



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Academic Engagement Network (AEN) Joins “Shine A Light,” an Unprecedented Coalition to Spotlight Antisemitism

WASHINGTON, DC, NOVEMBER 24, 2021—In anticipation of the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights (November 28 to December 6, 2021), the Academic Engagement Network (AEN) has joined a coalition of over 60 North American and Canadian Jewish and non-Jewish organizations and corporations to launch [Shine A Light](#). This national initiative will illuminate the dangers of antisemitism through education, community partnerships, workplace engagement, and advocacy.

Jewish communities throughout North America are experiencing an increase in antisemitism. As an educational organization committed to countering antisemitism and anti-Israel delegitimization on college campuses, AEN understands that college campuses are not immune from this deeply unsettling trend. For example, one in every three Jewish students on a college campus reported experiencing antisemitism in the past year¹, and nearly 2 out of 3 openly Jewish students reported feeling unsafe on campus in the Spring 2021 semester.² A [research paper](#) by AEN member Ayal Feinberg, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Texas A&M University, Commerce, found that Jews are more likely than members of other minority groups to be victims of hate crimes at colleges and universities, and that Jews are more likely to be targets of hate crimes on campuses than in other locations.³

Thus, AEN is proud to join with the other organizations participating in the Shine a Light campaign. To further education and dialogue on contemporary antisemitism, it will organize two separate events:

- On December 1, Dr. Ethan Katz, Professor of Jewish Studies at UC Berkeley, and Rabbi Adam Naftalin-Kelman, Director of Berkeley Hillel, will discuss “Antisemitism in our Midst: Past and Present,” an 11-minute video charting the history of antisemitism which has been used as an

¹ “One-Third of Jewish Students Experienced Antisemitism on College Campuses in Last School Year, New Survey Finds,” ADL, October 26, 2021.

<https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/one-third-of-jewish-students-experienced-antisemitism-on-college-campuses-in>

² “1st Poll to Survey ‘Openly Jewish’ College Students Reveals 65% Have Felt Unsafe on Campus, and 50% Have Actively Hid Their Jewish Identity,” Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, September 20, 2021.

<https://brandeiscenter.com/1st-poll-of-openly-jewish-college-students-reveals-65-felt-unsafe-50-hid-jewish-identity/>

³ Ayal Feinberg, “From Scholarship to Swastikas: Explaining Campus Antisemitic Events,” September 2021.

<https://academicengagement.org/from-scholarship-to-swastikas-explaining-campus-antisemitic-events/>

educational tool on their campus. This video was funded by AEN through its [Improving the Campus Climate Initiative](#).

- On December 2, four AEN faculty members, representing a range of academic disciplines, will discuss courses they have developed on antisemitism – in particular the way in which they adapted these courses to their specific disciplines, and the impact these courses have had on the campus climate. This event will launch a year-long project to gather syllabi on the topic of antisemitism for an online syllabi bank.

Educational resources developed by AEN are featured extensively on the Shine a Light [website](#), and a [speakers bureau](#) created for the Shine a Light initiative features many faculty experts within AEN's network.

“AEN is deeply concerned about rising antisemitism in multiple sectors of society, including, unfortunately, college and university campuses,” said AEN’s Executive Director, Miriam F. Elman. “Thus, we are proud to ‘Shine A Light’ on the historical manifestations and current mutations of antisemitism by providing a wide variety of academic resources. Only through sustained education and engagement can we counter these toxic forces.”

For more information about AEN and its participation in the “Shine a Light” campaign, please contact Raeefa Shams, AEN’s Director of Communications and Programming, at raeefa@academicengagement.org.