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Academic Engagement Network (AEN) is Recipient of Jewish National Fund – USA Boruchin Center Grant

February 10, 2025, Washington DC: The Academic Engagement Network (AEN), a national organization which 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, is the latest recipient of a Jewish National Fund-USA grant.

Committed to strengthening the connection between Americans and the land and people of Israel, Jewish National Fund-USA provides grants to organizations that foster such relationships through Zionist engagement and bold initiatives. As a result of the grant, these organizations are able to advance their missions and sustain and grow their programs.

The new partnership between Jewish National Fund-USA and AEN is centered around integrating alumni of Jewish National Fund-USA's Faculty Fellowship program into AEN's network of faculty members on over 300 campuses throughout the U.S. The Faculty Fellowship invites academics to participate in educational trips to Israel, with the goals of expanding their understanding of modern Israeli society, history, and culture and forming collaborations with Israeli scholars and researchers. AEN's programs and resources will help to engage, further educate, and empower these Faculty Fellowship alumni, helping them to leverage the knowledge and connections gained from their time in Israel to become committed supporters of the Jewish and Zionist community on their campuses. In turn, the broader AEN membership will learn more about the breadth and depth of Jewish National Fund-USA's philanthropic work for the land and people of Israel.

"It's imperative that we educate and engage our academic community about the realities on the ground in Israel," said Jewish National Fund-USA Boruchin Center Chair, Scott Schreiber. "Given the concerning rise in disinformation about Israel, fostering informed, positive conversations about our Jewish homeland on college campuses has never been more important or needed. We're proud to support AEN and their important mission as we work to support our Jewish and pro-Israel faculty and students."

Programs to support the partnership are already being planned. In May of this year, an AEN-supported faculty delegation to Israel from the University of Cincinnati will incorporate Jewish National Fund-USA sites into its itinerary, as will future AEN-sponsored trips to Israel for both faculty and administrators. In June, AEN will host a multi-day convening – consisting of expert talks, interactive presentations, and in-depth strategy sessions – for former Jewish National Fund-USA Faculty Fellows to learn more about AEN's mission, member opportunities, and day-to-day work on campus.

AEN is grateful for Jewish National Fund-USA's generous support of its mission and work. "At a time when Jewish and Zionist students on university and college campuses, and increasingly faculty and staff, are facing significant challenges as they seek to hold firmly to their beliefs and values, the new partnership with Jewish National Fund-USA will enable AEN to continue to provide the resources, education, and support that makes the work of our faculty members possible," said AEN Executive Director Miriam Elman. "We are deeply thankful for Jewish National Fund-USA's commitment to AEN's goals of advancing bedrock academic principles and fostering a safer, more tolerant campus climate where Jews and Zionists can feel fully welcomed and respected."