

Yeshiva University Strategic Plan

August 10, 2023

Introduction

Yeshiva's new strategic plan offers guidance, provides direction, and maps the way forward for the University for the period 2022-2026, within the enduring framework of its steadfast purposes, principles, and values.

Vision and Identity

Yeshiva is the flagship Jewish university. Rooted in core Torah values and an educational philosophy of Torah u-Madda that prioritizes Torah while simultaneously recognizing the religious value of worldly wisdom, Yeshiva has been committed to training the next generation of Jews in its Orthodox teachings for over 130 years.

An unshakeable unity of vision and values emanates from all of Yeshiva's schools, across all their differences and in all their diversity. Yeshiva's values, rooted in the Torah, have a universal application; the University's reach is global, and its work is holy. So it is that Yeshiva rises as the flagship Jewish university—the center for Torah learning and Jewish intellectual life, the steward of Jewish wisdom, the convener of essential conversations, the leading academic voice for the Jewish people, the magnifier of Judaism's impact on the world. Yeshiva's strength and promise live in its core identity as one Yeshiva, one university, one idea—the flagship Jewish university that enlightens and inspires, providing global leadership to all of humanity and ensuring the vitality of the Jewish people. Yeshiva's world-class faculty educates the leaders of tomorrow, and its students receive the gift of unwavering support from its alumni network and find fulfillment and success in exceptional careers.

Like the University it supports and the community it celebrates, this new strategic plan is at once deeply rooted and forward focused. It reflects both the vision and aspirations of Yeshiva's leaders and the insights and ideas of the University's community of faculty, staff, and students. Like the University itself, this plan stands firmly on the strong foundation of Jewish thought and reaches out not only to advance the Jewish people, but also to serve society through the cultivation of humanity, the creation of knowledge, and the elevation of

truth, justice, and prosperity. Proposals for new or expanded academic programs have their origins in existing areas of distinction, but welcome innovation and embrace the demands of changing markets and emerging careers. Goals that work to enrich the student experience and promote retention hold closely the distinguishing features of a Yeshiva education, while accepting the challenge of responding to changes in students' perceptions, priorities, and purposes. Yeshiva embraces, and teaches, both history and opportunity. It elevates; it rises.

As students move from their formative years to Yeshiva's professional graduate schools, there is a shift in focus towards professional training and academic research. These schools, comprising a diverse student population, excel in their scholarship and education of excellent professionals in their respective fields. These schools also embody Yeshiva's core values to "Seek Truth, Discover Your Potential, Live Your Values, Act with Compassion and Bring Redemption," in their respective learning communities. They also follow a Jewish calendar and maintain kosher standards to facilitate an accessible experience to our Orthodox Jewish students. But the focus is wholly different and so are the assumptions of student life.

Process: Developing the Plan

Strategic Directions: Yeshiva's previous strategic plan ("Pathways to Our Future") provided guidance for the period 2016-2020. Beginning with the University's new administration, the president worked closely with members of the Board of Trustees, key lay leaders, and the President's Initiative Council to formulate renewed strategic directions—character (values and leadership), mindset (entrepreneurship and innovation), skillset (emphasizing science, technology, data, and data analytics), and outcomes (good jobs and impactful careers). Four strategy groups amplified thinking and planning in the areas of focus and emphasis that constituted those strategic directions. Throughout the schools, deans convened working groups of students, faculty, and staff to engage them in discussions about school-based strategic directions and goals. This substantial and diverse group of roots informed and enriched an ongoing planning process focused on areas such as new academic programs, curricular innovation and the Innovation Lab, science and technology, and entrepreneurship. Potential opportunities identified through that process also included pathway programs linking baccalaureate and master's studies, joint baccalaureate and master's programs, international partnerships (including with Israel), and improvements in online delivery options, the Graduate Program in Advanced Talmudic Studies for Women (GPATS), and the Career Center.

