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COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Committee for the Evaluation of Architecture Studies

The Azrieli School of Architecture

Tel Aviv University

Evaluation Report

November 2009

Contents

1. Introduction

Summary of the Evaluation Committee's Observations and recommendations

i. The School's Mission Statement does not sufficiently take account of its location within a comprehensive university in a major urban center. Nor does it take account of the changes in contemporary society that directly affect architectural education and practice, particularly changes in technology, ecology, and globalization. The Evaluation Committee (EC) recommends that the School redefine its core academic mission, taking into account the unique opportunities of its institutional framework (the Art Faculty of Tel Aviv University, as well as the city of Tel Aviv), as well as the realities of architecture in the 21st century.

ii. The EC observed an architecture curriculum that needs renewal, restructuring, and rationalization. Generally speaking, the studio work has a dated and old-fashioned character. Moreover, student designs rarely achieve detailed development and resolution. The theory courses seem rather independent of, and should be aligned with needs of the entire curriculum, particularly studio teaching. Furthermore, there must be a serious and comprehensive review of teaching in information technology and computing, for the nature and potentials of these important parts of architectural education are presently misunderstood or ignored. Lastly, teachers and students must develop a "culture of critical thinking" in the development and evaluation of student work.

iii. The EC observed strengths and weaknesses in the teaching staff. On the positive side, there is talent and deep commitment among the staff. Yet, while the teachers are dedicated to their students, they are not dedicated to the school, nor do they feel as though they have a stake in its development. The EC also observed an imbalance between practioners and theoreticians in the teaching staff, as well as a disproportion between full and part time staff. Another problem is the lack of clear Appointment and Promotion (A & P) criteria, or lack of awareness of any criteria that might exist. The EC recommends the development of a plan for reshaping the faculty, also that A & P criteria be agreed upon. The teaching staff should be given greater involvement in the development of the curriculum, and they should be given incentives to develop research, once the nature and kinds of research in architecture are discussed and acknowledged. Lastly, the EC recommends that the Head of the School hold a full-time appointment.

iv. The EC observed a number of problems with the existing infrastructure; most generally that the existing building hardly suits the program's needs, nor does it serve as a model of high quality, inspiring architecture – just the reverse. The school needs better workshops, an expanded library, and more appropriate studio space.

1.1 Appointment and Membership of the Evaluation Committee

At its meeting on 23.10.07 the Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to evaluate study programs in the field of Architecture during the academic year 2007-8.

Following the decision of the Council for Higher Education (CHE), the Minister of Education, who serves ex officio as Chair of the CHE, appointed an Evaluation Committee for the evaluation of the academic quality of architecture studies in Israel. The Committee consists of:

- **Professor David Leatherbarrow, Department of Architecture, University of Pennsylvania, USA, Committee Chair**

- **Architect Bracha Chyutin, Chyutin Architects, Tel Aviv, Israel**

- **Professor Michael Gelick, School of Architecture, University of Illinois, Chicago, USA**

- **Professor Yehuda Kalay, College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley, USA**

- **Professor Moshe Margalith, Azrieli School of Architecture, Tel-Aviv University, Israel**

- **Professor Thomas Maver, Mackintosh School of Architecture, Glasgow School of Art, Scotland**

Ms. Alisa Elon, Coordinator of the Committee on behalf of the CHE.

Within the framework of its activity, the committee was requested to submit the following documents to the CHE:

1. A final report for each of the institutions that would include an evaluation of Architecture programs, the Committee's findings, and recommendations.

2.1 A general report regarding the status of the evaluated field of study in Israeli institutions of higher education.
2.2 Recommendations for standards in the evaluated field of study.

The committee's letter of appointment is attached as Appendix 1.

The first stage of the quality assessment process consisted of each institution's self assessment, resulting in the preparation and delivery of a self-evaluation report. This process was conducted in accordance with the CHE's guidelines as specified in *The Self-Evaluation Process: Recommendations and Guidelines* (October 2007).

1.2 Committee Procedures

The Committee held its first meeting on March 22, 2009. At this meeting committee members were given an overview of higher education in Israel and a description of the Israeli CHE. They also discussed Architecture study programs in Israel and fundamental issues concerning the committee's quality assessment activity.

During the period March-May 2009, committee members conducted a two-day visit to each of the four institutions under evaluation.

During these visits, the Committee met with the relevant officials at each institution, as well as with faculty members, students and alumni, and also conducted a tour of the campus.

In view of the fact that Prof. Moshe Margalith is a faculty member at the Tel Aviv University and in order to prevent the appearance of a conflict of interest, Prof. Margalith did not participate in the evaluation of the architecture study program at the TAU.

This report deals with the *Azrieli School of Architecture, at Tel Aviv University*.

The Committee's visit to the Tel Aviv University took place on March 23-24, 2009.

The schedule of the visit, including the list of participants representing the institution, is attached as *Appendix 2*.

