

## A NEW GENERATION OF PROFESSIONALS: REFLECTIONS AND STRATEGIES— RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

*The joint Jewish Communal Service Association—Association of Jewish Community Organization Personnel Annual Meeting, held on June 17, 2002 in New York, featured a panel discussion entitled A New Generation of Professionals: Reflections and Strategies—Recruitment and Retention.*

*David E. Edell, President, DRG, Inc., NY, moderated the program. Panelists were Adina Danzig, Assistant Director, Hillel Stanford University, Stanford, CA; Robin S. Levenston, Vice President, Women's Department, THE ASSOCIATED: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, MD; and Rabbi David Rosenn, Founder and Director, AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps, NY.*

*The subject and format of the program were created and developed by the Joint Annual Meeting Program Committee Co-Chairpersons Sandra Lief Garrett and Stephanie Kalish Newman (JCSA), and Rabbi Daniel Allen (AJCOP).*

*The following article is based on the panel discussion, edited to conform to the style of the Journal of Jewish Communal Service.*

### David E. Edell

The purpose of this program is to provide an opportunity to hear the voices of younger colleagues and people who are early in their careers. Not to study them, not to judge them, but to listen and to begin to understand. It struck me that we spend so much time studying the new generation of philanthropists and donors, and we know so much about them and their interests and their abilities. Yet, we know very little about the young professionals who will be the ones who work with those new philanthropists to lead the community in the future. This is our first opportunity to do so.

Another point about today's program is the issue of retention. Recent human resources studies about retention in organizational life in general have talked about the fact that the Boomer generation, in fact, is more anxious to think about early retirement and second careers than previous generations. There is a lot of study, and there are a lot of statistics to document it. Therefore, we should anticipate a leadership gap soon. What's interesting to me is that that's not a new issue for the Jewish community. The generation before us, my father's generation,

stayed in one place for 25–30 years, and when they left in the 1980s, those organizations and agencies were taken over by a generation of people who were mostly in their thirties. These new executives were very committed yet somewhat ill-prepared, but they stumbled through and did great things. Now those Boomers, many of whom are beginning to think about moving on, have been in their senior chairs for 25 and 30 years.

On our panel are the 30-year-olds who will replace them. I have to ask the question, What did those Boomer executives learn from their experience, and what did we learn from their experience that will help us effect a smooth transition this time? And who are the teachers? Who is going to prepare them? Our scholarship programs and our training programs have not changed dramatically, not in terms of the number of participants and not frankly in terms of the substance of the programs.

A recent article that appears on our company's web site talks about *Fortune Magazine's* annual competition to be "the best company to work for," which is a sought-after designation. In it, the author asks what happened if in the nonprofit or Jewish com-

munal sector there was a similar competition to be the "best organization to work for." It wasn't long ago that all of us could name those organizations. All of us grew up at a time when there were, in each of our fields, organizations and agencies that if we were offered a job there, we would take it, regardless of the location, because it was a credential. How many Big 16 federation executives have come out of the Cleveland system? How many from Pittsburgh and Baltimore? There is a question of who accepts the responsibility now for training for the field.

Today we begin by "talking to customers." The panel is composed of young people who have agreed to take a look at their jobs that may, in fact, evolve into careers. We need to listen and respond to them, to be sure that we help them prepare for the generational change that will come shortly.

The questions for the panel, because they were developed by committees, are actually dissertations of four or five or six different points. To begin, when did you choose a job—not necessarily a career but a job in Jewish communal service; how were you recruited for it or how did you find it; why did you choose it, what was promised to you in that first job and what was delivered in the first job; and how did that affect your view of the field and of your career?

