

# Scholars Circle Resource Guide

Double-sided

US Campus Impact: Jewish/Zionist Faculty Experiences & Challenges Post 10/7



## About Dr. Miriam F. Elman

Dr. Elman is Executive Director of the Academic Engagement Network (AEN), an educational nonprofit that builds nationwide networks of university faculty and administrators to counter antisemitism and advance the academy's principles of open inquiry and free expression. Before taking on her position at AEN in 2019, she was a tenured Associate Professor of Political Science at Syracuse University, where she held the title of Robert D. McClure Professor of Teaching Excellence in the Maxwell School of Citizenship & Public Affairs. An alumna of Hebrew University of Jerusalem (BA) and Columbia University (M.Phil., Ph.D.), Dr. Elman previously taught at Arizona State University and spent several years as a Fellow at Harvard University's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. She is an award-winning scholar and teacher, has edited seven books, and is the author of nearly 100 peer-reviewed articles and essays. In recognition of her work, she has been listed by *The Algemeiner* among the top 100 people worldwide who are positively influencing Jewish life. Dr. Elman lives with her family in Fayetteville, NY and serves on the Board of Directors of the Jewish Federation.

## Dr. Miriam F. Elman

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# Common Q&A's

## **What have been the faculty experiences on U.S. campuses – especially after October 7?**

It has been a painful and challenging time for Jewish faculty who work and teach on our nation's campuses. There is considerable evidence of Jewish faculty being subjected to harassment, discrimination, boycotts, and intimidation on account of their real and perceived Zionist identities and attachment to Israel. While these experiences are not new, feelings of isolation, alienation, and even demoralization have increased dramatically in recent months.

## **How are Jewish faculty who research and teach in some disciplines in the Humanities and 'softer' Social Sciences negatively impacted?**

While no discipline is immune from antisemitism and anti-Israel bias, some fields of study have developed an ideological conformity around the topics of Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with activism around social justice valued more so than the production of knowledge. Such ideological capture is not new, but with a virulent anti-Israelism now baked into the missions of many academic departments, Jewish and openly Zionist faculty—especially already vulnerable junior faculty and those on contingent contracts—are reporting a high degree of self-censorship.

## **What role do faculty play in improving the campus climate for Jewish and Zionist communities?**

Due to shared governance and their permanent presence on campuses, faculty are important stakeholders in the fight against antisemitism and anti-Israel bias. Non-Jewish faculty as well as those in the STEM fields are crucial allies. Increased collective action, including a multi-pronged approach to faculty organizing, is necessary in order to mobilize the 'silent majority' of faculty on American campuses who are committed to both the bedrock academic principles of open inquiry, free expression, and academic freedom and to a welcoming and inclusive campus climate.

# Key Takeaways

- ✓ Faculty on U.S. campuses have been experiencing an astonishing degree of hostility since October 7, 2023.
- ✓ Jewish faculty, especially those who are not yet tenured and who work in certain fields of study in the Humanities and 'softer' Social Sciences, have long reported that they feel like they must hide their Zionist identities in order to succeed professionally. These perceived risks have dramatically increased over the last year.
- ✓ The Faculty for Justice in Palestine (FJP) Network is a new pernicious development that is bringing more organized anti-Zionism and anti-Israel bias onto U.S. campuses.
- ✓ Working collectively, and in coordinated ways with students, alumni, and other stakeholders, Jewish and Zionist faculty are now more actively engaged in the fight against campus antisemitism than ever before—and are having an impact and making a difference.

***The views expressed by the speaker don't necessarily reflect Chai Mitzvah's official position.***

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