The members of the committee thank the management of the institution and the School of Architecture for the self-evaluation report and for their hospitality towards the Committee during its visit.

1.3 Evaluation of the Azrieli School of Architecture, at Tel Aviv University

* This Report relates to the situation current at the time of the visit to the institution, and does not take account of any changes that may have occurred subsequently. The Report records the conclusions reached by the Evaluation Committee based on the documentation provided by the institution, information gained through interviews, discussion and observation as well as other information available to the Committee.

Background

Tel-Aviv University was established in 1956 and was fully accredited by the Council for Higher Education in 1969.

According to the institution's self-evaluation report, during the academic year 2007-8 there were 32,016 students at the university of whom 19,748 were studying for a BA degree, 6,639 for an MA degree, 1,799 for a Ph.D. degree and 377 students were studying in the Ph.D, direct track.

Undergraduate studies for a degree in architecture have been offered at Tel Aviv University since 1993 at the David Azrieli School of Architecture, in the Faculty of the Arts.

The institution's self evaluation report further states that in 2008, 370 students were enrolled in the program.

2. MISSION AND GOALS

2.1 Summary of the goals stated in self-evaluation report (SER):

> To confer upon students a broad cultural understanding of the physical environment.
> To encourage independent thinking based on specific kinds of knowledge (environment, technology, history, current practice).
> To cultivate professionalism based on craft and art.
> To develop a team of teachers, especially young teachers with potential.
> To seek excellence and develop leaders in both practice and theory.

2.2 Observations

The placement of the School in the Arts Faculty of the University of Tel Aviv (TAU) would seem to support the desire for cultivating breadth of understanding in the School's graduates (goal 1). Yet, the EC discovered several indications that this placement may conflict with the stated goal, contributing, instead, to the School's relative insularity within the University.

While craft is developed and communicated through the repetition of familiar techniques, the EC concluded that development of the art of architecture in this School has been stalled by neglect of new techniques being developed in other centers of learning, particularly techniques resulting from advances in information technology.

A sense of common purpose was expressed by many on the faculty, but it was also plain to the Committee that constructive criticism (by senior of junior colleagues) is relatively rare in this faculty. Overcoming this lack will help the faculty develop its junior colleagues.

The Committee found little integration of non-architecture subjects in studios (the human sciences, engineering, etc.). While courses on these subjects may be obligatory for students, their integration seems to be optional or occasional. There also seem to be missed opportunities for collaboration with other faculties, especially art, engineering and environmental studies.

Generally, the Committee found the character of student work to be rather conservative. This was particularly evident in the use of media for visualization and design generation. Design technique is at issue here, but also, and more fundamentally, understanding of the several media contemporary architects must use to express their ideas and convey the content of their designs.

The Committee observed a rather high degree of prescription for student work. The Committee feels the faculty should review and consider this and ask whether or not it encourages the independence of mind and method that is identified in the School's Mission Statement.

The EC observed less research than it expected. Research agendas seem to be relatively rare among members of this faculty. The absence of research initiative has lead to complacency and reliance on habituated or well-established methods, neither of which is good for a School's continued growth and development. The EC would like to suggest that excellence in theory and practice cannot develop in isolation.

When schools mainly build their professorate from the ranks of their own graduates, as this one does, there is a risk that the School as a whole, particularly its students, will not benefit from developments that occur elsewhere if they do not expand their knowledge by additional education elsewhere.

The infrequency of meetings and non-existence of forums for self- and mutual-criticism seems to have discouraged innovation in teaching methods, course content, and research.

Reliance on familiar and time-honored methods seem to have arrested the development of both art and technique in this School, as has the concomitant insulation against methods developed in other schools of architecture, industry, and the profession.

2.3 Recommendations

The EC strongly suggests that the School renew its Mission Statement, perhaps taking into account: 1) the place of this School in a comprehensive university, 2) contemporary developments in the professional practice of architecture, 3) current approaches to the

environment, 4) new opportunities for architecture that have arisen in information technology, and 5) global developments in architecture and its related fields.

The Committee also suggests that the School is poised for development along a number of fronts: 1) developing stronger linkages with the courses and teachers in the Arts Faculty, and the university at large, 2) the development of courses, workshops, and studios that introduce new modes and media of form generation and visualization, together with associated concepts and aspirations, and 3) the development of the history and theory curriculum in dialogue with the aims of the studios at the program's several levels. These steps towards achieving the School's mission and goals would require of the institution procedures and protocols and assessment and mentoring for junior and part-time faculty, as well as concrete opportunities for travel and exchange of both students and professors, foreign contacts that would cultivate awareness of new modes of practice.

3. CURRICULUM

3.1 Observations

The SER describes the curriculum as a "parallel progress" model (3.2.2.1), designed to provide exposure and experience of course work in several divisions in parallel, to form an integrated and balanced structure from the first year onward. A significant expectation of this pattern for learning is that "the integration and inclusive combination" of data acquired in parallel courses will be expressed in the projects carried out in the studio. The EC feels, however, that this goal has not been achieved. While the curriculum may indeed be balanced among the several areas of knowledge, the relative autonomy of courses and studios, which should be the vehicle for integrating the "parallel progress" model, and the absences of a unifying comprehensive design studio experience, hinders the student's understanding of how the different areas of study actually come together in the formation of built environments.