#### **Adina Danzig**

I didn't realize there was a distinction between job and career. I can't remember when I decided to take my first job in Jewish communal service. I grew up in camps and took on leadership positions in youth groups and in college; even my first job after college when I was definitely not going to work in the Jewish community and my plan was to be a public interest lawyer was at the New Israel Fund. One of the reasons I was committed to not working in the Jewish community, perhaps, was that as a rabbi's daughter, I wanted a career that would allow for clear separation of personal and professional identities. After a year of law school, I realized for a number of reasons that, in fact, I did want to work in

the Jewish community. My thought process mirrored that of a young woman I spoke to recently in preparation for today's discussion. I thought at that time, like she does today, that there was more important work to be done, that issues of poverty and civil rights were pressing, and that the Jewish community is basically well off on this country. But during my process of going through law school and doing some work in public interest law, I realized that there are many important issues and communities to work for. I felt I had something unique to contribute to the Jewish community and in fact that was my passion, so here I am.

A large determining factor in my choice to return to graduate school was receiving the Wexner Graduate Fellowship. I had some educational debt, and this program made it possible for me to go back to school. Had I not received the Fellowship, I believe I would have continued a career in the Jewish community, possibly in Israel where I was living at the time, but I would not have been as strongly self-defined and committed as a Jewish communal professional serving the community here.

That program invests in people, and that investment is very powerful. In terms of being recruited for my first job after graduate school, I can be considered a case study in Larry Moses's article about recruitment and retention, when he notes Hillel as a great example of human resources (HR) recruitment. I was at the General Assembly as a graduate student, and Eran Gasko, Hillel's HR director at the time, walked up to me in this conference of thousands of people and introduced himself, saying "I've heard your name and I would love for you to come to the staff conference and meet some directors and explore some career opportunities." Hillel had not been on my list of organizations to work for, but that meeting made a strong impression on me. I indeed went to that conference, where I met Debra Feldstein, the executive director of Hillel at Stanford, and that's in fact where I have been working for the last two years.

So, the second part of the recruitment story was meeting Debra Feldstein. And what she made clear to me in discussing the possibility of my coming to Hillel at Stanford was that in the dance that we do between organizational needs and personal-professional growth interests, she is willing to engage creatively to enable employees to utilize their areas of strength and interest while identifying areas in which they wish to grow and help create opportunities for that growth. She also made it clear that her staff are trusted to be creative and encouraged to develop whatever projects they envision that are consonant with the organization's mission. And those attributes have meant that three of our one-year Jewish Campus Service Corp Fellows have decided to stay on after that year because of that philosophy and organizational culture.

I would say this experience affects my view of the field and career in that it has given me a model for entrepreneurial management and of an organization that encourages employees—and therefore the organization itself—to grow and adapt and improve over time.

#### **Rabbi David Rosenn**

I am a sort of unexpected Jewish professional. I run a small, relatively young non-profit organization called AVODAH-Jewish Service Corps. We engage young Jews in their early and mid-twenties in direct work on poverty issues in New York and, starting this fall, in Washington, DC as well. This puts me both in the position of being a young professional and also speaking with a lot of people who are beginning to think about what they would like to do in their work life. So I hope that I will be able to contribute something from both of those experiences.

I was not recruited for service to the Jewish community, which I think is fairly common for many of us who are starting out. Larry Moses mentioned that being recruited is the exception rather than the rule. It was through my own exploration of ways to create a career in social change that I came to

the conclusion that what I would really like to do is engage the Jewish community in creating sustained responses to poverty in this country. I thought that in order to do that in a way that was deeply and authentically Jewish, the best professional training for me would be to go to rabbinical school. Up to a year before I entered seminary, I thought I was going to law school or to get a master's degree in public administration.

But for a combination of deeply personal and also strategic reasons, I chose a strange form of the rabbinate, which I hope will not be so strange in future years. No one tried to talk me into it at the time. In fact, there were several people, including my parents, who tried to convince me that the rabbinate is not a profession for a good Jewish boy. I am happy to be in the position that I am in right now. I am in my first job as a Jewish communal professional, at least as a credentialed one. I worked for several Jewish organizations along the way to completing rabbinical school, and one result of inventing my own job and doing it in a way that cuts against the grain of traditional jobs in my profession is that I am not very aware of what some of the constraints are for my peers entering into more traditional roles in Jewish communal service. I see that as both a liability, because it prevents me from understanding some broader aspects of the field, but also as an advantage, because I have been able to make certain things up as I have gone along. When we get to some of the other questions, I will be specific about what those were and why I think that by and large they have worked very well.

