

# Hillel Yeshiva Gives Students a Head Start on Business Careers

**H**ow do you introduce high school students to the fundamentals of business administration through real-life experiences? In 2006, under the initiative of Dr. Eugene Simko, an Associate Professor of Management in the School of Business at Monmouth University, and with the support of the administration of Hillel Yeshiva High School, the Business Academy was created.

Dr. Simko, who has taught at Hillel for eight years, teaches this class to both juniors and seniors. The junior class is taught the basics of business: marketing, accounting, finance, micro and macroeconomic theory, production and organizational theory. During the senior year, the skills are applied in business decision making, leadership, written and oral communication skills, and case analysis. Rabbi Bald, Head of High School, believes that juniors and seniors who elect to take this class learn what it is like to be a business major in college. "This is, in actuality, a college business course."

Students engage in the Stock Market Game and The Executive Game. In these games, the students use computer simulation to run their own businesses and compete against each other for market share and profits. Students also follow a Fortune 1000 company throughout the academic year.

Dr. Simko's approach is to merge book theory and practice. He stresses group dynamics, literacy in business information technology and critical thinking. He feels that the Academy's graduates will be a step ahead as they enter their fresh-



*Sammy Saka, Dr. Eugene Simko, Nathan Laniado, Adam Nasar, Deborah Massry, Billy Goldman, Lottie Edery, Michael Belhassen, Ikey Nasar and Steven Beyda*

man year of college.

Initially, the class began with 12 students, but has grown to twice that number due to the way in which the course was received. "Overall, it's a great class, and anyone who takes this course realizes that high school education can be practical in preparing him or her for the future," said Rabbi Bald.

Students are interviewed before being accepted to the course. They are asked about their GPA, how serious they are about the class, if anyone in their family is involved in business and how serious they are about pursuing business in college.

The Business Academy hopes to be able to solicit local businesses to allow students to serve as interns, which will give them valuable experience in the real business world. As part of the juniors' course last year, Dr. Simko accompanied his students to the facilities of Sakar International in Edison, New Jersey.

They were invited by Sammy Saka, President of Hillel, to tour the

facilities and witness the operation first-hand. Sakar International is an import/export firm specializing in the global marketing of electronic accessories, including toys, games, cameras and many other products. The company also specializes in selling merchandise under licensed names of popular characters and movies.

Mr. Saka's staff explained the marketing, sales, finance, accounting, inventory and customer relation aspects of the business. The students were amazed at the business and the complexity of the warehouse operation. They had an incredible time seeing how a business is run. It really put everything they had been learning in class into perspective.

Dr. Simko is encouraged by the response to his class. "The community, the school, the students and the faculty all really like the program. I see that the program has started to pay off as the students enter college." □