Vision, Distinction, and Values: Early in 2021, the president, provost, and deans began to shape the ideas arising from the preceding conversations into the initial elements of a strategic plan—clarifying the University’s vision, identifying areas of distinction, formulating draft goals that would bring that vision to life, and linking key elements of the emerging plan to philanthropic opportunities. The aspirations and commitments inherent in the “5/4/3/2/1” framework (as explicated herein: five Torot, four strategic priorities, three funding platforms, two key qualities of the University experience, and one university) provided guidance and illumination to support diligence, creativity, and innovation in the planning process.

Priority-Setting by Deans and Working Groups: Analytical work and initial goal-setting by the deans of the undergraduate and graduate schools occupied early summer 2021; in parallel, ten topical working groups chaired by undergraduate deans and their colleagues and comprised of faculty, staff, and students addressed areas of common and high priority interest reflecting the four areas of strategic priority identified earlier, such as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education, the health sciences, and expanded, facilitated pathways from undergraduate to graduate programs. Each of the graduate and professional deans prepared presentations highlighting the most important, pivotal, and inspiring strategic priorities for their schools, with projected major capital requirements, during late spring and summer 2021; at the same time, the ten working groups developed presentations identifying strategic priorities in those core areas.

Draft Strategic Plan: Later in summer 2021, the provost, working with a strategic planning consultant, convened a series of extended and in-depth leadership discussions among the deans, working group chairs, and their colleagues to connect and intercalate their aspirations and ideas with the president’s vision, share their concerns and goals with one another, and formulate a pathway forward for the University in the light of its overarching commitments and values. The president convened groups of undergraduate, graduate, and professional deans, the provost, and the consultant to discuss the University’s identity, vision, and values and to explore how the application of those universal values can guide Yeshiva’s strategy—and later, to review draft versions of the emerging strategic plan. The president shared and discussed successive drafts of the plan with members of the Board of Trustees and brought their perspectives into subsequent revisions.

Implementation Planning: The process of implementation planning, through which the goals and objectives in the strategic plan are translated into specific, time-bound action steps linked to resource and funding requirements, began with a full day retreat for Yeshiva’s senior leadership and deans in March 2022. Using a customized implementation

planning spreadsheet, the deans then prepared and submitted draft implementation templates for each school; these templates catalogued the activities that each dean and school would undertake in support of the objectives in the strategic plan. During mid- and late summer 2022, the provost and strategic planning consultants inventoried, integrated, and assessed the templates; worked with the deans to ensure the completeness of their submissions, and prepared an overall university-wide implementation plan incorporating the guidance of institutional finance and operations officers.

The Flagship Jewish University

The Flagship Jewish University is the organizing principle for the strategic plan. There are winds—even storms—of change, disruption, and opportunity in society and throughout higher education; the deans and working groups explored how Yeshiva will thrive in those conditions through creative thinking and planning, by anticipating and responding to greater demand in key fields and disciplines, and by preparing graduates for careers not yet fully developed—or just barely imagined. The new strategic plan constitutes a flourishing and coherent synthesis of all of those ideas, embedded within and drawing sustenance from Yeshiva’s identity as the flagship Jewish university.

Values

Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman, the University’s fifth president, began his tenure in June 2017; in his investiture speech, he proclaimed that the University was, above all, an *idea*, and identified five Torot that differentiate Yeshiva, explain the idea that it embodies, and define its values: Torat Emet, Torat Chayyim, Torat Adam, Torat Chesed and Torat Tziyyon – Truth, Life, Infinite Human Worth, Compassion, and Redemption. Those five values form the framework for the flagship Jewish university and the four strategic priorities described earlier; they inhabit every aspect of this strategic plan. As Rabbi Berman said at his investiture, “They root us deeply within a structured value system while providing moral guidance and direction in living our lives. They propel us to develop our talents and skills while directing us to reach outwards and connect to others in kindness. And they inspire us with a grand, historic purpose to make a difference, and impact the world.” These are broadly inclusive human values applicable throughout society and across the ages. Among them, Yeshiva’s deans underscore the critical importance of the search for truth through teaching, service, and scholarship.

But what differentiates Yeshiva is not just naming, claiming allegiance to, or teaching the five Torah values, nor even the ways in which they influence the University's work and articulate its priorities—though all of that is both important and true. What matters most is that the five Torah are the source of Yeshiva's strength, the adhesive that holds the University and its community together, and the substance of the gift it makes to every one of its students.

