

Lead gift from Elon parents launches Hillel Center renovation

Trustees honor the Levine-Sklut family's support of Jewish life.



Lori and Eric Sklut

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Elon University's Board of Trustees has named the new campus Hillel Center in honor of Lori and Eric Sklut of Charlotte, N.C. The couple, who are parents of an Elon student, made a lead gift through the Levine-Sklut Family Foundation to fund creation of the center.

The Sklut Hillel Center will open early next year in a renovated facility that was formerly the home of Elon's Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life. The Truitt Center will be relocating to the Numen Lumen Pavilion, which will open in January as Elon's multi-faith center.

"We firmly believe that the permanency of the new Elon Hillel Center will be transformational," says Eric Sklut. "Completing this now, while activity surrounding Jewish life is at a pinnacle, will give students a true Jewish home on

campus."

The Skluts are active supporters of Jewish life at Elon. Last year, they endowed the Lori and Eric Sklut Emerging Scholar in Jewish Studies. Their son Mason, an Elon junior, serves on Hillel's student board. Lori and Eric Sklut serve as co-chairs of the Jewish Life Advisory Council with fellow Elon parents Andy and Debbie Cable.

"In addition to their generous gift to establish this center, Lori and Eric Sklut have provided leadership, passion and a compelling vision for the future of Jewish life at Elon University," says Nancy Luberoff, director of Elon Hillel.

The Sklut Hillel Center will create a permanent home for an active Hillel organization, which serves a growing Jewish population on campus. This year there are more than 400 Jewish students at Elon. The university's strategic plan, the Elon Commitment, has a goal of expanding Elon's support for the many religious and spiritual

traditions at the university.



The Sklut Hillel Center

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Hillel at Elon offers a wide range of programs including Shabbat programs, Jewish cultural events, Passover meals, worship opportunities and interfaith events. Offering accessible holiday services is an essential part of Hillel's mission, as Jewish students are often on campus and away from family during Jewish holidays. The Sklut Hillel Center will include a modern kitchen, student lounges, offices, a conference room and business lounge to help provide a home-like atmosphere.

"Jewish students want a home on campus and more opportunities to find and connect with each other," Luberoff says. "The Sklut Hillel Center will be the first Jewish space in Alamance County, which has never had a synagogue. It will also be a home away from home for thousands of Jewish Elon students in the coming years."

"We are grateful to the university for its willingness to allow Hillel to create its new home, and are excited to see it completed during our son Mason's junior year," says Eric Sklut. "As Hillel's mission is to enrich the lives of Jewish students so they may enrich the people of the world, we are motivated to see a place where Jewish students can identify themselves as leaders in creating a pluralistic and inclusive environment for themselves and their peers."

Renovations on the center are being paid for by the generous support from the Skluts and other key donors. In order for the center to succeed, Elon alumni, parents and friends are being asked to support an endowment for the maintenance and upkeep of the Hillel Center as well as the programming that will occur there.

The center will also serve campus groups such as the Elon Academy, a college access program for promising high school students with financial need or no family history of college. Elon Academy students taking sustainable food courses will use the center's kitchen to store and prepare food grown in Elon's Community Garden.

Says Luberoff, "We hope the Hillel facility will become an important resource for the entire Elon University community."