

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Adam Naftalin-Kelman

[DATE]

510-845-7793

Capital Press Release - DRAFT

Berkeley Hillel, Center of Jewish Life in Berkeley, Announces Major Remodel
Upgrades to Significantly Expand Student Programming and Resources

BERKELEY, Calif. — Berkeley Hillel, the center for Jewish spiritual, educational, and cultural life for more than 3,000 Jewish students at UC Berkeley, will undergo a significant remodel starting June 2017. The opening of the new center is expected in August of 2018.

“For the past 90 years, Berkeley Hillel has been addressing the spiritual, emotional, and philosophical needs of the campus’ Jewish students,” said Rabbi Adam Naftalin-Kelman, executive director. “As we move full steam ahead into the 21st century, it’s time our building meets the needs of new generations.”

Established at UC Berkeley in 1927, the 16,000-square-foot building will undergo a complete remodel. The building was last renovated nearly 30 years ago and it can no longer provide the modern amenities called for by today’s contemporary students. The new building will include technological upgrades, security advancements, expanded outdoor areas, and ADA accessibility – as well as a higher level of environmental sustainability and flexible programming spaces.

“Hillel has been my home away from home since I was a freshman. I am so proud of Berkeley Hillel for taking these steps to make this home more secure, more dynamic and more welcoming for anyone who walks through its doors,” said Rachel Marcus, Berkeley Hillel Student Leadership Board President.

In 1913, Rabbi Martin Meyer made the weekly trek from San Francisco to UC Berkeley to teach Jewish college students. In 1927, just a few years after the B’nai B’rith Hillel Foundation had been established in Illinois, the country’s fifth Hillel House opened at UC Berkeley to meet the religious and social needs of the estimated 500 Jewish students. Today, Berkeley Hillel plays a key role in the life of the university’s thriving Jewish population and sees more than 1800 students walk through its doors every year.

Berkeley Hillel promotes discussions about unique Jewish issues, such as assimilation, multiculturalism, Zionism, and new directions in thought and ritual. These unique opportunities for personal exploration and growth within a Jewish framework are only found at Berkeley Hillel.

The remodel has been funded thanks to the generous charitable foundations and individual contributors, including an initial gift of \$1 million from Pat Lapan’s (z’l) bequest, and the support of the San Francisco Federation and Endowment Fund. Funders of the campaign include UC Berkeley alumni and Bay Area Jewish foundations. Major supporters of this campaign are: Gerson and Barbara Bakar, the Lisa and Douglas Goldman Fund, Sandy and Jean Colen, Ron Kaufman, and other benefactors. A new courtyard will be named in memory of Berkeley Hillel’s visionary past Board chair, Rob Ruby z’l.

For information on supporting specific opportunities, please contact Rabbi Adam Naftalin-Kelman.

####