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TO: Dr. Samuel Belkin

FROM: Dr. Norman Lamm

RE: Amendment to Report of Jewish Studies Review Committee,
SCW

In the early part of the deliberations of the Committee, I made a number of tentative suggestions for fundamentally recasting the whole structure of higher Jewish education for women at Y.U. However, some committee members felt that because my proposals affected divisions of the university other than SCW, that it would be unwise to consider them in the context of this particular Committee.

I accepted this criticism, and consented to the final report as submitted. However, I am sending this addendum on my personal initiative.

Certain iniquities and duplications exist within the present system which, I believe, ought to be corrected. These are as follows:

1) Heretofore, a student at TIW, attending YU only part-time for two years, would receive a Hebrew Teacher's Diploma and be authorized to enter the teaching field and earn a living. At the same time, a student equally well prepared on the High School level and attending SCW -- at much greater expense and with much heavier Jewish studies program -- had to wait four years for a degree. It matters little that one was a mere diploma and the other an academic bachelor's degree. Few girls, if any, go on to graduate work in Judaica. This paradoxical situation is exacerbated now that the SCW girls will not even get their bachelor's degree after their full years at Stem.

2) The above reenforces the reluctance of well-prepared High School graduates (such as those of YUHSG) to attend SCW. This reluctance issues, among many other factors, from the economic

factor. Why pay for a full college course at SCW when the same -- or at least minimally adequate -- Jewish higher education can be obtained at TIW, while attending one of the free city universities?

3) Since the Jewish education level of girls entering TIW and the advanced students entering SCW is identical, YU in effect must run two parallel programs and pay double expenses for faculty.

It is in order to solve these problems at least partially that the following recommendation is offered. Because the committee refused to discuss it, it remains in capsule form and, if it proves attractive, would have to be submitted to a high-level university committee for elaboration of details.

The basic proposal is to divide the SCW day into three parts. The first part of the day would be devoted primarily to the Jewish courses for beginners. The second part would serve for the bulk of the general academic program of SCW. The third part, beginning in late afternoon and possibly continuing into the evening, would offer the advanced Jewish studies. Here, one faculty would teach combined classes of SCW advanced students and TIW students. Major consideration would be given to the convenience of SCW students. The teacher's diploma would be offered after 2-3 years to all students fulfilling requirements, with SCW girls then entitled to receive a Masters degree after a total of five years of Jewish studies work. The added convenience of a combined Jewish-secular program under SCW auspices would encourage more of the girls normally inclined to enroll in TIW to become SCW students.

This plan would thus eliminate the inequity between the schools; encourage more YUHSG graduates to come to SCW; and save the expense of an additional advanced Jewish studies faculty.

Of course, this is merely the skeleton of a plan. Many details must be filled in, and probably some of the basic features mentioned above may have to be modified. But I believe it is worthy of consideration.

NL/ek

MARCH 5, 1970

TENTATIVE PROPOSAL FOR RESTRUCTURING
OF JEWISH STUDIES AT STERN COLLEGE

I suggest we think along the following lines:

The three or four track system ought to be abandoned in favor of a two-track system, which corresponds essentially to the men's division (i.e., JSS on one side and EMC-RIETS on the other).

My plan would envisage bunching all the non-Hebrew and non-Judaic courses to approximately the hours of 10-10:30 to 3, or thereabouts. Of course, these general courses would be equally available to all SCW students regardless of their achievements or levels in the religious divisions.

Now, track A, the elementary one, would concentrate on Jewish courses in the morning hours, from 8-8:30 A.M. to about 10-10:30. Their courses would be intense, but also more inspirational. I envisage a program in which elementary Hebrew is taken for granted, and even some elementary conversational Hebrew. Courses would be constructed sequentially, aiming at the eventual integration of track A with track B in the third or fourth year.

In order to start at a certain minimum level -- i.e., elementary Hebrew reading and conversation ability -- incoming freshmen, who have not attained this level of skill, would be required to attend a specially devised Ulpan course for one month before the opening of school, or possibly an equivalent period during the June preceding the freshman year. (Or any Ulpan they choose subject to approval by the Dean.) In the Ulpan devised by SCW, an effort should be made to integrate orientation to the school together with the normal Ulpan work. In this manner, those students with no background at all can be brought up sufficiently close to those with minor backgrounds so that the difference in level will not be significant.

The first year courses for track A students should focus on three elements: additional skills, inspiration to Jewish living, and survey-type courses in Jewish knowledge. As an example of the latter, I would imagine a course in Bible to be an assignment for the student to read through all of the narrative-historical portions of the Biblical-Chumash period by herself, with passages studied in class to be taken from the most important sections of the Chumash in the Hebrew, gradually building up use of commentary, whether in the text or orally.

Track B - It is with regard to this level that my proposal becomes most innovative, and perhaps outrageous. Advanced students who come in with a good high school background should take their Hebrew courses after three o'clock, and this division should be integrated with TIW. Courses should be offered in the combined institution in such a manner that Stern girls can take the major courses together with TIW students in the late afternoon, leaving minor courses, and courses in pedagogy, for the evenings. Here the emphasis should be more on scholarship than on skills, and the inspirational quality of the courses should be on a more scholarly level. Contrary to what prevails at present, hashkafah courses should be centered on track B rather than track A. Jewish thought should occupy a much greater part of the track B curriculum than it has heretofore.

Finally, faculty should be chosen with an eye to the different requirements of track A and track B. Generally, younger men and women, who are more inspiring and who have perhaps had experience at YU Youth Seminars, should be directed towards track A, and faculty that is more research-oriented should be directed towards track B.