3.1.1 Design Studio

The sequence of design studios forms the curriculum core at the School. Historically, the studio concept evolved in architectural education from the Beaux-Arts Period, through the Bauhaus, and continues today as a collection of ideas and experiences. At the Azrieli School, these experiences include: a Bauhaus-based introduction to design principles, a thematic or subject focused emphasis (such as sustainable design), and independent or student-generated design studies. The five year studio sequence is organized in a traditional pattern with introductory small scale exercises in the first year, to larger scale more comprehensive projects in the final year. The first year is an introductory studio. The second year focuses on the connection between idea, content and function. The pattern of the exercises shifts back and forth from the general to the detail. The third year includes planning of more complex, medium sized projects. The fourth year includes two main

subjects: "complex buildings in an urban context, and design of the urban environment." The final year is a summation year where each student develops one project in a comprehensive way. (3.2.3).

The EC identified the professionalism of the faculty, and their dedication to their students, as positive traits of the School. Some studios even integrated the staff's own research interests with the studio, such as the conservation studio, which was truly commendable. However, in the Committee's judgment, these represented rather isolated examples of interrelating research and professional work, and illustrate the relative autonomy and discontinuity of the curriculum.

The Committee also noted the rather constrained, prescriptive nature of the projects, which seem to limit independence of thought. A clear evidence of such constraints is the pre-determination of studio presentation formats, and the limited use of digital media for composition and communication of design ideas. When the student work in this school is compared with that of students elsewhere – especially abroad – this work has a rather conservative, traditional, and of cautious character.

The whole question concerning the use of computers in the curriculum needs to be addressed. Staff should also see if there are not better ways of making use of courses outside the School, and aligning outside courses with the needs of the students.

The Committee feels that the School has not adopted a sufficiently robust practice of criticism with respect to its curriculum. The Committee concluded that renewal of the curriculum is necessary if students are to have real opportunities for creativity and innovation. The staff and students could do much more to address current topics, such as sustainability, globalization, and new media.

One way to foster critical review of the curriculum would be to institute, or at least embrace, study abroad. Where such experiences existed at TAU, they seem to have been very beneficial. Yet, there was little, if any, evidence of a formally structured program, such as those that are typical in schools throughout the world. In fact, visits to other schools initiated by students themselves, were overlooked by faculty.

3.2 Recommendations

In order for the School to achieve its mission and goals, the EC has the following recommendations:

An earlier introduction in the curriculum to urbanism, with an emphasis on contextual case studies (in Tel Aviv, as well as elsewhere in Israel), infrastructure, open space and buildings case studies, would seem consonant with the School's Mission.

A more consistent approach to sustainability seems important and timely. This approach would benefit from collaborations with cognate TAU studies (e.g., the TAU environmental studies program).

The study program should encourage and facilitate interdisciplinary project work with applied courses in the Faculty of Arts, such as film, photography, etc.

The theory/history of the built environment, especially of Israel and Tel Aviv, should be emphasized.

Computing should be incorporated as a mode of design thinking in studios from the first day. Consideration should be given to the requirement that all students acquire a laptop of appropriate specification. Diverse software should be introduced, and made available to students over the wireless network.

A design methods emphasis, which includes critical analysis, innovation-driven design, and design problem solving, should be included as a studio strategy.

An integrative comprehensive course (sequence) could be introduced "design, economics, and integrated architecture" in the 4th and 5th years to focus on building and site design in-depth.

A technology based studio(s) could be included that incorporates comprehensive building sub-systems analysis and prototyping (universal buildings vs. contextual buildings).

Required courses could be integrated in an appropriate ratio with elective courses, in order to enhance the diversity of the students' educational experiences: physics and mathematics, film, history, and philosophy.

Practitioners could be better utilized in the 5th year where practical, complex projects are more common. Increased involvement of teaching staff in curriculum development would promote communication and enhance their sense of participation in the School.

Finally, three over riding issues became apparent during the discussions with administrators and faculty. The first issue, regarding the incorporation (or, rather, lack thereof) of computers in the study program, emerged with a cynical statement from a senior member of staff regarding the adverse effects of computers, to the effect that "computers will ruin the world". While such a view may be one among many, it explains the reluctant use of digital media in the projects presented to the EC. This stance can hardly define a school in our time, if students are to be equipped for effective professional practice. Second, the School's studios appear to be designed independently by each instructor. This approach promotes a lack of cohesiveness and continuity. Rather, a coordination of the studios should be undertaken, so students (and instructors) can build upon what students learned in previous studios, and prepare them for forthcoming ones. Third, and most importantly, an attitude emerged during faculty discussions that identified architecture as an accidental,

directionless profession. A wide and sustained discussion of the cultural values of architecture will help the School discover its role in and relevance to contemporary Israeli society.

