



American
Jewish
University

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15600 Mulholland Drive
Bel Air, California 90077
(310) 476-9777

Contact: Joanna Gerber, Vice President of Marketing & Communications

Email: jgerber@aju.edu

Phone: (310) 440-1529 | Mobile: (805) 729-1823.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

American Jewish University Announces Pause of Undergraduate Admissions

Los Angeles, CA – October 5, 2018 – American Jewish University (AJU) today announced its decision to pause undergraduate admissions and sunset the current undergraduate curriculum. Simultaneously, it will establish a working group to explore and design exciting academic initiatives based on best practices that will take advantage of the dynamism of its Los Angeles location, and the university’s ethical and moral foundations.

The university will cease recruiting for its undergraduate program effective immediately but is committed to ensuring that the roughly 70 active students in the current undergraduate program are able to continue and complete their studies at AJU.

“Our students come first, and we have notified them of these plans,” said Dr. Jeffrey Herbst, President of AJU. “Over the next few days we will be holding open forums to address the questions they have and have appointed an academic affairs liaison to provide ongoing support for these students.”

No other divisions within the university, including other academic programs such as the Ziegler School for Rabbinic Studies, Graduate Center for Jewish Education, or Graduate School of Nonprofit Management, will be affected by this change. The university continues to be accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC).

“A vibrant 21st century university is an entity that provides educational and cultural resources to a wide range of individuals in the communities it serves on a year-round basis. While undergraduate education is a core element for most universities, it is not the only element,” said President Herbst. “For decades, AJU has committed itself to serve its communities through diverse offerings for all ages – from children through our retirees - but has never been able to grow the undergraduate program to a size where it can provide a deep and broad educational experience. As a result, we have made this difficult decision to pause current undergraduate programming, but plan on using this opportunity to examine how best we can serve the young adult population looking for a unique academic and cultural experience.”

Since he became president of AJU in July 2018, President Herbst has spent substantial time reviewing the university’s unique offerings, and taking a close look at undergraduate programming became a top priority. He is in the process of appointing a working group to explore exciting, thoughtful programming that leverages the latest thinking in educational practice and academic innovation.

“As an educator, the chance to devise a new undergraduate program from a blank page is a once-in-a-career opportunity,” said Herbst. “My colleagues and I are excited about the prospect of developing a cutting-edge program that takes advantage of new technology and pedagogy in academics, and we view this opportunity as a unique chance for a university to fully engage in fresh thinking regarding undergraduate education.”

American Jewish University, which is healthy financially, provides a myriad of other programming for the Greater Los Angeles Jewish community and people of all ages and backgrounds through its two campuses in Bel-Air and Simi Valley. Founded in 1947, AJU offers extensive programming ranging from continuing education, arts and cultural events, a rabbinic school, graduate programs, outdoor experiential learning programs and summer camps.

“The issue of maintaining one of the smallest undergraduate programs in the country has been a concern for many years. After numerous efforts to shift programming, enhance marketing and grow enrollment, we have determined that pausing the current undergraduate program is the best alternative, but we are extremely excited about using the opportunity to investigate and design new academic offerings,” Herbst concluded.

The university’s Board of Trustees met earlier this week to review and approve the plan to pause admissions and sunset the current undergraduate program. There will be no faculty lay-offs associated with this action.

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American Jewish University (founded in 1947) is a thriving center of Jewish life, built upon the mission of Jewish learning, culture, ethics, leadership and peoplehood. In 2007, the University of Judaism merged with the Brandeis-Bardin Institute, creating a landmark entity - American Jewish University (AJU). With two campuses (in Bel-Air, California and Brandeis, California) AJU is now one of the largest Jewish institutions in the world. Offering abundant community programming, degree programs and learning experiences, American Jewish University continues to create a distinctive learning environment in which we nurture innovation, incubate new ideas and integrate socially-just values into community life. Learn more at www.aju.edu.

For more information, contact: Joanna Gerber, Vice President of Marketing & Communications at jgerber@aju.edu.