



50+ Faculty Leaders Join 700+ College Students at National Conference to Combat Rising Anti-Semitism on Campus

AEN recognizes UC Berkeley Professor Ron Hassner with its inaugural Faculty Changemaker Award

Washington, DC, July 29, 2025 - In a powerful display of solidarity, more than 50 college faculty members from the Academic Engagement Network (AEN) stood in solidarity with more than 700 college students at the Israel on Campus (ICC) National Leadership Summit (NLS) in Washington, DC, to strategize ways to work together to combat rising antisemitism on campuses nationwide. The faculty members expressed eagerness to support students in the coming academic year and shared how they themselves are experiencing vicious antisemitic targeting.

The ICC National Leadership Summit is the largest pro-Israel student gathering in the United States, and featured speeches from former Prime Minister of Israel Naftali Bennett, Senator Dave McCormick, Congressman Ritchie Torres (D-NY), Chair of the DOJ Task Force to Combat Antisemitism and Senior Counsel Leo Terrell, and more.

The faculty members, who work at colleges and universities across the country, including Columbia University, the University of Pennsylvania, University of Minnesota, University of Oregon, University of South Carolina and George Washington University, sent a clear message ahead of the start of the school year: we will not stay silent in the face of antisemitism. Jewish students and faculty deserve to learn and teach without fear of harassment, discrimination, or violence.

"AEN was thrilled to bring some of our most active and engaged faculty to the NLS - to connect with Jewish and Zionist students, show them that they have faculty allies, and highlight the central role of faculty in fighting antisemitism and creating welcoming environments on campus," **said Raeeza Shams, Director of Communications and Programming at the Academic Engagement Network.**

"It's hard to find space for Jews in the academy, and being here and with the AEN centers me," **said Jeff Cohen, Professor of Anthropology, Ohio State University.**

"Sometimes I feel alone. Walking into the NLS, I realized I am one of thousands and it is our mitzvah to lead together," **said Geoffrey Braswell, Professor of Anthropology, University of California San Diego.**

"Students are not alone in their fight against antisemitism and in their advocacy for Israel. The AEN faculty delegation are partners to ensure that campuses are safe places for Jews and allies and no one is excluded for supporting Israel," **said Rob Weisskirch, Professor of Human Development, California State University Monterey Bay.**

"Being at NLS not only allowed faculty involved in AEN to reconnect in meaningful ways but also allowed us to extend our connections to the students we teach," **said Gary Katz, Associate Professor of Psychology, California State University, Northridge.** "The array of speakers at NLS served to enhance my scholarship and advocacy for Jewish students and faculty at my University but also 'recharge my batteries' necessary for working in academia, where being Jewish is frequently difficult."

"Countless notions and strategies are given at the ICC conference to enhance campus climate to return normalcy regarding Israel and Jewish culture. Moreover, we are seeing spiritual and intellectual solidarity which is priceless," **said Allan Havis, playwrighting Faculty, University of California San Diego.**

"The work of a faculty member on campus often leaves little time for actual conversations with students on issues of Jewish identity and inclusion and on Zionism," **said Gregory Brown, Professor of History, University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV).** "Even if we are working on those issues, the opportunity to be here is a special one, because it has offered opportunities to talk directly with students and learn what they are hearing, doing and thinking."

"The opportunity to be a faculty delegate with AEN for the ICC NLS was such an amazing experience which allowed us to engage with and learn alongside student leaders. It enabled us to hear real life examples from students at other universities and also to connect with students in our fields to offer them future mentorship and support," **said Amy Milligan, Associate Professor of Jewish Studies and Women's and Gender Studies, Old Dominion University.**

At the Summit, AEN also recognized UC Professor Ron Hassner, the Chancellor's Professor of Political Science and Helen Diller Family Chair in Israel Studies, with its inaugural Faculty Changemaker Award. This past spring, Hassner began an open-ended "[sit-in protest](#)" over the failure of UC Berkeley administrators to protect Jewish students. In addition to eating, sleeping, and teaching from his office, he left a light on in his office window to let students know that his door is always open to them and that he was "sleeping as bad at night as they are."

"In the wake of the horrific attacks of October 7, when Jewish communities around the world were reeling from grief and fear—and when hostility and hatred toward Jews surged with alarming intensity on college campuses—Ron chose not to remain silent. Instead, he took a bold and deeply principled stand, guided by his conscience and by a profound sense of responsibility to his students, colleagues, and the ideals of the university itself," **said Miriam F. Elman, Executive Director of the Academic Engagement Network.** "Through this award, we express our admiration and appreciation for Ron's extraordinary courage, moral leadership, and unwavering commitment to justice in the face of rising antisemitism at the University of California, Berkeley."

"I am deeply honored by this award," **said Professor Hassner**. "And, having been a member of AEN from its very founding, I am delighted to witness its growing impact. AEN has now exceeded 1000 faculty across more than 300 campuses. I could not be more proud."

Inspired by Hassner's courageous action, AEN, in April, launched the [Faculty Against Antisemitism Movement \(FAAM\)](#) to help enable AEN's faculty members, as well as other academics who choose to sign up, to stand against antisemitism, anti-Zionism, and anti-Israel activity on their campuses and to collectively urge their own university leaders to take appropriate action. More than 25,000 faculty became active in FAAM over the last year.

As part of FAAM, AEN members across the country founded groups to publicly speak out against antisemitism and anti-Israel bias, to advise and mentor students, and host educational programming. Examples include: [UCLA's Jewish Faculty Resilience Group](#); [Yale's Forum for Jewish Faculty & Friends](#); [UIUC's Faculty for Academic Freedom and Against Antisemitism](#); [Columbia's Jewish Faculty and Staff Supporting Israel](#); University of Buffalo's Association of Jewish Faculty, Staff and Friends; University of Cincinnati's Israel Initiative Committee; and [Indiana University's Faculty and Staff for Israel](#).

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