4. FACULTY

4.1 Observations

The staff of the Azrieli School of Architecture at TAU comprises 10 FTE.
The staff comprises three groups:

Full-time teaching staff: 2
Part-time teaching staff: 21
Adjunct teaching staff: 37

Only two staff members are currently full-time, and of these only one has a permanent position (tenure). It is notable that the Head of the School is (and always has been) a part-time, non-permanent staff member.

Part-time, non-permanent staff are responsible for teaching design studio courses, and for all administrative functions. Very few (5) have advanced degrees (MSc, PhD, DDes). Theory courses are taught by full-time permanent (or permanent-track) staff who typically hold advanced degrees, who are drawn from departments and Faculties outside the school.

The teaching staff is highly dedicated, but also rather frustrated. Although staff members feel that they devote more time to the School than called for by their contractual agreements, in reality they do not: their contracts call for 44-50% time, yet most spend only one or two afternoon/evening a week at the School. This is understandable (though not desirable), because all but two are part-time or adjunct appointments, and they must juggle their commitments to the school with their out-of-school commitments.

While highly motivated, the teaching staff is uncritical, and projects reflect an overall image of weakness, as demonstrated by statements such as "the curriculum is a given." It appears to be directionless, relying on the inaugural Mission Statement, which has not been updated since the School has been established. Hence, the Committee takes strong exception to the assertion stated in the SER that the teaching staff facilitates "flexibility and dynamism in the study program."

The SER also states that the teaching staff is multidisciplinary (p. 71), as befits a professional studies program within a comprehensive university. The staff roster in Chapter 6.2 of the SER seems to support this statement. Yet a closer examination reveals that the core faculty (the studio teachers) are not at all diversified: the vast majority (twenty eight of 33) are practicing architects.

Still, the teaching cohort can be described as multidisciplinary because it includes individuals whose main affiliation lies with departments outside the School. As noted in the SER (p. 76), these faculty do not consider the School to be their "home." Yet it is these faculty who are responsible for teaching most theory courses, and for practically all the research that is conducted at the School.

Consequently, there is little integration between theory and practice (the design studios). In fact, when integration does occur, it happens at the initiative of the students, rather the faculty, a point that was affirmed by both faculty and students.

Core staff, who are practitioners, have a diversified expertise in many areas of professional practice: city planning, urban planning, planning complex structures, public buildings, interior design, and more (see section 3.5.1.1). Thus they bring considerable professional knowledge to the studios. This, of course, is commendable and expected. However, their expertise is practical, rather than critical: although some participate in design competitions, their creative production is not generally subjected to peer review, nor do they participate in research activities. Core staff explained that their part-time/impermanent positions at the School, coupled with the exigencies of their practice, do not allow them to devote time to research (one senior colleague observed: "they must feed their families").

Instead, research is mostly the province of the "outside" staff who do not teach design studios, and therefore is only integrated into the School's curriculum through the seminar courses they teach. Although the SER (p. 72) states that the research of the teaching staff "contribute to the courses given by the teachers/researchers," the Committee finds this approach to enriching and advancing the state of knowledge of the students to be insufficient and ineffective. Most of the students' efforts are centered on the studio courses, rather than the seminars. Since studios are taught by non-research faculty, the Committee considers infusing research through seminar courses and through professional updating of the "practical courses" taught by practicing architects to be an inadequate substitute for original research activities.

The paucity of research at the School may explain why both teaching staff and the students appear to be uninformed about emerging technologies and other global issues in contemporary architectural discourse. There is little evidence of innovation in the studio projects that were presented to the Evaluation Committee, nor even awareness of issues that permeate such discourse (globalization, sustainability, technology, etc.).

The absence of connection to international forums or organizations that could inform staff and students about such developments further contributes to a state of conservativism and un-informedness.

The Head of the School has much power to influence the curriculum and the composition of the staff. The choice of head, therefore, is very important. Yet, contrary to the SER's statement that only full time staff members are eligible for the position of head (p. 72), the

Head of School has always been a part-time, non-permanent staff member, whose selection for the position appears to be ad-hoc rather than on stated academic criteria.

It is unclear what procedures are in place for appointing non-permanent, part-time teaching staff, other than their availability and willingness to teach. While officially the term of their appointment may be short (8-12 months), most have been re-appointed again and again, for over ten-years (some, since the inception of the school). There is little evidence of turnover, despite the SER's assertion that "should their research not progress, their appointment is terminated" (p. 72). The appointment of relatively recent graduates of the School, who did not benefit from additional education at other institutions and have not yet had much experience in practice, may further add to stagnation, in-bred mentality, and non-argumentative conformism.

