. Liraz Spear, medical speech-language pathologist Beatrice Nudelman, and nurse and healthcare administrator Hannah Bodenstein. They discussed work-life balance, religious observance and Jewish values at work, intercultural interactions, and antisemitism. About 40 students from various majors attended in Yagoda Commons and submitted questions in advance and during the event.



September 2026

Over the summer months, **Michelle Levine** (Bible) presented the following lectures in person and online to communities in Kew Gardens Hills and Holliswood: “Matan Torah and the Anticipation for the Coming of Mashiach;” “A Cry for the Generations: Tisha Be-Av and the Story of the Spies;” “Rosh Hashanah on Shabbat: Awakening the Heart to Teshuvah When the Shofar is Silent;” and “Neilah: A Closing Prayer or A New Beginning?”

In July, **Nechama Price** (Bible) presented at the Herzog Yom Iyun in Israel. She gave the opening lecture to the conference. The title of the lecture was “When the Torah Breaks Its Pattern: Hidden Messages in the Story of Nimrod.”

David Shatz (Philosophy) delivered a paper on February 17th titled “Maimonides On Proper Motivation” at a Vanderbilt University conference devoted to Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed*, and on March 24th he gave a lecture at Lincoln Square Synagogue titled “Adam One and Adam Two Revisited: Rabbi Soloveitchik and the New Technologies,” in memory of Shama Berman, son of Rabbi **Saul Berman** (Jewish Studies).

‘tine Slentz (English; photo right) is feature reader at The Persistence of Cormorants in Gowanus, Brooklyn, September 13, as well a host and organizer of [Adverse Abstraction](#); next reading is September 18 featuring Anthony Cappel, Nicolas Henderson, and Hannah Donigan.



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Publications

David Berger (Jewish History) published “The Validation and Assessment of Prophets in Jewish Polemic, Philosophy and Messianism,” *Religions* 2026, 17(7), 832. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel17070832>.

Anna-Lisa Cohen (Psychology) published “Reading fiction in early adolescence predicts the ability to imagine our own future” in the *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*. Her findings emphasize how important reading fiction is, especially in early adolescence, because it allows readers the opportunity to “practice” representing imagined scenarios that are very different from their day-to-day lives. The research found that those who read higher amounts of fiction in early adolescence had higher *cognitive flexibility* (the ability to generate alternatives) and higher *transportability* (the tendency to become immersed by stories) in the present day. Importantly, these two traits predicted higher levels of vividness associated with imagining and simulating the future. Critically, higher levels of vividness were associated with a higher sense of control over their future.

In 2026, **Steven Fine** (Jewish History) has three publications to his name: “The Jewish Tombstones of Zoar and the History of Judaism in *Late Antiquity*,” *Eretz Israel* 36 (2025): 17-31; ““A Mysterious Object that Cannot be Identified”: Incense Shovels in *Late Antique Palestinian Synagogues*,” in *Welcoming Visuality: New Studies in Jewish Art and Material Culture*, eds. V. Levin, S. Mintz (Boston: Brill, 2026), 477-504; and, “Menorah” (with Baruch-Lev Kelman), in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary Online*.

A CULTURAL HISTORY OF DEATH
IN THE AGE OF
ENLIGHTENMENT

Edited by Jeffrey Freedman



Originally part of a series of volumes, *A Cultural History of Death in the Age of Enlightenment*, edited by **Jeffrey Freedman** (History), has been released as a standalone volume by Bloomsbury Academic.

Elizabeth Goldman (Psychology) published two articles: “Do infants attribute false beliefs to a visible agent with no visible access?” *Cognitive Development* 79 (July–September 2026), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogdev.2026.101745>, and “Social Priming enhances young children’s trust in robots,” *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 273 (January 2027), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2026.106618>

Richard Hidary (Jewish History) published a new book: *Discovering the Jewish Holidays: Eight Talmudic Readings* (Maggid, 2026).

