

STUDENT LIFE

Reunited (and it feels so good!)

We kicked off the Fall 2021 semester with a whirlwind of programming, beginning with FreshFest, Hillel's pre-orientation program for new Jewish students. Despite the uncomfortable heatwave, students and parents alike formed connections during a casual BBQ on the Hillel lawn. Students then went bowling, ate s'mores by a campfire, did service work at a local Jewish farm in Northampton, and even went on a field trip to Target to purchase last-minute dorm supplies! Student programming rolled right into our first in-person Shabbat -- and the events have been non-stop ever since then. At our annual Kick Off Block Party, we hosted more than 150 people, including a food truck and many social activities! And of course, the High Holidays created a myriad of opportunities for hundreds of students to share Jewish rituals and customs.

For the High Holidays, we hosted Reform/Conservative and Orthodox services on campus and at Hillel. We rented a big tent for daytime services in front of the Old Chapel. With the support of UMass Koshers Dining, Hillel fed hundreds of Jewish students free meals at Franklin Dining Commons, instead of Hillel House as is our tradition. Although logistically challenging these modifications enabled us to provide safe, in-person programs for the entire community. After last year's reduced student population on campus and Zoom programming, it has been wonderful to celebrate together in person this year.

Interest in our student-led groups is very high this year, and throughout the semester our staff and upper-class



mentors will continue organizing and hosting social events, challah bakes, service opportunities, and vibrant discussions about Jewish

identity and combating anti-Semitism. Programs like our 8-week intensive Jewish Learning Fellowship (JLF) will continue to create ways for

students to form close friendships while discussing life's big questions in relation to traditional and contemporary Jewish texts.

Not surprisingly, even the smallest gestures make a big impact. While tabling at the Wellness Fair the first week of school, nearly 100 students stopped by to connect with our staff, who distributed free small succulent plants to help students decorate their dorms and, at the same time, shared important information about maintaining good health and mental wellness.

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