#### **Robin S. Levenston**

I'd sum up my answer by saying that I lucked into the world of Jewish communal service and when I look back on my first 10 years in the field I feel very fortunate.

When I attended college I really didn't know what I wanted to be. My father advised me to pursue a liberal arts degree, which requires study of a foreign language. Having grown up in Florida I did not want another

year of Spanish, so I chose Hebrew because I could always read it, but didn't know how to speak it. It was my favorite course in my entire college career, and one day while I was in class, a woman came and spoke on behalf of a study abroad program at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which truly changed my entire life. I did plan on spending my junior year abroad. However, Saddam Hussein had different plans for me. I think because of that, I am in the field now. I didn't complete the program, but I came back with a very strong yearning and a longing and desire to do something that had to do with the Jewish people.

I wish I could say that I grew up aspiring to be a Jewish communal professional, but I didn't know that there was such a career out there. So when I graduated school, I went back to South Florida and lived with my parents until I figured out what I wanted to do. I began to call a place called the Jewish federation. I didn't really know what they did, except that they gave me a scholarship at one point during my earlier stages in school. I found it incredibly easy to start networking in the Jewish communal world. Once I met one person, it led to 10 more, which led to 10 more, and I networked up and down South Florida until someone gave me the chance to be an intern earning \$4.25/hour with a college degree. My father said, "Go for it, get your feet wet, see what happens, and if worse comes to worse, so for a couple of months you earn \$4.25 per hour, and then you'll go out and do something else."

When I accepted this internship, the gentleman who gave me a chance said to me, "You know, intern for a little while and if things seem to work out, we'll create a position." So, when you ask if you got what was promised, I did. Throughout the first course of my career, I was really given amazing chances as a young professional. People took risks and I think that is what is really important—to take risks on younger people and give them opportunities.

I toyed with going back to school for a master's in Jewish communal service. I ac-

tually interviewed at a national conference, and when I came back, they offered me a full-time job at the Jewish Federation of South Palm Beach County. I decided at the time to take this job opportunity and see if it would be rewarding to pursue such a degree. I then got hooked on it, and once I was working full time and earning a salary, it was very hard to leave. So I went a different route with my graduate work and pursued a master's in public administration over six years while working full time. This was fully supported every step of the way by the institutions for which I worked.

### **David E. Edell**

Each of the three of you is very involved in recruiting and counseling young people and talking to them about careers and life, and you ultimately have the opportunity to bring people into the field. So, two pieces of a question. Number one, what are the motivators—what helps us sell and what are the incentives—and what are the obvious barriers that you are hearing? I am especially interested in knowing about anything that has changed in the last year. We have heard a lot about the spirituality movements, the economy, 911, Middle East, and anti-Semitism. There was an interesting Op Ed piece by David Gergen in the *New York Times* that spoke about the potential for national service and that the environment was ripe for a national service in America. What have you learned about young people from your experiences talking to them that we can use to recruit people into Jewish communal service?

### **Robin S. Levenston**

I have had an opportunity through the course of this past year to speak with a lot of young professionals, as we started a Jewish Communal Professional Association in Atlanta. It is not specifically for young professionals, but many of the people whom we are reaching are young. What they are looking for is immense professional reward. They

want to feel like they are making an impact. They want to feel that they are personally connected to their Jewish roots. They want their personal ambitions and professional ambitions to be intertwined. But it's also very important for them to be significantly supported by supervisors—to be mentored, to be trained, to have career tracking. And I think this is something that is extremely important that didn't necessarily happen a lot in my beginning years of being in the field. Having a supervisor and a mentor that will sit down with you regularly, for career-tracking, and to speak about your goals in 5–10 years is critical. This may not have been different from what you all were looking for earlier in your career.