Foundations

The first six goals constitute the foundation for the flagship Jewish university; five additional goals advance the University's strategic priorities. *The sequence, or order, of presentation of the goals does not indicate their priority; each of the goals is essential to the University's strategy.*

Goal 1: Academic Quality and Reputation

Advance the quality, reputation, and visibility of the University and all its schools and academic programs.

Objectives:

1. Continuously invest in and elevate the quality and distinctiveness of Yeshiva's undergraduate and graduate academic programs, including through academic and pedagogical innovations, interdisciplinary collaboration, and exceptional faculty.
2. Modernize Yeshiva's academic facilities.
3. Elevate the role of Yeshiva University Libraries in supporting discovery, innovation, and interdisciplinary information exchange to advance scholarship, academic dialogue, and collaboration among students and faculty across the University,
4. In recruitment, marketing, and branding efforts, reframe and renew the image of Yeshiva as a world-class institution with unique and distinctive academic programs and exceptional student outcomes.
5. Highlight Yeshiva's values to improve the visibility, strengthen the brand, and elevate the reputation of the University and each of its schools.

Goal 2: Administrative, Financial, and Operational Excellence

Achieve administrative, financial, and operational excellence across the University.

Objectives

1. Create and implement a sustainable business model through which Yeshiva can grow and thrive as the Flagship Jewish University.
2. Ensure that the administration, capacity, staffing, services, and functioning of YU's infrastructure, business functions, and operations are aligned with growth in enrollment, the requirements of new or changed programs, and the organizational, facilities, and equipment needs of both academic and co-curricular programs and services.
3. Support the professional development and advancement of all members of the University's staff.
4. Support new online educational programs to increase revenue and expand the student population.

Goal 3: Student Experience and Success

Promote and support the success of both undergraduate and graduate students during and after their engagement with the University's academic and co-curricular programs.

Objectives

1. Enrich and enliven the undergraduate student experience to create an environment of Torah values, responsiveness, comfort, engagement, caring, and belonging to increase student satisfaction, enhance learning, and raise rates of retention and graduation.
2. Prepare students in every academic program to think critically, solve problems skillfully, understand life in its complexity, and engage in meaningful, satisfying, rewarding, and purposeful careers.
3. Generalize a focus on student success across the University, making it the shared responsibility of all members of the faculty and staff—especially, but not only,

student-facing staff.

4. Inaugurate a discipline-specific career advising model, partnering assigned career advisors with designated faculty and alumni, to advance to Yeshiva's retention, completion, and pathway pipeline goals.
5. Sharpen the focus on and make investments in the quality of the graduate student experience, including in career services, throughout the institution.
6. Modernize and upgrade residence halls and athletic facilities.

Goal 4: One YU

Through joint programs, research projects, and faculty appointments, promote interdisciplinary and inter-professional collaboration to better integrate academic programs and strengthen Yeshiva as one University.

Objectives

1. Prioritize collaboration across graduate schools, including joint programs and research projects as well as shared faculty positions, cluster hiring of faculty across schools, teaching and research space, and equipment.
2. Create innovative, interdisciplinary, and dual- and parallel degree programs that will excite the interest of students and their families.
3. Create closer engagement of the graduate schools with the University's undergraduate programs, through shared courses, pathways, faculty, facilities, and resources.

Goal 5: The Jewish People Project

Focus the attention and resources of Yeshiva's schools on the most important social, cultural, and human needs of the Jewish people, marshaling the unique capacities of all

the schools in the service of the health, well-being, and flourishing of Jewish communities.

Objectives

1. Across all the schools, support research, scholarship, and teaching intended to confront, challenge, and undermine antisemitic attitudes, entities, and behaviors.
2. Strengthen and advance Yeshiva's unique centers, including the recently established Fish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought, the Rabbi Arthur Schneier Program for International Affairs, the Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks-Herenstein Center for Values and Leadership, and the Center for Israel Studies.
3. In the teaching and research activities of Yeshiva's undergraduate and graduate health sciences programs, emphasize the health-related challenges that are unique or particular to Jewish people.
4. Provide thought leadership, partnerships, and programs to advance Yeshiva as a national and global resource for the Jewish people.
5. Encourage a deeper understanding of Jewish life, the past and living heritage of the Jewish people, and Jewish art and material culture through the collections and experiential learning activities of the Yeshiva University Museum.