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Earlier this year, **Ariel Malka** (Psychology) published “The aspiration for scalable citizen-level interventions and the missing tests of countermessaging” (with J.N. Druckman), in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 123 (3) e2527948123, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2527948123>. His “Questionnaire democrats? Reconsidering the relevance of abstract democracy support in the American public” (with A. R. Panish), is forthcoming in *Political Behavior*.

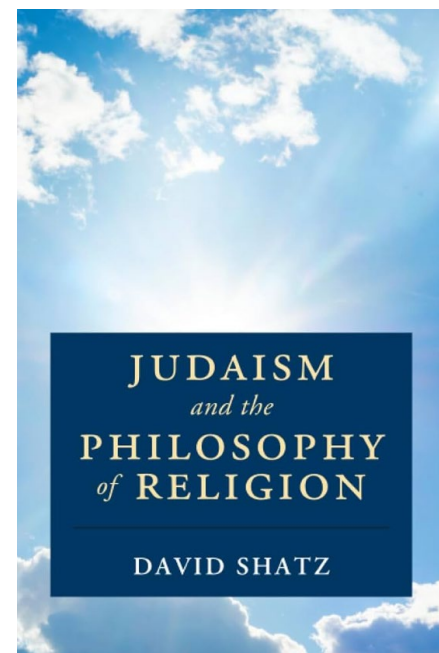
Nechama Price's book is being published by Koren Publishers. The title is *Villains of Genesis: The Struggle with Evil and Hope for Redemption*.

Global City Review will soon publish its newest issue, “Impermanence of Home.” Led by **David Poretz** (English), the journal's Editorial Director, this 26th issue explores the increasingly precarious nature of home in the twenty-first century. Its contributors consider how home may be lost, reshaped, or reimagined amid displacement, war, environmental crisis, economic uncertainty, technological change, grief, and the search for belonging. The issue brings together fiction, nonfiction, poetry, multimedia work, and visual art from twenty contributors, including acclaimed author Beth Kephart. It also features an interview conducted by Professor Poretz with a New York City school counselor who works with recently arrived immigrant students. Their conversation explores how undocumented youth navigate displacement, language, and belonging at a time of increasing uncertainty about their futures. Founded in 1993, *Global City Review* is a themed literary journal focused on community, culture, social experience, and the originality of ordinary lives. The new issue will be available at globalcitypress.com.

David Shatz (Philosophy) published *Judaism and The Philosophy of Religion* with Cambridge University Press. The book attempts to integrate Jewish thought with “analytic” philosophy, using Jewish tradition to engage major issues and literature in general philosophy of religion. During one recent period the book ranked near the top of Amazon sales in Jewish philosophy.

'tine Slentz (English) signed numerous publications this year: an introduction to *Thirty West Publishing House Best Poetry in 10 Years*; “Places and Spaces to Share,” in *The Embodied Writer: Breathing Life into Creative Writing*; interviews and an essay in *Tupelo Quarterly*; “Ode to the Hot Dog,” in *The Saturday Evening Post*; and “Bag of Bagels & Blueberries” in *Queens Review*.

“UBA2-mediated sumoylation is required for both spermatocyte and Sertoli cell functions during mouse spermatogenesis,” an article by **Margarita Vigodner** (Biology) and her research group (Sayanto Subrato Pal, Benjamin Lucas, Rupali Khane, Aliza Balsam, Yael Polotsky, Rui Wang, Hayden McSwiggin, and Wei Yan), appeared in *Andrology* (19 August 2026), <https://doi.org/10.1111/andr.70362>