The selection of non-practitioners to teach theory courses in the School is based mostly on their availability (pp. 74, 75). It is strongly influenced by budgetary considerations (as per the Dean). Hence, as stated in the SER, the staff so appointed may not be the most suitable for the needs of the School. These teachers often do not modify their courses to meet the needs of architecture students (as per the Dean). Consequently, some of the courses they offer are perceived by the students to be irrelevant. The feeling appears to be mutual: some of the teachers are reported (by the Dean) to resent accommodating Architecture students in their classes. The EC concurs with the SER assertion that it would be preferable to employ teachers for (non-practice) courses who will develop and teach courses that specifically meet the needs of the students in the School.

The pairing of a senior and a junior faculty in teaching studio courses is pedagogically excellent, but it limits the growth potential of the staff. It may also be a luxury the School cannot afford. It might be better to limit the number of teachers per studio to one, and convert some of the released FTE to full-time, research-oriented positions, while finding ways in which studio teachers can contribute to each other's classes as visiting critics.

The part-time and non-permanence nature of the teaching staff, coupled with lack of office space—or even a dedicated conference space—makes them feel like nomads, and impedes communication among them. There are no staff meetings where issues and initiatives can be raised and discussed as a group. Teachers of one studio year do not know, and therefore do not build upon, what is taught in previous studio years, nor prepare their students for the next studio year. One teacher has characterized the nature of their encounters as "hit & run": they come and teach their course, then go back to their private practices outside the school.

The lack of communication and the uncritical acceptance of the existing curriculum contribute to the general absence of new initiatives, or even independent, original thought: the teaching staff have no vision of the larger whole. Both the Rector and Dean, who are not architects, seem to have a more comprehensive, progressive vision than the teaching staff of the School, as do some students, especially ones who have taken time off to spend a

year abroad. Even the celebrated spring field-exercise, when the entire student body helps some needy community in Israel, was a student-initiated activity.

4.2 Recommendations

The Committee recommends that the composition of the teaching staff should be reconsidered in two ways. First, the imbalance between theory-oriented and practice-oriented staff, which is currently heavily tilted towards the latter, should be corrected: more FTE should be allotted to research-oriented staff. This may be achieved by assigning to the School more FTE, or by abandoning the current practice of pairing studio teachers, as mentioned above. Second, the School should actively and aggressively recruit full-time, permanent teaching staff, whose main activity is research rather than practice.

The composition of the existing staff, and the criteria for their continued employment, should be re-examined, to allow for change, renewal, and the introduction of new ideas.

Means to facilitate the exchange of ideas among the staff, and between the staff and the university and the academic community in Israel and world-wide, should be created. This may be achieved by bringing in staff from other institutions for defined periods, through exchange of faculty (sabbaticals) and students (study abroad, or at least at other Israeli schools of architecture), and through membership in national and international academic forums.

Incentives and opportunities for research must be created and encouraged. The definition of research should be expanded to include critical practice. Proper academic criteria for appointment, re-appointment, and promotion should be adopted. Such criteria have been developed at other schools of architecture around the world, which can be consulted and used as a basis for developing specific A&P criteria for the School of Architecture at TAU.

The Head of the School should be appointed through commensurate academic practices used in other Faculties at TAU. His/her position should be as a senior, permanent, full-time staff member, who will devote his/her time exclusively to the needs of the School.

5. RESEARCH

5.1 Observations

Two areas of research activity are presented in the SER. The first is academic in nature and encompasses the creation of new knowledge and its development in the form of publications and presentations at conferences. The second lies in the practice of architecture and is concentrated in the area of critical planning, design and technical accomplishments in practice, recognized through publications, exhibits and awards. This duality reflects on the faculty, a multidisciplinary teaching staff, including those who have an academic focus and those who to a much greater extent are involved in practice directly concentrating on planning, design and the arts.

As discussed above in the Faculty section of the report, the list of faculty at the School also includes faculty from the fields of geography, history, engineering, mathematics, sociology, physics and philosophy. It is these "external" faculty who are responsible for the academic type of research, which may or may not be relevant, in some way, to architecture.

The architects and artists, who comprise the core faculty of the school, are mostly part- or half-time, non-permanent faculty, who are responsible for the research in the practice of architecture. The SER identifies exhibitions and prizes won by these faculty that represent critical issues relating to architecture in Israel and beyond.

The SER makes the relevant distinction between "conventional" research/scholarship output – e.g. journal papers, conference presentations, books, etc – and "non conventional" output such as buildings, exhibitions, installations, etc.

Although numerous accomplishments in both areas of research are identified in the SER, very limited discussion, evidence or presentation of these activities was shared at the meetings with the Committee. Furthermore, it appears that the vast majority of publications have been authored by faculty providing service teaching to the school, rather than the core faculty. As the SER does not provide a list of publications, it is unclear to what extent these scholarly products relate to the core issues in architecture as opposed to the disparate specialist interests of the authors. Furthermore, as stated earlier, there is little evidence that research permeated the selected work presented by students representing the 1st through 4th years of the architectural curriculum.

