Worship

The Asbell Center draws together Jewish students from all denominations. The center also welcomes the local Jewish congregation, Beth Tikvah, to use its sanctuary for religious services. The Asbell Center often collaborates with Beth Tikvah to co-sponsor events, including High Holiday services, Passover Seders and other religious gatherings.

Each year, Dickinson hires a rabbinical student from a well-respected seminary to lead services for the campus community. The center hosts weekly Shabbat services, led by the rabbinical student or by Hillel members. After services, students enjoy meals prepared by the student-run kosher cooking club.

The Asbell Center also has developed relationships with the Harrisburg Jewish community, the Jewish Community Center and the five synagogues in the Harrisburg area. Hillel students are welcome to attend services at these temples and are invited into the homes of community members for Shabbat meals and other holiday celebrations. Dickinson students also have been interns at the Harrisburg JCC.

Learning

The pursuit of knowledge is one of the central aspects of Judaism, and the Asbell Center offers numerous opportunities for learning. Activities at the Asbell Center teach Jewish and non-Jewish students alike about Jewish religion and culture. Each semester, the center brings a rich roster of nationally renowned speakers to campus. Students, faculty and staff work together to organize programs on a variety of Jewish themes. Recent programming highlights include lectures by Rabbi Mitchell Chefitz, attorney Nathan Lewin, feminist Susannah Heschel, sociologist Egon Mayer and AIDS activist Scott Fried.

In addition to supporting Jewish life on campus, the Asbell Center facilities are available to Dickinson's academic program in Judaic studies, which has an unusually strong curriculum for a liberal-arts college. The Judaic-studies program, led by the professor holding the Sophia Ava Asbell Chair in Judaic Studies and by a new faculty member in modern Hebrew language, offers a full major and elective courses in many fields. The Asbell Chair also provides funding for visiting scholars to come to Dickinson for short residencies of a semester or year; they are at times housed in the faculty apartment on the top floor of the Asbell Center.

Community

The Asbell Center is a gathering place for students to come together for religious, social and cultural events. Each year Hillel members organize a host of exciting activities including parties,
dances, concerts, bowling nights and informal coffeehouses with guest speakers. Students host an annual Latke/Hamantashen debate, encouraging professors to defend their favorite foods. Hillel also has sponsored a Purim costume party, a "chocolate seder" (for chocaholics only), a Latke/Dreidel Night and a Sukkot Sleepout, affectionately called "pizza in the hut" or "snack in the shack."

Jewish rock stars Rick Recht and Dan Nichols, klezmer bands, Ashkenazic and Sephardic music groups have all performed on campus. Other events prominent in Jewish life at Dickinson include bagel brunches, screenings of Israeli and American Jewish films and Hillel's annual Uncle Moyshe's Deli Night. The Asbell Center also organizes workshops on creating Jewish ritual art, Israeli dance lessons, outdoor programs and Jewish-heritage trips neighborhoods in New York and Washington D.C.

In addition to these events, Hillel actively supports social causes. Hillel students have gone pumpkin picking with the local Headstart chapter, run a canned-food drive for the Harrisburg food bank and organized several fundraisers-from car washes to walk-a-thons-for the Gift of Life Foundation, an organization that supports leukemia research and was founded by a Dickinson alumnus.

**Leadership**

The Asbell Center provides students with opportunities for leadership by serving on the center's executive board or by becoming a member of one the many student committees. The center is governed by a board of students, faculty, staff, local alumni and members of the Carlisle community. The board meets twice a year to discuss programming opportunities for Jewish life at Dickinson and to set policies for the Asbell Center, including the standards of kashrut to be observed in different parts of the building and the management of the various spaces within the center.

The Asbell Center falls under the auspices of Dickinson's Office of Religious Life and Community Service, and often works with academic departments, college organizations and student groups to co-sponsor events. The center also builds connections with other colleges in the area through regional Hillel chapters.

**Access Policies**

Students and community members must apply for access privileges to the Asbell Center. Those who apply for access privileges agree to the following:

- Only dairy and vegetarian food may be brought into the center.
- Students will clean up after themselves. Any furniture that is moved around must be restored to its original place.
- Food in the refrigerators is off limits.
- The Director and Program Assistant's offices are off limits.
- Business machines are not available for personal use.
- Sexual activity, public drunkenness and offensive language are not permitted.
Violations of the above may result in suspension or permanent revocation of access privileges.

*Under no circumstances are the following permitted:*

- Carrying or consuming alcohol
- Possession, use or sale of illegal drugs
- Smoking
- Stealing or unauthorized use of supplies
- Vandalism or intentional damage
- Physical, emotional or spiritual violence carried out on any person
- Possession, use or sale of firearms or weapons

**Related Information**

**History/Revision Information**

Responsible Office/Division:

Effective Date:

Last Amended Date:

Next Review Date:

Also Found In: Asbell Center Web Page (www.dickinson.edu/departments/asbell/)