September 2026

In June 2026, **Jacob Wisse** (Art History) began writing an online column, “The Seeing Eye,” exploring the relationship between visual art and the Jewish tradition. “The Seeing Eye” is published monthly by Tikvah’s Mosaic Magazine (<https://ideas.tikvah.org/mosaic>), one of four new columns that address in distinct ways the intellectual encounter of Jewish civilization with the wider world. In anticipation of Rosh Hashanah, Jacob’s latest column, published on August 17, focuses on a key sculptural competition around the subject of the *Akeidah* (Binding of Isaac), which took place in Florence, Italy, in 1400, at the very beginning of the Renaissance (<https://ideas.tikvah.org/mosaic/columns/the-seeing-eye>). He has also been awarded a Fellowship Grant by the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture for 2026-2027 to work toward the publication of a book on *The Artistic Legacy of the Hebrew Bible*, which will explore the vital and transformative role of the Hebrew Bible in the history of art and visual culture.



Sacrifice of Isaac by Brunelleschi (Left) and Ghiberti (Right), 1401–02. Bronze, gilding, each 53.3 x 43.2 cm. (Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence).

Performances

In August, with soprano Sonya Headlam, **Rebecca Cypess** premiered the song cycle *Reflections* by New Jersey-based composer Trevor Weston. The cycle consists of settings of six texts drawn from letters by the eighteenth-century Black British composer Ignatius Sancho. The performance featured an original 1780 English square piano and was livestreamed as part of the American Musicological Society’s “Many Musics of America” series.

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Field Trips

On March 25, students in **Paul Glassman's** (Art) "Cultures of Modern Architecture" course visited two designated New York City landmarks on Park Avenue: [Lever House](#), designed by Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill in 1952, and the [Seagram Building](#), designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and completed in 1958. They discussed the materials and structure of both buildings; how they incorporated post-war technologies, both structural and systemic (e.g., central cooling); and how they shaped public spaces at street level. They ended in the atrium of Park Avenue Plaza (photograph below), a [privately owned public space](#) (POPS), and discussed the incentive zoning practice that enabled its creation.



Students in "Cultures of Modern Architecture" after discussing privately owned public spaces (POPS) at the Park Avenue Plaza atrium. (L-R): Henry Wildes, Simon Bitton, Ezzie Douek, Yaakov Beyda, Amittai Najman-Licht, Gabriel Esraeilian, Hillel Jacobson, Daniel Engelsohn, and Noam Verschleiser.



As part of her course on New York Architecture and Urban Design, **Aviva Novick** (Art History) and her students visited Grand Central Terminal to explore its Beaux-Arts style and its place in the City Beautiful movement. One hallmark of Beaux-Arts architecture is its “architecture parlante” — the idea that a building should tell its own story through its design. Grand Central does exactly that: commissioned by the Vanderbilt family, the terminal is threaded with their emblem, the acorn and oak leaf, worked into its walls, carvings, and light fixtures. Look closely as you move through the space, and you’ll start spotting acorns everywhere.



On April 17, **Maria Zaitseva** (Political Science) took a group of YC and Stern students to tour the UN Headquarters. (photo at right) After the official tour they met with a couple of reps from the Israeli Mission to the UN. They spoke about their work and the challenges they face representing Israel. They also gifted the students with copies of Ambassador Danny Danon’s book “In the Lion’s Den: Israel and the World.” The hope is to make this trip an annual event for students in the spring.



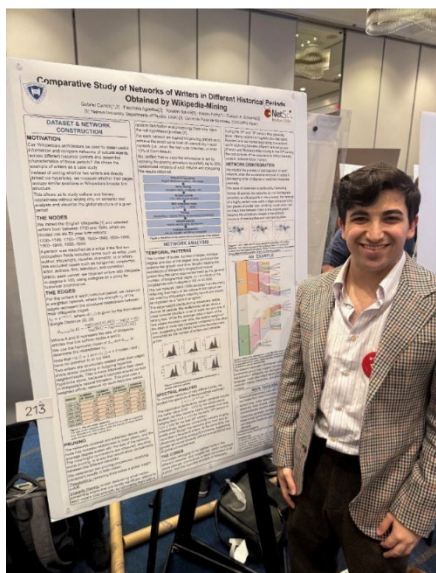
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Maria Zaitseva with students at the United Nations.



