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1 December 2021

Dear Chairman Jakubek, President Tressel, Provost Smith, and Dean Howell,

We write to express our grave concerns over the implications of Youngstown State's decision to eliminate the faculty line of Clayman Assistant Professor of Judaic and Holocaust Studies, Jacob Ari Labendz, at the end of this academic year. With the non-renewal of Dr. Labendz's position, YSU has effectively chosen to shut down the academic programs sustained by its Center for Judaic and Holocaust Studies, since there will be no full-time faculty remaining to teach its courses and advise its students.

We don't believe it is ever a good time to eliminate courses on Jewish history, anti-Semitism, and the history of the Holocaust. But given the documented rise of anti-Semitic incidents in recent years, in particular in the Youngstown area, your decision strikes us as especially troubling and short-sighted. We wish to register our strong objections and urge you to reconsider these actions.

Sincerely,

The Executive Committee and Board of Directors  
Association for Jewish Studies

