

GTU Receives \$2.5 Million Grant from Hellman Foundation

Funding will support new initiatives in interreligious education and engagement over the next five years

On October 16, 2019, the GTU announced receipt of a \$2,500,000 grant from the Hellman Foundation to support bold new initiatives in interreligious programming. The five-year grant will provide funding for the establishment of an innovative interfaith chaplaincy program at the GTU, and will allow the hiring of additional faculty to support the Madrasa-Midrasha program, a creative interreligious partnership between the GTU's Richard S. Dinner Center for Jewish Studies and Center for Islamic Studies that seek to build understanding and engagement between the Jewish and Muslim communities. In addition, the grant also provides ongoing support for faculty and programming in areas of Jewish and Islamic Studies.

"We are confident that this generous gift from the Hellman Foundation will catapult the GTU into bold new arenas of interreligious engagement, building on the historic strength of our programs," said GTU President Rabbi Daniel Lehmann. "We are especially excited about the new initiative in interreligious chaplaincy, which unites deep religious scholarship with the applied skills and professional training necessary for spiritual care amid today's diverse religious contexts. We believe this innovative program will expand significantly the opportunities for collaboration with our partners, such as the University of California, Berkeley.

Both the interfaith chaplaincy program and the Madrasa-Midrasha program are products of the GTU's interreligious emphasis. The chaplaincy program will offer students opportunity to gain chaplaincy certification with specific interfaith training, while simulta-

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neously earning a Master of Arts degree in Jewish, Islamic, or Hindu Studies. The Madrasa-Midrasha program emphasizes Jewish-Islamic dialogue, offering courses and public programming exploring the richness, diversity, differences, and commonalities of Jewish and Islamic traditions.

"The Hellman Foundation is delighted to support the GTU's pioneering work," said Susan Hirsch, executive director of the Foundation. "Our world desperately needs new models of collaboration across lines of difference. We're pleased to partner with the GTU in these groundbreaking efforts to build interreligious understanding, includ-

ing this innovative interfaith chaplaincy program, which is the first of its kind."

GTU President Daniel Lehmann continued, "In an age where religion is often seen as contributing to polarization, we believe the GTU's unique brand of critical, informed scholarship can build bridges of understanding and cooperation, and can contribute to the public discourse in ways that enrich public life and community relations across lines of difference. It is an honor to have the Hellman Foundation as a dedicated partner as the GTU moves into a new phase of interreligious programming. We are deeply grateful for their generosity." ♦

About the Hellman Foundation: *With primary focus in the San Francisco Bay Area, the Hellman Foundation works to build equity and opportunity, to advance knowledge, and to foster health, science, the arts, innovation, and creativity.*