Goal 6: Israel

Elevate Yeshiva's commitments to and relationships with Israel, and embed Israel in the University's academic and co-curricular programs.

Objectives

1. Help Yeshiva students develop the skillset needed to integrate into Israeli society and culture.

2. Better integrate Israel into Yeshiva University in the US—bringing Israeli professors to study and teach at the University, including Israeli scholars and researchers in the Innovation Lab, and welcoming Israeli entrepreneurs, artists, and creators to Yeshiva’s campus.
3. Strengthen Yeshiva’s alumni network in Israel to better enable the University’s graduates to access rewarding and meaningful career opportunities.
4. Expand the portfolio of learning experiences in Israel for Yeshiva’s students, including by developing and implementing programs to provide more options for undergraduate and graduate students to study in Israel.

Strategic Priorities

Goal 7: Skillset—Science, Technology, Health Sciences, and Data Analytics

Support new or expanded programs in STEM, health sciences, and data analytics across undergraduate and graduate schools so that every Yeshiva student acquires the basic skillset needed for success today.

Objectives

1. Broaden Yeshiva’s portfolio of undergraduate and graduate STEM programs, and create new academic opportunities in health sciences, data analytics, and other areas aligned with social, economic, and disciplinary priorities.
2. Expand research support for faculty in STEM, health sciences, data analytics, and other emerging disciplines and fields.
3. Prepare students throughout undergraduate and graduate health sciences programs for inter-professional practice, care, and services.

Goal 8: YU Going Global

Yeshiva University will gain market share of new consumers through affordable, customizable educational products that keep pace with the emerging global economy.

1. Create new programs and explore new markets to increase revenue and expand the student population.
2. University will gain market share of new consumers through affordable, customizable educational products that keep pace with the emerging global economy.
3. Yeshiva University will identify the needs around the development of appropriate infrastructure to support the delivery of programs and will Yeshiva assist the university in the appropriate build of software, hardware, and staffing.

Goal 9: Mindset— Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Encourage, support, and promote distinguished, innovative, and entrepreneurial research, scholarship, and creative work among all members of Yeshiva’s student body and among faculty and staff throughout the undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools.

Objectives

1. Prioritize learning the mindset and skills of innovation and entrepreneurship in the curriculum and co-curricular experiences for students across all of Yeshiva’s academic programs.
2. Through v 2.0 of the “Innovation Lab,” develop ways (including founder boot camps, entrepreneurial marketing, and investor relations) to support start-up ventures by alumni, students, or members of the broader community.

Goal 10: Outcomes—Great Jobs and Impactful Careers

Through both academic and co-curricular programs, ensure that graduates of Yeshiva's undergraduate and graduate schools are well prepared for meaningful and successful careers.

Objectives

1. Integrate in Yeshiva's undergraduate and graduate programs exceptional career development, preparation, facilitation, and placement services for students.
2. Further develop and increase enrollment in signature, high-impact graduate programs that respond to students' changing purposes and interests, answer the demands of the marketplace, and prepare students for rewarding and meaningful careers—especially in STEM, data analytics, and health sciences and healthcare.

Goal 11: Character—Values and Leadership

Foster and sustain an institutional culture rooted in and framed by Yeshiva's values, oriented toward leadership development, and sustained and elevated in the University's graduate and undergraduate schools and programs.

Objectives

1. Ensure that Yeshiva's universal values, rooted in the Torah, are fully understood, consistently practiced, and intentionally sustained across the University, and that they are communicated as the foundation of the University's identity.
2. Provide distinctive leadership development and training experiences that respond to and reinforce Yeshiva's values.
3. Sustain, diversify, and strengthen Yeshiva's distinctive, values-based undergraduate programs—stabilizing traditional enrollments while broadening the University's undergraduate offerings and attracting new groups and categories of students.