For Immediate Release

DATE: September 12, 2013

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FOUR MAJOR CALIFORNIA FOUNDATIONS COLLABORATE TO AWARD $2.85M TO UC BERKELEY INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH LAW AND ISRAELI LAW, ECONOMY AND SOCIETY: Funds support Israel Studies, Programs on Jewish Law and Thought, and Student Support

San Francisco, CA -- Four leading supporters of Jewish life in California—the Bay Area-based Koret Foundation, Lisa and Douglas Goldman Fund, and Jim Joseph Foundation, as well as Los Angeles-based The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation—have joined to make an unprecedented coordinated gift of $2.85m to UC Berkeley’s Institute for Jewish Law and Israeli Law, Economy and Society.

The gift will support classes and programs in Israel Studies and Jewish Law and Thought, as well as broader programs to support undergraduate students on the UC Berkeley campus. It consists of three-to-five-year support from the Jim Joseph Foundation ($1.2m), The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation ($750,000), the Lisa and Douglas Goldman Fund ($450,000), and the Koret Foundation ($450,000).

“This major collaboration of the Bay Area Jewish community speaks volumes for the quality of the Institute,” said Richard Greene, director of the Koret Foundation and alumnus of Boalt Hall School of Law. “It will have a profound impact on the students interested in these studies and the campus as a whole.”

The Berkeley Institute was founded in 2011 with pioneering seed funds from The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation, a major supporter of the University of California. The Institute’s two programs – one on Israel Studies, one on Jewish Law and Thought—are coordinated by a faculty committee drawn from over ten different departments and schools around campus. Since its inception, the Institute has supported twenty undergraduate course offerings, as well as conferences, major lectures, and roundtables for faculty, graduate students, and the broader East Bay community. It has brought seven visiting faculty to Cal, as well as post-doctoral fellows, visiting scholars, and a Fulbright Scholar.

“The Institute has achieved tremendous success in transforming the face of the Berkeley campus in terms of classes, programs, and resources for faculty and students,” said Martin H. Blank, Jr., chief
operating officer and trustee of The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation, “and we are proud to have taken an important role in this pathbreaking partnership with leading Bay Area foundations to ensure the Institute’s growth and vitality going forward.”

This year the Institute is organizing classes including “Contemporary Israeli Culture,” and “The Holocaust in Theater.” Its 2013-2014 program includes an international conference on Water and the Environment in Israel and a major address by renowned Princeton political scientist Michael Walzer on “What We Can Learn From the Jewish Political Tradition.” The Institute this year will also launch a slate of research collaborations between UC Berkeley scholars and Israeli academics, on areas ranging from environmental technologies to judicial behavior.

“This tremendous gift will support the Institute’s goals of reaching more students and faculty, offering more programming, and transitioning from a ‘startup’ to a permanent institution at U.C. Berkeley,” explained Berkeley Law Prof. Kenneth A. Bamberger, the Institute’s faculty director. “We are extremely grateful for the vision and support of the four foundations.”

Central to the Institute’s activities is an attempt to integrate its programs into undergraduate life, through its coordination of undergraduate faculty mentors; hosting of formal and informal undergraduate events and meetings with visiting scholars and speakers; and program collaborations with student groups on campus.

“We are happy to assist the Institute in engaging undergraduate students so that they can incorporate Jewish and Israel studies into their college experiences,” said Doug Goldman, President of the Lisa and Douglas Goldman Fund.

The four foundations’ cooperation in supporting the Institute, moreover, sets an important philanthropic model.

“We always look for opportunities to collaborate with other funders on creative and engaging Jewish learning experiences,” says Al Levitt, president of the Jim Joseph Foundation. “These partnerships are critical in helping to sustain new initiatives beyond the start-up phase. In just a few short years, the Berkeley Institute has helped build a stronger Jewish campus community and offered unique Jewish learning opportunities for the entire Bay Area. We think it has begun to change Jewish student life and we are very excited to partner with the three other major foundations to continue these efforts.”

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