There would appear to be significant practice related output from the staff within the School. Yet, there is little evidence that this output can or has been considered 'critical,' in the sense that it has been subject to peer review in the form of competitions, publications, and other means of critical evaluation.

5.2 Recommendations

The scholarly and research output relating to architecture should be increased to a level appropriate to a school of architecture in a university. This can be accomplished by significantly increasing the ratio of full-time permanent staff compared to part-time, impermanent staff, and by encouraging the practice-oriented staff to submit their work to peer-reviewed, critical evaluation. One way to support this process would be to condition continued appointment on the production of scholarly or critically evaluated work.

Adding a graduate integrated program in architecture, possibly in combination with the geography and environmental curricula, along with an infusion of the research accomplishments into the studio courses, will enhance the strength of the curriculum and strengthen the faculty.

6. STUDENTS and LEARNING

6.1 Observations

Applications for admission to the School are buoyant and the qualifications of those accepted are high.

The drop-out rate is high and not fully explained in the SER.

The current and graduated students which the EC met were articulate, generally supportive of the School, but critical in some important regards; specifically, the paucity of technology content, no thesis and little written requirement, no "in-depth" knowledge of staff because of little research activity, complaints regarding the curriculum not addressed, ITC outdated, no exchange programs, not enough theory, prescribed aesthetic/values in studio programs.

6.1.1 Student Work

We were presented with six student projects by the authors that covered the first through the fourth year. The students were enthusiastic, articulate, and quite proficient at conceptualizing, developing and presenting their work. The work ranged from a small-scale interior special exercise to large visionary urbanistic studies. A conservation studio product was presented that developed a comprehensive analysis and design for an historic well house. This was a mature and sensitive proposal that was a highlight of the student work presented.

A project was included that focused on issues of sustainable design related to an electric car depot interrelated with a music center. This emphasis on the sensory interplay of noise-free cars adjacent to a music venue added credence to the sensitivity to the conditions. Our overall reaction to the students was very positive, yet many of their projects reflected the reservations listed above (prescriptive, conservative, and lacking in digital communication skills).

6.1.2 Student Backgrounds

The students responded to questions asking information of their background and the attraction of the TAU school of architecture as follows:
Many students are from the local area, quite possibly the majority.
The School's location in the city makes it a very good place to study architecture.
The curriculum that combines artistic and technical components contains the appropriate balance for this field of study.

The idea that the School will concentrate on intellectual, critical, and theoretical interests as well as design pragmatics is a strong attraction.

6.1.3 Student Concerns

Class sizes are too large and contact hours with teachers are limited.
Additional guidance and attention would enhance the learning experience.
The School is dramatically behind in the use of computer/digital technology.
The School does not take advantage of the diverse offerings within TAU.
The School should teach the "basics" since change is so rapid.
The School should offer increased integral focus on critical, theoretical issues related to design and then environment.
Irrelevant courses should be weeded out that are weak and waste time and energy.
The School should offer more diverse courses as electives that exist in the TAU.
The School should embrace a global awareness with an open eye to the future.
Students indicated that the curriculum was lacking in "state of the subject" conceptual and technique development.
Students who have experienced study abroad commented that the school does not "keep up" with advances in the field of architecture.
Student surveys are not responded.

6.1.4 Student Initiatives
The students have initiated community based interactive projects with faculty support that begin to connect the school to the Israeli/Tel Aviv context. Expansion of programs like this, including the spring workshop, could enrich the program and benefit the community.

6.2 Recommendations

Many of the students' concerns were also identified by the Committee elsewhere in this report. The curriculum should be revised to overcome the deficiencies identified by the students and the Committee. The students are positive and their contributions to the development of the School's programs should be acknowledged and encouraged.

7. INFRASTRUCTURE and RESOURCES (Physical and Human)

7.1 Observations

Consideration of the infrastructure of the School is predicated on what the Committee understands to be unprecedented financial constraints affecting the Higher Education sector in Israel. The TAU has been operating a deficit budget for the past 5 years, during which the number of academic staff has fallen from circa 1,300 to circa 950 with consequences for all 9 Faculties and 70 Departments in the Institution (this information was supplied to the Committee by the TAU).

The SER is quite open and explicit regarding how shortages in resource has impacted on human resources (pp73/76), space (pp78/82), the provision of ICT (pp75/7), library services (pp 75/82), and the workshop (p82).

The following sub-sections deal with these and other aspects of infrastructure, in its broadest sense.

7.1.1 Human Resources

The level of technical and administrative support is significantly lower than appropriate for a School of this size.

