



Zacharias Frankel College comments on plans to restructure and on executive summary from law firm Gercke Wollschläger

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Zacharias Frankel College wishes to comment on the Executive Summary of the Gercke Wollschläger law firm as well as to respond to the December 6, 2022 press release from Abraham Geiger College, as both affect the future of Frankel College in an existential way.

The findings of the Gercke Wollschläger law firm confirm the asymmetrical power relations in the two rabbinical seminaries at Potsdam that have kept Zacharias Frankel College in a state of dependency on the will of one person from the time of its founding in 2013. Our institution has been pushed into invisibility and excluded from communication with major funding organizations in Germany.

The findings document the continued serious misconduct of an individual who should be a role model in his capacity as a leader. Holding different leadership positions in institutions that belong to different movements and to fulfill the task to represent each institution on an equal footing, has proven to be unattainable. As a proud affiliate of the Masorti Movement, Frankel College celebrates the ways in which the liberal Jewish movements have some common interests while maintaining distinction in philosophy and practice. To date, a representative of one stream of Judaism has full governance powers over institutions from two different movements (Reform and Masorti). This inherent conflict of interest does not honor the uniqueness and educational needs of each institution and has resulted in significant structural and financial inequities. Therefore, we call for equal and separate representation and leadership for each school. A new beginning is needed here.

The plan for restructuring presented to us by Abraham Geiger College was developed without consultation or participation of representatives of Frankel College. We therefore do not feel represented by this latest statement from Abraham Geiger College. This course of action not only reflects, but reproduces, the practice of arbitrary and dependent politics that has prevailed since the beginning. A partnership between equal parties requires joint preparation, mutual trust, transparency and consensus. All of these have been lacking and continue to be lacking.

Aside from the fact that we were not consulted in the planning of this "new" proposal, it perpetuates the mistaken idea that we simply have to buy into and approve whatever we are handed. Further, it does not provide for a clear governance and vision for leadership, funding, and educational partnership at eye level.

The proposal does not recognize that Frankel College will determine its own future and represent a clear affiliation with Masorti Jewry.



We remain committed as an independent and autonomous rabbinic training institution to working with the University of Potsdam, the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Masorti e.V. and our other partners to chart a course of visible equality, transparent leadership, and a strong Masorti vision for the future of the Jewish community in Germany.

We stand ready to collaborate in designing a new beginning for rabbinic education in Germany.

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