#### **Rabbi David Rosenn**

Most people who are in AVODAH are not thinking about going into the field of Jewish communal service. They go into all sorts of careers. Some of them do enter into programs of Jewish communal social work or the rabbinate, but most of my conversations with people are about what kinds of things they want to do not having to do with the Jewish community. However, I sense an openness in many of them to coming to work for the Jewish community for some period of time over the course of their career. So I have started to think about what it means for us to recruit people who do not start off in the traditional feeder programs for Jewish communal service—people who do not start off working for the Jewish community, but who will look for an opportunity, a way in at some point in their career. That led me to think about people who are starting off working in the Jewish community and, then for whatever reason, choose to take a position outside the Jewish community. I wonder, Is the door still open for them to reenter the Jewish community? Do we look at those people as losses to the community or people who are gaining some skills, some experiences that we don't have in the Jewish community and they should come back at some

point? What are we doing to encourage them to come back?

Regarding recruitment, I want to open up a conversation about some nontraditional places for us to go and look for people who might be interested in entering the field. It has been my experience that more than half the staff at AVODAH are persons who were recruited from positions outside the Jewish community. It is a very small organization, so I wouldn't draw any conclusions from that, but I think it has been very satisfying for them, and we have been extraordinarily satisfied with the quality of their work.

#### **Adina Danzig**

My focus group was the JCSC fellows, a great group of people who are out just one year from college. These Fellows who work for Hillel after college are actually not recruited as future Jewish communal service workers. The door is there, but I was told by Fellows that if they thought they were being recruited for this field, they would run the other way. So, these are recent graduates who think they'll go into another career. What is striking is that some of them do continue on in this field, much to their own surprise, let alone their parents and friends.

The kind of experience that they have during that year is really what determines whether or not they will continue in Jewish communal service. The fellows I spoke with love the Jewish learning piece that is integrated into our work. Other elements that lead fellows to stay are gaining concrete and transferrable skills that they can apply to whatever field they go into and finding role models who are strong, talented and committed to this work and people whom they can identify with. Incentives include innovative and creative opportunities, a way to stretch your wings, the Jewish learning piece, and a sense of community. It's kind of like an extended Jewish family.

The barriers I found interesting. One is that it's a safe positive environment, but not perceived as challenging enough. When I look at Stanford University, these students

can go to the top of any program, academically or professionally, and if it is not perceived as competitive, as rigorous, they are not interested. There is also a fear that the career choice might pigeonhole you and limit your opportunities in the future, and young people today—particularly coming from Silicon Valley where there is a lot of turnover and a lot of choice—have high expectations of self-actualization and not necessarily much loyalty. Another barrier was that there is a perception that Jewish organizations require you to tow a certain line and are sometimes slow to change. And this is particularly true right now in regard to Israel.

As you probably have heard, college campuses have been very tense in relation to Israel issues. And while we, of course, stand strongly behind Israel, we have created many opportunities for students to discuss the tensions and challenges just as Israelis are doing today. But that contrasts with the messages that young people get from some organizations, which, sometimes do not allow for that kind of conversation. And young people whom I know are turned off by that.

I want to mention also a short story. As you know, there are usually hundreds of college students, not this past year unfortunately, who attend the General Assembly (GA) every year. At the GA I attended several years ago there was a session entitled "How to Put Off Law School for a Year: Post-College Programs to Nurture Your Jewish Soul." And I was thinking, why didn't we just title that session, "Post-College Programs to Nurture Your Jewish Soul?" Because we ourselves reinforce the message that they are getting from their friends and parents that law school would be the respectable thing to do and that pursuing this Jewish interest is "time off" and not to be taken seriously. In terms of recent trends, unfortunately, anti-Semitism and the conflict in the Middle East have actually inspired young people to be more interested in Jewish communal service because the Jews are now seen as a community that's targeted. So it feels somehow more legitimate to them. I think on

the West Coast the September 11 impact has diminished. I did get some phone calls immediately following it from people who said they thought of changing careers to something more meaningful, but I think the effect out West was elastic, as was the impact of the slowed-down economy. Over time the impact in California, at least, will not be significant in this field.

**David E. Edell**

Adina, when we talked about the Gergen article before, you made a comment about universal interest versus the specific interest.

**Adina Danzig**

When I asked one young person how September 11 affected him and his interest in working with the community, he said that it pushed him to work toward universal causes and not toward the particular.