7.1.2 Space

The building occupied by the School is inadequate in a number of regards:

i. Studio space for architectural design: rooms are too small for the number of students they accommodate, resulting in the provision of under-sized desks for student use.

ii. The number of studio spaces available is inadequate, requiring sharing the same room between multiple classes (Tue/Thu vs. Mon/Wed). As a result, students cannot leave their work in the studio, and do not treat the studio as "their space". Instead, they work at home, rather than in the studio, thereby adversely affecting the pedagogical experience of architectural design.

ii) Office accommodation for staff is non-existent. Only the head of the school has an office. All others must share one windowless office as a place to hold private meetings with students. There is no place for meeting of the faculty, other than a public space in front of the secretaries' office.

iii) Absence of a gallery space: the only space available is part of the corridor, which is also used by non-architecture students to pass through the building on their way from the dorms to their classes.

iv) Classrooms dispersed throughout the Campus.

7.1.3 ICT

Whereas there is wireless network coverage to part of the building, the lab provision (21 workstations, 4 scanners and 2 printers) is insufficient and out-dated. There is no ITC provision in the studios. There also appears to be a shortage of laser cutters and 3D printers. But the provision of equipment alone will not be sufficient to deal with the ICT problems facing the School, for these tools and their use will need to be integrated into the pedagogy if they are to have real impact.

The TAU has an On-Line Academic Learning facility and Video Based E-Learning Services; however, the School does not avail itself of these facilities to any great extent.

7.1.4 Library

The Library is modest in size and in number of volumes and is under threat of absorption into the main University Library. Yet, the staff is dedicated and the students seem to make good use of what they have.

7.1.5 Model Workshop

The workshop facilities are wholly inadequate. There is provision for modest carpentry work but no facilities for working with metal, glass, plastic, etc.

7.1.6 Management Infrastructure

The Evaluation Committee considered the management structure to be overly hierarchical and an impediment to the participation of all academic staff in the shaping of the curriculum and the evaluation of the Programme outcomes.
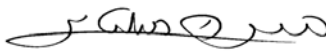
7.2 Recommendations

The University should give urgent consideration to the provision of a building which is fit-for-purpose for architectural education – providing suitable staff accommodation, adequate studio space, an expanded Library and a range of well equipped workshops.

Emerging information technologies are having a profound impact on the way teaching and learning in design education is shaped. The School, the Faculty and the University have to make adequate provision of state-of-the-art hardware and software and develop a plan for its subsequent regular upgrades. The School must also foster, in staff and students, a more progressive culture regarding ICT.
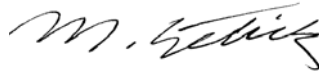
Signed By:

(signature)

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Prof. David Leatherbarrow

Committee Chair
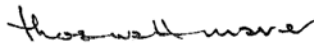
(signature)

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Architect Bracha Chyutin

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Prof. Michael Gelick

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Prof. Yehuda Kalay

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Prof. Thomas Maver

מجلس
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המועצה
להשכלה
גבוהה

COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Planning & Budgeting Committee | הועדה לתכנון ולתקצוב

17 March 2009

Professor David Leatherbarrow
Department of Architecture
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia
USA

Dear Professor Leatherbarrow,

The State of Israel undertook an ambitious project when the Israeli Council for Higher Education (CHE) established a quality assessment and assurance system for Israeli higher education. Its stated goals are: to enhance and ensure the quality of academic studies; to provide the public with information regarding the quality of study programs in institutions of higher education throughout Israel; and to ensure the continued integration of the Israeli system of higher education in the international academic arena. Involvement of world-renowned academicians in this process is essential.

This most important initiative reaches out to scientists in the international arena in a national effort to meet the critical challenges that confront the Israeli higher educational system today. The formulation of international evaluation committees represents an opportunity to express our common sense of concern and to assess the current and future status of education in the 21st century and beyond. It also establishes a structure for an ongoing consultative process among scientists around the globe on common academic dilemmas and prospects.

I therefore deeply appreciate your willingness to join us in this crucial endeavor.
It is with great pleasure that I hereby appoint you to serve as Chair of the Council for Higher Education's Committee for the Evaluation of Academic Quality for Architecture Studies. The composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. David Leatherbarrow-Chair, Arch. Bracha Chyutin, Prof. Michael Gelick, Prof. Yehuda Kalay, Prof. Moshe Moshe Margalith and Prof. Thomas W Maver.
Ms. Alisa Elon will coordinate the Committee's activities.

In your capacity as Chair of the Evaluation Committee, you will be requested to function in accordance with the enclosed appendix.

I wish you much success in your role as a member of this most important committee.

Sincerely,

Professor Yuli Tamir
Minister of Education, Culture and Sport
and Chairperson of the Council for Higher Education

Enclosures: Appendix to the Appointment Letter of Evaluation Committees
cc: Ms. Riki Mendelzvaig, Secretary of the Council for Higher Education
         Ms. Michal Neumann, Head of the Quality Assessment Unit
         Ms. Alisa Elon, Committee Coordinator

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October 07

Appendix to the Letter of Appointment for Evaluation Committees (Study Programs)

1. General

On June 3, 2003 the Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to establish a system for quality assessment and assurance in Israeli higher education. Within this framework, study-programs are to be evaluated every six years and institutions every eight years. The quality assessment system came into effect in the academic year of 2004-2005.

