

Student Center Built on Jewish Foundation

January 11, 2011 10:00 AM Fran Simon
fsimon@tulane.edu

The Goldie and Morris Mintz Center for Jewish Life, the new home of Tulane Hillel, is opening this semester. Located on Broadway at Burthe Street, it will be the site of many activities, including a slate of 10 academic courses that will be taught in the building this spring.



Rabbi Yonah Schiller, right, executive director of Tulane Hillel, chats with Raymond Burmaster, superintendent of the job site, as workers put the finishing touches on the new Goldie and Morris Mintz Center for Jewish Life. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Workers are now putting the final touches on the [building](#). Rabbi Yonah Schiller, executive director of Tulane [Hillel](#), said, “I think this will be a great addition to the campus culture. So many people have put a great deal of time, passion and love into making this possible.”

Schiller described the Mintz center as a “low-barrier experience” that he hopes will introduce diverse students to Jewish thought and Jewish life.

The expansive front porch of the 10,000-square-foot building is designed to welcome students inside, where free Wi-Fi and printing, along with coffee and baked goods each morning, will be available. Ten classes in Jewish studies and other disciplines will be held in the building.

The kitchen was custom-designed with input from executive chef Harveen Khera, who previously operated an Indian restaurant in San Francisco. Daily lunches and dinners of organic, healthy and kosher cuisine may be purchased by the Tulane community with the student meal plan [Wavebuck\\$](#) or cash.

Schiller said he hopes the new building will reflect the philosophy of Hillel, exemplified in the Hebrew phrase “tzelem elokim” which means “in God's image.” This principle recognizes the godliness in each person and the concept that all people are unique while also connected to one another. He wants the center to be a place where students explore a variety of ideas with each other.

“We're universally human and particularly Jewish,” Schiller said. “The building is an incredibly beautiful space, yet that's secondary to what happens inside of it and how each person is engaged and contributes to the larger community.”

A building dedication is scheduled for March.