
Can Hillel's funding be put to better use elsewhere?

COMMENTARY

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From my understanding, Hillel is at \$12 million of their \$18 million goal for their new building. The addition of the new Hillel building would be the second Jewish building on a historically reformed Dutch college that began its roots in theology. As a student of Rutgers, and a resident of New Brunswick, I find myself considering what \$18 million means. This is a success of great ardor, but I also fear the demographics do not fit this proposal.

Either way, it's hard not to mention how badly the city of New Brunswick could really use \$18 million. The lights on the streets are at 50 percent productivity and — in thinking about our future — it is also hard to dismiss what that \$18 million could do in creating residences for Rutgers alumni. With a train station minutes from New York City, I began to see New Brunswick not just as a home to a state university, but a more metropolitan suburb in which I often consider taking up permanent residence. It is a long way off, but you could potentially see New Brunswick as a less-cool Williamsburg.

If you know anything about Israel, you can conclude that pro-Israel parties are good at getting money into funds, i.e. the purchases of Jewish National Fund and modern-day Palestine. On Dec. 2, the Jewish Federation of Greater Middlesex County, a federally and privately funded agency, raised \$400,000 at a telefund held at the Douglass Campus Center. I am not 100 percent sure where this money is going, but seeing that they used a University building my only guess would be to the University, or specifically to the proposed Hillel building. This building is to be named after Eva and Arie Halpern.

So I ask you, the reader, if the building for Hillel, seemingly self-funded besides the \$3 million dollars gifted (assuming from Rutgers federal endowment) raises any eyebrows. Is the building impractical? As a non-Jewish person, does the Jewish nature make you feel welcome? Do you expect this building to benefit everyone?

I ask that we, the students of Rutgers, re-evaluate the resourcefulness of these presented charitable offerings.

This is just something to think about.

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