

**List College at the Jewish Theological Seminary**  
**Joint Program with Columbia University**  
**Double Degree with Barnard College**  
Ramah College Network  
Summary of Survey Results

General Demographics

Eighteen Ramahniks at List College responded to the survey; twelve are in the Joint Program with Columbia University and six are in the Double Degree Program with Barnard College. The students have attended one or more of the following Ramah camps or programs: Berkshires, California, Canada, Darom, New England, Nyack, Poconos, Wisconsin, and Seminar.

**The Search Process**

The Impact of Ramah on the College Decision

Many students indicated that they wanted a strong Jewish community, similar to the “model” community of Ramah. A number of the students explained that they had never considered the possibility of attending JTS as an undergraduate, but they heard from former staff members that it was a great option. One student wrote, “My Ramah experience helped me stay close to my Judaism and encouraged me to live a Jewish life. The love for Jewish learning and Jewish community that I got from my summers at Ramah definitely influenced my decision to apply to JTS.”

Other Schools Considered

Brown University, Haverford College, University of Pennsylvania, Brandeis University, University of Maryland, Tufts University, Washington University in St. Louis, University of Pittsburgh, University of Michigan, Rutgers University, George Washington University, Emory University, University of Chicago, Binghamton University

Attributes Looked for in a School

Students were looking for a strong academic environment, a thriving Jewish community, and access to a city. Many students noted that beyond just an active and observant Jewish community, they specifically wanted a strong Conservative community.

Best Aspects of the School

Students appreciated the “best of both worlds”—a small, but strong Jewish community at JTS, the larger Columbia/Barnard community, and all that New York City has to offer. One student explained, “Obviously, there are many opportunities in New York City, and Barnard is a lovely school which caters to the needs of its individual students. At JTS, there is a feeling of community that brings the students in its programs together. The academics are challenging, and there is much freedom in terms of choosing classes at Barnard/Columbia.” Many students commented on this unique nature of List; “an observant and active Conservative community; an Ivy League secular broad-base liberal arts education; unparalleled Judaic studies; being around like-minded people; an intimate community; New York City... There is NO other program like List College.”

## **Jewish Life on Campus**

### Kosher Dining Options

There are a number of kosher dining options for students at List College. One student explains: “List College students in the Joint Program have no meal plan, they have their own kitchens. We are also free to utilize the Columbia University meal plans. The girls at Barnard in the Double Degree Program are on the Barnard kosher meal plan.” The Jewish Theological Seminary has a kosher dining hall that serves breakfast and lunch, and there is a kosher deli at Columbia that is open for lunch on weekdays. Hillel has a restaurant, Café Nana, which does not accept meal points. Students were generally satisfied with the kosher options at List, however many noted that the hours are inconvenient and it can be a waste of money for vegetarian students. Students also agreed that one of the benefits of living in New York City is the plentitude of kosher restaurants.

### Worship/Services

Columbia/Barnard Hillel offers Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox services every Shabbat. Students say that while many people go to Hillel, a large part of the student population also goes to local synagogues. While some students enjoyed the Hillel atmosphere, saying it is welcoming and has options for everyone, a number of students said that the Hillel is “irritatingly divided” by denomination and lacking ruach, and they prefer local synagogues like Ramath Orah, Ansche Chesed, or the Hadar minyan.

### Jewish Studies

Students were enthusiastic about the comprehensive and well-rounded Judaic studies department at JTS, as well as at Columbia and Barnard. They encourage students to take Bible, Medieval Jewish History, and Modern Jewish History classes at the seminary, and Hebrew at Columbia.

### Jewish Social Life

Students said most of their Jewish life came from the List student body, supplemented to an extent by Hillel programming. Students enjoy coming together for Shabbat and holiday meals, and some participate in Student Life activities at JTS.

### Hillel Activities

Hillel at Columbia is open to List College students, and it provides services, social programs, Israel programming, social action, performing arts groups, educational programming, and formal study opportunities. Hillel is an umbrella club for over 40 smaller groups, which students say make it possible for everyone to find something that interests them in the Hillel community. There is a strong Conservative presence: “KOACH on campus is an intimate community and very List College-oriented. It is also an observant Conservative Jewish community, providing many opportunities for Jewish learning and holiday/Shabbat meals and programming in addition to regular Shabbat services.” Students raved about the Hillel facilities: “It’s a beautiful building, made of Jerusalem stone. It has several floors, and most of the rooms can be converted from a sanctuary to a social space. The building also has WiFi, cable, and a library.” Of the respondents, four Ramahniks have held leadership positions in Hillel. Four Ramahniks

have served in leadership positions in KOACH, and nearly all of the survey respondents have attended KOACH programming.

### Other Options for Jewish Social Life

New York City provides a variety of options for social life beyond JTS: “New York University, Yeshiva University, the local synagogues, the local Jewish schools, the park on Shabbos afternoon; there are so many places to go to be enriched by Jewish life on and off campus.” Another student wrote, “It's New York City, so the possibilities are endless – I teach at a Hebrew School, I go to JTS, I sometimes do things at the JCC.” Many Jewish institutions around New York City offer regular social and educational programming, which is open to anyone in the broader Jewish community.

### Antisemitism and Anti-Israel Activity on Campus

Most students responded that due to the nature of Columbia and Barnard's (and certainly JTS') Jewish populations, they had not experienced any antisemitism on campus. However, anti-Israel activity is common. Because Columbia is a politically active campus, there have been a number of anti-Israel and pro-Palestinian rallies and protests. Students are quick to note, however, that the pro-Israel community is also strong, and clubs like LionPac (Columbia's pro-Israel group aligned with AIPAC) and Pro-Israel Progressives are very active. One student explained that when professors were accused of being biased against Israel from an academic perspective, “the Jewish community, quite ably, gathered together to show that academic freedom does not preclude supporting Israel.”

### **Ramahniks' Advice to Prospective Students**

Ramahniks at List College enjoy the balance between the Jewish atmosphere of JTS and the other options available to them at Columbia University, Barnard College, and New York City. They encourage students to come visit for a Shabbat.

“Be prepared to really immerse yourself in a Jewish community... You can absolutely branch out of the JTS community, but you will have to make a larger effort to do so. But if it's what you want, it is really a great place to be.”

“Look at the whole picture: Is JTS what you want? Is CU/BC what you want? Is this the academic community for you? Is this the right Jewish community for you? If you are open-minded and interested in exploring Jewish tradition and your Jewish identity in an academic and communal setting, List is a great program for you to consider.”

“If you are willing to work hard and you want a foundation in Jewish studies as well as secular studies, then this is the place for you.”

“Remember that Columbia is there to be taken advantage of if you make the effort, take as many CORE classes as possible, and keep in mind that the JTS courses will be scientific/academic more than religious.”

To receive contact information for Ramahniks at List College (or another college on the Ramah College Network), please email Alana Tilman at [ramahdesk@campramah.org](mailto:ramahdesk@campramah.org). Please include your name, your Ramah affiliation, and the college(s) for which you would like contact information.

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