

3:15 - 4:45

What Can an Alliance for Continuing Rabbinic Education Accomplish and Look Like?

Introduction by Rabbi Rachel Cowan and Rabbi Hayim Herring

The planners of this Conference chose this session to be the last and longest discussion at the Conference. The belief was that all the earlier discussions would provide the "raw material" for this far-ranging dialogue. One major goal of the Conference was to have a discussion about the feasibility of the creation of an Alliance for Continuing Rabbinic Education and to have an initial discussion about what it would/could do and how it would function. When you read the range of comments to the questions that were posed you will see that a consensus formed to start taking some initial steps in the creation of an Alliance and that some very specific first steps were suggested.

What Can an Alliance for Continuing Rabbinic Education Accomplish and Look Like? - Questions



- 1) What "added value" could be achieved through the creation of an Alliance for Continuing Rabbinic Education?
- 2) Imagine that you could create an Alliance for Continuing Rabbinic Education. What would it look like and what would it do?
- 3) Imagine that you have the opportunity to create a lifelong learning "curriculum" for rabbis after graduation. What would it look like?

1. What “added value” could be achieved through the creation of an Alliance for Continuing Rabbinic Education?

- *Talmud mayvee I'ma-aseh.*
- *Renewal is an ongoing process.*
- *How can the Torah of CRE lead to the outcome of self-renewing congregations?*
- Contracts: culturally train consensus among klei kodesh and lay kodesh about benefits of CRE, and standards for contracts.
- Many parts of CRE are not denominationally sensitive: if worked together could pool resources more effectively - and get better funding.
- Helps to create culture to normalize CRE among rabbis and community members. Leaves door open to become expectation.
- Sounding board and stamp of approval: common place and language. Program worth looking and promoting.
- Considerations: extremely important to have buy-in from stakeholders. Move slowly. Loosely coupled.
- What are the legitimate and valid partners to Alliance (address what is a rabbi, who is a rabbi, who can serve as a rabbi)
- Leverage power to create dialogue about expectation and need for change.
- Marketing device to market success and existing programs - where are shared programs
- Lobby for CEUs being required
- Bring together like-minded people - convener
- Publish joint catalog/website - all provides cross-references
- Publish newsletter or journal - narratives of experience, inspiration, infoundation sharing.
- Create venues where funders can meet program providers
- Creating conditions for cultural shift
- Value for mutual recognition and support
- Biggest dangers/cautions:
 - Tafasta meruba
 - Adjudicatory
 - Joint curriculum creation
- “consortium” -
 - web resource guide
 - Research and evaluation
 - For teachers
 - Capacity for advocacy

2. Imagine that you could create an Alliance for Continuing Rabbinic Education. What would it look like and what would it do?

- Calendar to plan & be aware of what's happening when
- Specialists to help people develop IEPs

- Open some elements of movement-based programs to others
- Approach federation as a coalition
- Create a shared language for CRE
- Recognizing people for completion of certain amt (promote culture of excellence in this area)
- Sharing best practices
- Consortium of providers, use technology platform to make resources available more broadly (e.g.)
 - Participant testimonies across programs
 - Programs
 - Resources
 - Best approaches
 - Stage appropriate
- Research - getting money for research and doing for constituencies
- Flagship program
- Forum for conversations among program providers
- Advocacy
- Administrative clearinghouse for information
- Annual meetings for professionals of coalition of education
- Bringing together denominational leaders with founders and providers
- Bring in potential new funders
- Promoting expectation of CRE
- Faculty and evaluation consultants
- One resource director works collaboratively with stakeholders; identifies options for collaboration (including clearing house for books/web sites)

- Tech options
- Interactive
- Flexible scheduler, media, venues
- Infusing fresh ideas (like CORE)
- Facilitation of smaller discussions (e.g., mentoring, emotional intelligence, etc.)
- Keep table big - advisory board, small number of program staff
- Should connect to rabbinical associations, seminaries, programs, synagogues bodies, funders

- Membership for organizations - providers and funders and synagogue umbrella
- Who would be in Alliance: (need to decide)
 - Providers
 - Reps of seminaries
 - Movements
 - Organizations
 - Funders

3. Imagine that you have the opportunity to create a lifelong learning “curriculum” for rabbis after graduation. What would it look like? What is this all about at the end of the day? Vision

- 4 pedagogies
- Balance between retreats and bringing home (hevruta)
- Coach/advisor/mentor
- Beyond not-for-profits move forward toward universal participation
- Learning to help renewal of rabbi
- Awareness of strengths and weaknesses
- Learning about greater context of synagogue is
 - a. shift idea of synagogue
- Provide all four areas of curriculum
 - Torah/Interpretation
 - Formation
 - Context
 - Skills Performance
- Can't be one size fits all
- Concerns about what curriculum would be “towards”
 - Not displacement of all of anxiety of what I didn't learn (rather than process of coming into one's own)
 - Process of transforming nature of rabbinate to make it liveable and sustainable
 - Possibly way to transform Jewish community (unsustainability of synagogue as country club or membership organization).
Dynamics of change to change community/Jewish life in America
- Wholistic approach to rabbi needs
 - Resources for families
 - Hevra time at retreats
- Skills -
 - Stronger and better teachers
 - Pastoral skills
 - Energize (combat burnout)
 - Time management
 - Pastoral technology