

News Brief

Conservative movement launching seminary in Germany

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BERLIN (JTA) — The Conservative movement will open a seminary in Germany near Berlin.

The Zacharias Frankel College is under the spiritual supervision of the American Jewish University's Ziegler Rabbinical School in Los Angeles and is scheduled to launch next fall at the University of Potsdam. The seminary outside Berlin is believed to be the first Conservative seminary in Europe and will start taking applications on Nov. 17.

The university also is home to Abraham Geiger College, a Reform seminary that launched in 1999.

The Conservative, or Masorti, and Reform seminaries will be separate but share secular studies, which was something demanded by the state, according to Rabbi Walter Homolka, rector of the Abraham Geiger College and chairman of the Leo Baeck Foundation.

It is hoped that the students in both rabbinic programs will share ideas and inspiration, said Berlin Rabbi Gesa Ederberg, executive vice president of Masorti Europe, who will supervise mentoring and internships for the students and act as liaison on behalf of Masorti Germany.

Rather than a joint program, "it is a cooperation between Reform and Masorti," Ederberg said. "Knowing about each other helps us to see where can we cooperate well, and what the differences are."

The opening of the Frankel campus is one of several major developments at the University of Potsdam, including the Nov. 19 debut of its School for Jewish Theology. The theology school has enrolled 47 students.

"It is the first state university department for Jewish theology in the history of European universities," Homolka noted.

Until now, the German university system had only subsidized Catholic and Protestant theological training programs.

Read more: <http://www.jta.org/2013/10/16/news-opinion/world/conservative-movement-launching-first-seminary-in-europe-near-berlin#ixzz2yD0nF0Kc>