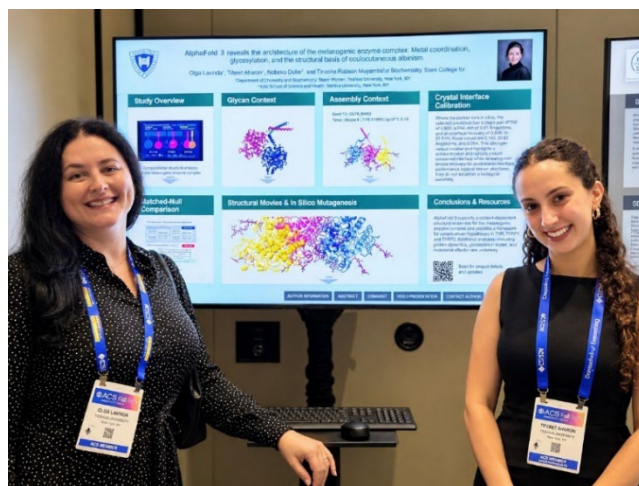
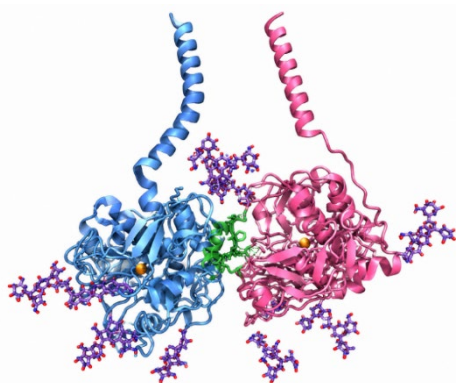
Student Research



In June, **Gabriel Cwilich** (Physics), together with the YC undergraduate student Nissim Farhy, presented their work “Comparative study of networks of writers in different historical periods obtained by Wikipedia-mining” (G. Cwilich, P. Agapitos, Y. Spivak, N. Farhy and G. Schwartz), at the annual conference of the Network Society, NetSCI 26, Boston. [photo at left]

Marian Gidea's (Math) PhD student, Arya Dutta, presented both a poster and a talk at the CIME Summer School “New Challenges in Celestial Mechanics,” held in Cetraro, Italy, July 6–10, 2026. He also gave a talk at the Mathematics Webinar “Mathematical Modeling in Solar System Dynamics,” organized by Edward Belbruno, on August 14.

This summer, Stern student researcher Tiferet Aharon presented work from the lab of **Olga Lavinda** (Chemistry) at ACS Fall 2026 in Chicago on the AlphaFold 3-predicted architecture of the human melanogenic enzyme complex. The work was also featured in an ACS Committee on Science Innovative Program on deep-learning co-folding and physics-based modeling. Tiferet received an ACS Bridge Travel & Professional Development Award supporting her participation in the meeting.



Olga Lavinda and Tiferet Aharon (above).

AlphaFold 3 model of interacting proteins in the human melanogenic enzyme complex, including predicted glycosylation (left).

