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AEN INVESTS IN KALANIYOT TO COUNTER BDS AND DEEPEN U.S. TIES WITH ISRAELI SCHOLARS

Calls on more support for an exciting new faculty-led national initiative that advances U.S.-Israel academic exchange and helps build welcoming and inclusive campus communities

WASHINGTON, DC (January 27, 2026) – The Academic Engagement Network (AEN) today announced it has made a significant investment in the [Kalaniyot Foundation](#) – a nonpartisan national organization supporting faculty-led initiatives that bring Israeli researchers to U.S. universities for sabbaticals and visiting fellowships. The participating Israeli academics include senior scholars as well as early-career academics who will benefit from a network of scholars and mentors. The project aims to deepen U.S. academic ties with Israeli scholars, strengthen university communities, and reaffirm American campuses as welcoming places for students and scholars of all backgrounds, including Jews and Israelis. It sends a strong message of collaboration between U.S. and Israeli scholars, who are [increasingly facing boycotts and isolation](#).

As part of this investment, AEN is urging philanthropists committed to combating campus antisemitism and anti-Israel hostility and boycotts to join in supporting Kalaniyot's faculty-driven work that bridges academic divides and defends higher education's core missions: advancing knowledge and furthering inclusion and understanding.

Kalaniyot was co-founded by Ernest Fraenkel and Or Hen, MIT professors who are also members of AEN, and had the opportunity to further develop their project during an AEN-facilitated faculty mission to Israel in March 2024. On this trip, Fraenkel and Hen, along with other faculty from MIT, met with Israeli university leaders and researchers, President Isaac Herzog, and then U.S. Ambassador Jack Lew, gaining insight into the challenges faced by Israeli academics after October 7. Disheartened by what they heard from their Israeli colleagues, Fraenkel and Hen worked to inaugurate the first Kalaniyot chapter on their campus to reverse these trends. They then embarked on an ambitious project to assist faculty nationwide in launching similar chapters at their schools.

Today, in addition to MIT, there are active Kalaniyot chapters at [Dartmouth](#), [Harvard Medical School](#), [Columbia](#), Cornell, University of Pennsylvania, and University of Southern California, with expansions underway at additional campuses across the country. Many of these Kalaniyot chapters have been founded and are being led by faculty who are longtime members of AEN.

“AEN is deeply committed to fostering academic exchange and building communities where Jewish and Israeli voices are heard and valued,” **said Miriam Elman, Executive Director of AEN**. “Our investment in Kalaniyot reflects our belief that faculty leadership is key to creating vibrant and robust learning communities that welcome diverse perspectives. We strongly urge others to join us in supporting Kalaniyot’s important work so that the American academy remains a place of openness, U.S.-Israel academic collaboration, and intellectual excellence.”

AEN will be investing \$25,000 in Kalaniyot over three years to further strengthen U.S.-Israel university partnerships and foster academic collaboration, thereby hindering the goals of the divisive and discriminatory BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) movement. Funds will be used to grow the capacity and reach of the initiative, including by producing and distributing new marketing materials featuring the work of various Kalaniyot chapters and hosting several conferences that will bring Kalaniyot scholars together with community leaders and other campus organizations.

AEN supports nearly 1,500 faculty members on over 350 campuses nationwide who combat antisemitism, promote academic freedom, and advance education about Israel. Its [Faculty Against Antisemitism Movement](#) (FAAM), launched after October 7, empowers AEN faculty members, as well as other academics who choose to get involved, to stand against antisemitism, the denigration of Jewish and Zionist identity, and anti-Israel bias on their campuses and to collectively urge university leaders to take appropriate action. More than 25,000 faculty nationwide have become active in FAAM over the last year.

AEN members across the country have founded [groups](#) to publicly speak out against antisemitism and anti-Israel bias, to mentor students, advise university administrators, and host educational programming. Examples include: [UCLA’s Jewish Faculty Resilience Group](#); [UIUC’s Faculty for Academic Freedom and Against Antisemitism](#); [Columbia’s Jewish Faculty and Staff Supporting Israel](#); [George Washington University Faculty and Staff Against Antisemitism and Hate](#); [California State University at Northridge’s Matadors Against Antisemitism](#); [the University of Cincinnati’s Israel Initiative Committee](#), and [Indiana University’s Faculty and Staff for Israel](#).

AEN faculty members at UPenn, UCLA, Yale, Harvard, Stanford, Dartmouth, UC Berkeley, the University of Cincinnati, and MIT have also organized faculty solidarity and educational missions to Israel. By networking faculty and sharing materials and best practices, AEN hopes to empower many more of these faculty groups and missions to sprout up across the country.

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AEN is a national organization that mobilizes networks of university faculty and administrators to counter antisemitism, oppose the denigration of Jewish and Zionist identities, promote academic freedom, and advance education about Israel. More at <https://academicengagement.org/> and <https://www.facultyagainstantisemitism.org/>.