**David E. Edell**

All of you have had to think about changing jobs and accepting new jobs. When you decide to change, what are the measures, the things that you think about? What do you take a look at? How do you decide that an agency is a good place, that it's a place for you, that it can help you do something?

**Adina Danzig**

This is my wish list. A culture of integrity and respect is important to me. Effective communication is terrific, and it doesn't always happen. A place that balances organizational needs with individual talent and recognizes talent and helps it flourish. Opportunities for cross-training so that you are excelling in what you love and what you are good at, but you also get to push the envelope in other areas. A place where people are recognized and appreciated. A place where new ideas are encouraged and understood as the potential for organizational strength and effectiveness. An organization that integrates reflection and evaluation into

its normal course of business and questions what it does. A place that trusts its employees. You like them, you hire them, they're good. An organization that actively invests in its employees, whether it's specialized training or seminars or making sure that employees have relevant and interesting opportunities because you know them and you know what is out there. An organization that supports the work/family/life balance. And of course, the work itself.

What was interesting to me when I wrote this list is that the work itself right now is at the bottom, because I think in this early stage of my career, it's all of those other things as I develop myself as a professional that are so important to me, and someday I hope to make a dream come true with those skills.

#### **Rabbi David Rosenn**

When I was asked to participate on this panel, I had not spent any time thinking about recruitment or retention in the field of Jewish Communal Service. It never occurred to me to think about that. I talk to people about going to rabbinical school, I talk to people about going into other programs, but I never thought of myself as a recruiter for the field. I also never heard of the two organizations that are sponsoring this luncheon today, and that is a problem for UJC and JCSA. Perhaps it's a problem that has to do with the gulf between the folks in the part of the Jewish communal service profession called the rabbinate and the other fields represented here. I went through five years of rabbinical school, but nobody told me that there were professional associations other than the Rabbinical Assembly. So, I think that's probably an issue to address.

I read Larry Moses' and Dana Sheanin's articles that appeared in the *Journal* before this program. They eloquently express some major issues that the field is going to have to address, including mentoring and professional development, lifelong learning, and the degree to which Jewish communal service is compatible with Jewish family life. Each of these factors is much more important

than the issue of competitive compensation, although we can ill afford to ignore that issue. But if we don't address those basic issues seriously and well, people will not stay in Jewish communal service, and we would be hard pressed to fault them for that decision.

I want to focus on one thing that Dana Sheanin wrote about in her article: performance evaluation as something to strive for within our organizations. It is well known that performance review is not widely implemented in the nonprofit world, and when it is implemented, it is not done particularly well. This shortcoming cannot be excused by the fact that we are all overworked and that programming overtakes our ability to deal with such niceties as performance review. Instead, it speaks to a much larger challenge, a much more serious issue for non-profits, and that is the difficulty that we all face in accurately measuring our success. The corporate sector has it easy in this respect because senior managers, middle managers, and everyone all down the line have financial targets to meet. Performance and professional advancement are linked to meeting these targets. The questions revolve around how are we going to get there, not what is the goal or the target. Having concrete performance goals makes life easier in a number of ways.

First, expectations are much clearer, and problems in performance are usually easier to identify quickly and address. And rewards are distributed in a rational way. You can understand why you're either advancing or not.

Almost none of this is available to the vast majority of us who work in Jewish professional life, and there is no bottom line equivalent to sales in the work that we do. We are educators. We are community builders. We are cultural activists. We are a people who are charged with the spiritual life of the community, and it's nearly impossible to scientifically quantify what it would mean for us to be successful. Now that's true, but I think that the truth of how difficult it is for us to quantify and specify our goals is largely being used as an excuse to ignore the entire project altogether. This has many negative

outcomes in terms of not only the way our organizations work but also job satisfaction.

There are three ways in which failure to have specific concrete outcomes for use in evaluating our performance not only as an organization but also as employees in organizations, contributes to a very severe loss of job satisfaction potential.

