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Education

Training The Next Fundraisers

YU inaugurates a Jewish philanthropy certificate program.

Jewish philanthropy is changing rapidly these days, as a new generation of givers charts a course away from the old centralized model of years past. Reacting to the changes, Yeshiva University's Wurzweiler School of Social Work is inaugurating this month a Certificate Program in Jewish Philanthropy, the first of its kind at the school.

We asked Saul Andron, the Hausman Chair in Communal Social Work at Wurzweiler about the new program and about Jewish philanthropy more broadly. The interview was conducted via email.

What was the thinking behind offering this program?

There is an acute shortage today of skilled, knowledgeable and committed fundraisers for Jewish nonprofit organizations. The goal of the program is to grow the pipeline of trained fundraisers to sustain and grow the work of the Jewish nonprofit sector. It provides an educational platform consisting of a formal classroom setting, experiential role-playing and simulation and a strong mentoring component to prepare the next generation of effective fundraisers.

How do you describe the changes taking place in the way philanthropists give?

Philanthropy has become increasingly donor-centric, which means fundraisers must address the needs, interests, priorities and aspirations of prospects and donors, in contrast to previous generations where agency needs and priorities took center stage. The chal-



Saul Andron: *The Jewish community has an "acute shortage of skilled fundraisers."*

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lenge of fundraising is to identify shared values between the donor and the agency and its causes, thereby developing a partnership of interests. Donors today are also more strategic in their giving approach, placing greater emphasis on results-driven, measurable objectives and more hands-on involvement.

Part of the program involves learning about women's philanthropy. Do women tend to give differently than men?

Women are prominent players in philanthropy and fundraising in the Jewish community, assuming major roles as principals and senior professionals at foundations, federations, synagogues, a range of Jewish legacy organizations and start up ventures. Like their male counterparts, they place a strong emphasis on results-driven philanthropy and hands-on involvement with recipients of funds. They play prominent roles in giving circles and other donor-centered giving vehicles that address challenges and needs of particular interest and

concern to women.

In the age of Pew and decreasing Jewish attachments, are there ways to increase the donor base?

Jewish philanthropy has become increasingly focused on major gifts development. Many fundraising campaigns today are characterized by the 80/20 rule: 80 percent of the funds are raised from 20 percent of the donors. Indeed, many capital and other special gift campaigns are even closer to a 90/10 percentage breakdown.

However, the Internet has opened up new and creative fundraising opportunities to reach both traditional donors and new generations of Jews across the religious spectrum and levels of engagement seeking meaningful ways to get involved in Jewish life. Social media is a portal of entry for increasing numbers of marginally engaged and connected Jews to Jewish causes that offer personal meaning and purpose. It has exploded as a vehicle to raise money.

What's the best pitch you've ever heard about why people should give Jewishly?

My father, of blessed memory, used to tell me classic UJA stories of intensive fundraising caucuses where the old-school UJA fundraiser would berate his group to give until it hurts. My father countered in his own fundraising pitch that one should give until it feels good — like one has done his share to strengthen the Jewish community and sustain vibrant Jewish life. ■

Robert Goldblum

