

9:00 - 9:10

Welcome: Rabbi Rachel Cowan, Co-chair

Welcome!

This is an historic event. So many rabbis from such a broad spectrum of the religious movements. All of us here together. All of us exploring together the possibility of building a field of inquiry, research and advocacy that can elevate the value of our beloved profession in the eyes of the larger community, that can open resources as yet untapped so that we may more skillfully, compassionately and effectively serve our Creator, for the benefit of the Jewish people and our precious, endangered world. And many of us have the aspiration of creating not only a field, but some sort of alliance to further that work.

I think this merits a shehekhianu!

As you may know, today's conference grew out of a series of planning meetings over the past few years - initiated by Maury Hoberman, a trustee of the Lasko Family Foundation, and supported by his board. Each meeting has grown to include more people - this gathering is about double the size of our meeting last spring. From that meeting emerged a design committee, whom I would like to take this moment to thank:

Rachel Cowan - Co-Chair
Jerry Weider - Co- Chair

Kenneth Brander
Norman Cohen
David Gordis
Hayim Herring
Richard Hirsh
Marisa Yammer
Marc Wolf

Maury Hoberman, ex officio
David Glanzberg-Krainin, ex officio

And I would like to express our collective gratitude to the funders of this conference, the Jim Joseph Foundation, the Lasko Family Foundation, the Marcus Foundation and the Schusterman Foundation

And none of this would be happening without Steven Kraus, whom JESNA designated as our brilliant and meticulous organizer.

Before I turn the program over to my colleague Hayim Herring, I would like to remind us all of the purpose of our gathering:

1. Articulate and clarify the potential for developing a formal continuing rabbinic education strategy. The strategy must meet the educational and professional needs of community rabbis to help them strengthen their congregations and communities, currently and in the future.
2. Develop, expand and share the knowledge and skills of providers of continuing rabbinic education.
3. Explore the benefits, feasibility and possible mechanisms for creating an "Alliance" for Continuing Rabbinic Education with the diverse providers of continuing rabbinic education.

The vision for the "Alliance" would be that these diverse providers who serve rabbinic populations with distinct needs can work together in specific areas to advance their own programs and the field.

Come join us as we plan a new vision and future of the growing field of continuing rabbinic education. We look forward to seeing all of you in September. Please bring an open mind and heart to this work today, think big and imagine!