Number one is that without outcome targets, managers tend to judge how hard and how well employees are working by the number of hours that they put in. As employees, we are driven by our own standards of excellence, so we begin to equate a large number of hours worked with high dedication or high performance, because we don't have any other meaningful standard. Obviously it is not true that people who work longer hours are better at their jobs or are performing at a higher level. A culture of long hours, combined with the absence of other milestones for progress, is really a problem in the field.

Number two: performance reviews that aren't based on the achievement of concrete goals, but on traits like attitude, flexibility, or creativity can turn what should be an opportunity for improving and sharpening professional growth into a trial where supervisors are put into the position of passing judgment on the personal qualities of employees, rather than on their work. This can be very uncomfortable for supervisors and supervisees alike and is the main reason why we avoid doing these things, or do them not based on performance goals.

Third, achieving clarity of purpose for our organizations and translating that clarity of purpose into specific steps that we need to take to achieve those purposes are connected to the issue of job retention.

Doing the hard work of setting goals and defining the outcomes we need to achieve them is central to the ability of our institutions to serve the community well. We avoid this work at great risk, not only failing to retain talented professionals, but more important, failing to accomplish the most that we can for those whom we serve. The pro-

cess of creating a culture of performance based on concrete goals and outcomes within the Jewish professional world represents what Larry Moses described as an adaptive challenge. It is work that we would rather avoid. It's contrary to our established way of doing things. And in many ways, it's contrary to our set of values. But it is a critical strategy for addressing some of the problems of retention that we've all raised.

### **Robin S. Levenston**

In conducting my recent job search I devised a list of not only the qualities and challenges I am looking for in the specific position that I will secure but also in the organization. The first two organizations that I was employed by were both facing extraordinary challenges, going through a great deal of change and experiencing much turmoil. On reflection, I realize that I am at a point in my career where I am seeking an organization with stability, with a healthy environment and a healthy reputation, an organization that has a very strong professional development philosophy, and that has the ability and the track record of promoting internally. Very important to me was finding an organization that had a reputation of having young professionals hold significant positions and gender equity at the top levels of the structure. My goal was to be in an environment where supervision was extraordinarily valued at all levels, with a real sense of teamwork, not a turf environment.

I looked at the rate of professional turnover as I wanted to see longevity. I wanted to work with colleagues whom I was going to learn from and who the organization invested in being there for a long time. It is also important to work for an organization that has a *hamesha* environment.

Finally, from going through an interview process most recently, one of the most significant things that sticks out in my mind from my two days at THE ASSOCIATED: Jewish Community Federation of Balhmer is that a member of the administrative staff said to me, "When I tell people I work for



THE ASSOCIATED, I hold my chest out and I hold my head high." It was extremely important to me to find an organization that at all levels, someone could say that.

**David E. Edell**

Given the experiences that you have all had in the field, and thinking about now going forward and advising others who may come to you, what skills do they need to have and what body of knowledge do they need to learn to succeed and advance in the field? Second, where has your learning come from? Who are your teachers now? Have you been able to find mentors? Do you have supervisors? Are conferences and continuing education available to you? Where have you gone in order to find your learning and to advance your own career?

**Rabbi David Rosenn**

I advise other people to talk as broadly as they can with people who are involved in work that they find interesting and to try to aim as high as they possibly can. If they want to go into federation work, I say call the executive of your federation. People are by and large delighted to take the time to reflect on what their work is about. And people have been very surprised and have actually opened up new lines of thinking in terms of career, just by having conversations with people not in the context of job interviews, although job interviewing is a way to do that as well.

In terms of my own training, I need to second everything that Adina said about the Wexner Graduate Fellowship Program and its alumni association, which continues to be an extraordinarily rich source of professional provocation and support for me as I go along in my work.

I have also had some excellent professional mentors in my career. I have been very blessed. Every one of these people was a woman, and I think that by and large, the best ones have been those who took their mentoring seriously, as it meant something

to them. It's not just because I asked, and they weren't there just when I had a problem, but they proactively took me on as a project and opened doors for me and advised me when there was something that they thought I should pursue. To the extent that I can do that now, I try to take a proactive role. I certainly could learn a lot more about what it means to be a proactive mentor, and I think that would help us all.