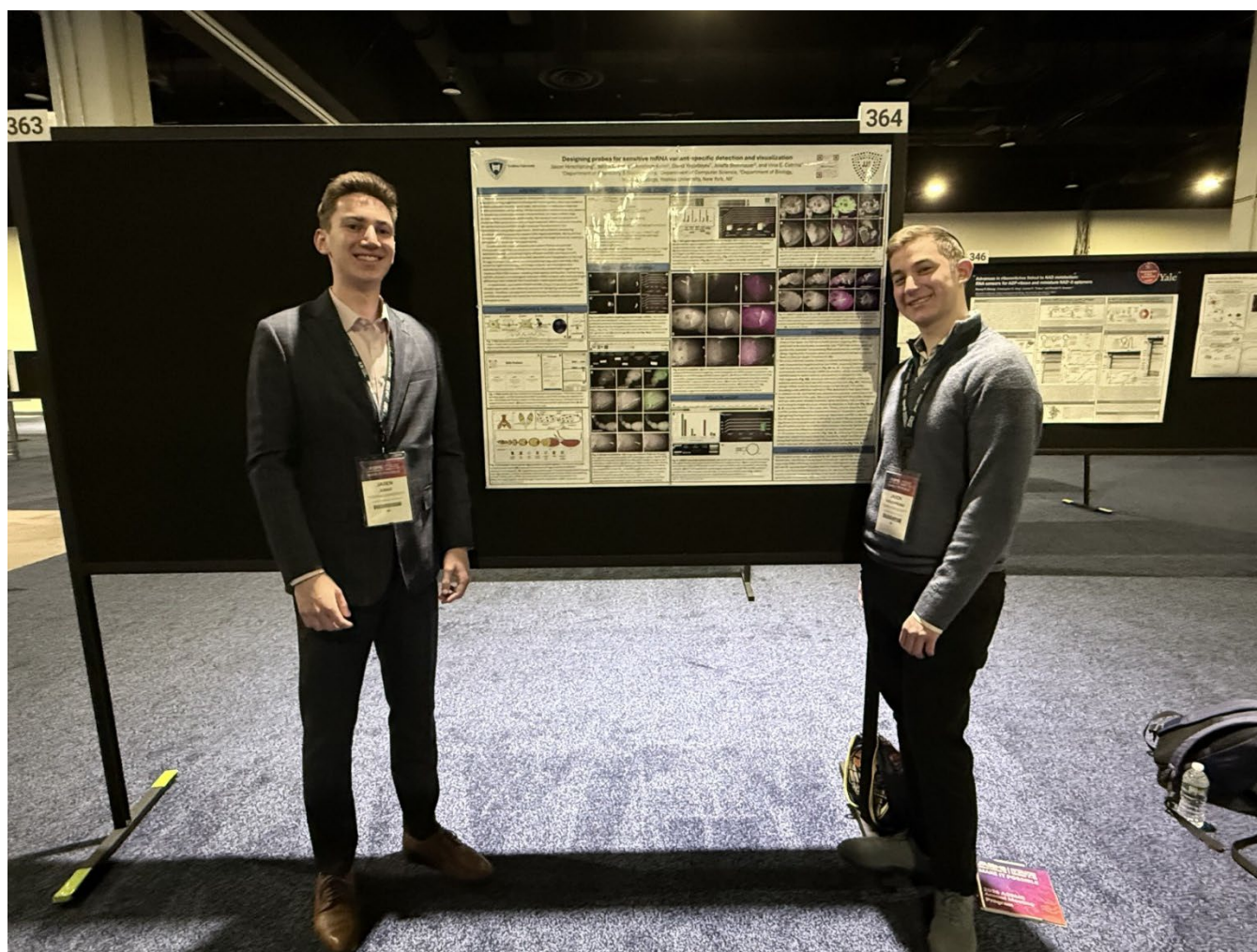


Tiferet Aharon, Olga Lavinda, and Ava Goldberg.

Stern student Ava Goldberg, an undergraduate researcher in **Ran Drori's** (Chemistry) lab, also presented research on ice crystal formation during beef freezing at ACS Fall 2026, with support from the Kressel Scholar Travel Fund.

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Jason Hirschprung and Jaden Jubas presented a poster (“Designing probes for sensitive mRNA variant-specific detection and visualization”) at the 2026 American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology held in March of 2026 in Washington, D.C. This highlighted their Honor Thesis work performed in collaboration with **Josefa Steinhauer** (Biology), which Jaden completed in January 2026 and Jason continues to work on it. (Hirschprung is the Bertha Kressel Research Scholar for 2026-2027).