**Adina Danzig**

I am also blessed to have had a number of amazing mentors, several of whom are sitting in this room and that has been incredibly important in my own development and I know will continue to be. But what I do miss is having a group of peers who work at a similar level and position who face similar challenges and with whom I have regular contact. I had that a couple of years ago and found it incredibly valuable. I know some executives have it, and I think that's something that perhaps JCSA could help formalize. I have also found the Wexner Institutes to be enriching both personally and professionally, as well as opportunities where we teach each other. It provided my first opportunities to teach formally, to speak publicly, to facilitate meetings formally and, importantly, to get feedback on all of those. Other professional conferences I attend I find important for collegial battery recharging. And another source of learning for me has been working with lay leaders, board members who have particular skill sets. I have worked closely with them, and that's been a tremendous source of professional growth for me.

**Robin S. Levenston**

There are a number of key skills that you don't necessarily get early on in your career that I would encourage young people to pursue and knock on doors to learn. I think that all too often when people take on their first management and supervisory position, they haven't any management or supervision training. Not only does that pose a challenge

to the person and make him or her feel a certain level of incompetence and insecurity. It is also a danger and threat to our field. Because if those are the people then supervising and mentoring people and they are not adequately prepared, they very well may turn off people whom we are trying to retain in the field. System-wide, we need to instill training in supervision and management at an early stage.

Budgeting skills follow the same logic. People don't have budgeting experience until they get to a point where it's really too late.

It's extremely important to advise young people in the field to belong to national professional associations. I have been in the field 10 years, and in those 10 years, I don't recall having a supervisor say to me, "You should be a member of AJCOP. You should be a member of JCSA." And I will tell you that the only way I discovered their resources was when we took the initiative in Atlanta to create our own local association. And I can tell you that since the doors of JCSA and AJCOP have opened to me, amazing networks, incredible friendships, and incredible mentors have happened, and it has been the most amazing year in my profession for that very reason. So I think it's critical for our colleagues to become members of professional associations as well.

When seeking career guidance from more seasoned colleagues, one of the stumbling blocks that I and several of my colleagues have experienced is coming face to face with the question, "Where do you want to be five to ten years from now?" People tend to believe that the question needs to be answered before taking the next step. Another school of thought is, "Let the journey take you where it will." The second philosophy has served me well thus far. Instead of saying to young people in the field, "Where do you want to be in five to ten years" and running the risk of making them feel lost, uncertain, and inadequate, we should sit down with them and conduct career tracking exercises. We should help define interests and identify skills sets that will help them develop long-

term goals. Posing that question as a challenge, where if you can't answer it you are told to come back when you figure it out, is very dangerous.

And lastly, in an effort to leave today with some action steps, I would like to propose the following.

The topic of the JCSA teleconference this year is "Managing Your Career in Jewish Communal Service." I am fortunate to have the honor to co-chair this program with Esther-Ann Asch. We are going to make a concerted effort to reach out to young people in the field, in Hillels, in Jewish communal local associations, in the APAs, to get people there to show them that there is a real career trajectory that they can follow.

We need the assistance of each of you in this room to help recruit participants. I also challenge each of us to take an oath as we enter the field—an oath of commitment to recruit people, an oath of commitment to retain people, and an oath of commitment to be mentors ourselves. And if we don't take our careers seriously enough to stand up and take that oath and feel proud to take that oath and to have that as a significant part of our responsibility, no matter how heavy our own job responsibilities are, then I think that we're going to be in danger of not being able to perpetuate this field.

#### **David E. Edell**

As Larry Moses said, the stuff that we deal with every day that is life changing in the world is profound, but the truth of the matter is that if we don't pay attention to the people who have to give that leadership and try and move them to the front of the agenda, we will continue to have personnel crises in the non-profit sector and Jewish communal service for years to come. Our next step is to really dig into the issues discussed today and learn from these young professionals as we began to today. We must figure out not just how to listen and study, but really how each of us can take action in the agencies we work in to try and create the environment that they envision.