The main objectives of the quality assessment activity are:

- To enhance the quality of higher education in Israel;
- To create an awareness within institutions of higher education in Israel of the importance of quality evaluation and to develop internal self-evaluation mechanisms on a regular basis;
- To provide the public with information regarding the quality of study programs in institutions of higher education throughout Israel;
- To ensure the continued integration of the Israeli system of higher education in the international academic arena.

It is not the CHE's intention to rank the institutions of higher education according to the results of the quality assessment processes. The evaluation committee should refrain from formal comparisons.

2. The Work of the Evaluation Committee

2.1 The committee shall hold meetings, as needed, before visiting the institution, in order to evaluate the material received.

2.2 The committee shall visit the institution and the academic unit being evaluated – if possible - within 3-4 months of receiving the self-evaluation report. The purpose of the visit is to verify and update the information submitted in the self-evaluation report, clarify matters where necessary, inspect the educational environment and facilities first hand, etc. During the visit, the committee will meet with the heads of the institution, faculty members, students, the administrative staff, and any other persons it considers necessary.

2.3 In a meeting at the beginning of the visit, the committee will meet with the heads of the institution (president/rector, dean), the heads of the academic unit and the study-programs, in order to explain the purpose of the visit. At the end

of the visit, the committee will summarize its findings, and formulate its recommendations.

2.4 The duration of the visits (at least one full day) will be coordinated with the chairperson of the committee.

2.5 Following the visit, the committee will write its final report, including its recommendations, which will be delivered to the institution and the academic unit for their response.

2.6 In the event that a member of the committee is also a faculty member in an institution being evaluated, he/she will not take part in discussions regarding that institution.

3. The Individual Reports

3.1 The final reports of the evaluation committee shall address every institution separately.

3.2 The final reports shall include recommendations on topics listed in the guidelines for self –evaluation, such as:
- The goals and aims of the evaluated academic unit and study programs.
- The study program.
- The academic staff.
- The students.
- The organizational structure.
- The broader organizational structure (school/faculty) in which the academic unit and study program operate.
- The infrastructure (both physical and administrative) available to the study program.
- Internal mechanisms for quality assessment.
- Other topics to be decided upon by the evaluation committee.

4. The structure of the reports

4.1 Part A – General background and an executive summary:

4.1.1 General background concerning the evaluation process, the names of the members of the committee, a general description of the institution and the academic unit being assessed, and the committee's work.

4.1.2 An executive summary that will include a description of the strengths and weaknesses of the academic unit and program being evaluated.

4.2 Part B – In-depth description of subjects examined:

4.2.1 This part will be composed according to the topics examined by the evaluation committee, and based on the self-evaluation report submitted by the institution.

4.2.2 For each topic examined the report will present a summary of the findings, the relevant information and analysis.

4.3 Part C –Recommendations:

4.3.1 Comprehensive conclusions and recommendations regarding the evaluated academic unit and the study program according to the topics in part B.

4.3.2 Recommendations may be classified according to the following categories:
- *Congratulatory remarks and minimal changes recommended, if any.*

- *Desirable changes recommended* at the institution's convenience and follow-up in the next cycle of evaluations.
- *Important/needed changes requested for ensuring appropriate academic quality* within a reasonable time, in coordination with the institution (1-3 years)
- *Essential and urgent changes required, on which continued authorization will be contingent* (immediately or up to one year).
- *A combination of any of the above.*

4.4 Part D - Appendices:

The appendices shall contain the committee's letter of appointment and the schedule of the on-site visit.

5. The General report

In addition to the individual reports concerning each study program, the committee shall submit to the CHE the following documents:

5.1 A general report regarding the status of the evaluated field of study within the Israeli institutions of higher education.

5.2 Recommendations for standards in the evaluated field of study.

We urge the committee to clearly list its specific recommendations for each one of the topics (both in the individual reports and in the general report) and to prioritize these recommendations, in order to ease the eventual monitoring of their implementation.

****

Monday, March 23rd 2009

Time	Subject	Participants	Comments
09:00-09:30	Opening session w\heads of TAU & senior member appointed to deal with QA	**Prof. Dany Leviatan**, Rector; **Prof. Aron Shai**, Vice Rector; **Prof. David Horn**, Charge\Liason with QA Committee	
09:30-10:00	Meeting with academic leadership of Faculty	**Prof. Hannah Naveh**, Dean; **Dr. Ilan Avissar**, Chair of Faculty Teaching Committee	
10:00-10:30	Meeting with academic & administrative Heads of Dept.	**Arch. Itzchak Laiwand**, Head of Scool of Arch.; **Arch. Hillel Schocken**, former Head of School of Arch.; **Ms. Orna Oberman**, Faculty Administraive Director; **Mr. Chaim Elad**, School of Arch. Assistant Administrator	
10:30-11:30	Meeting with representatives of relevant committees	Teaching Committee: **Arch. Daniel Wachtel**; Evaluation & Grades Committee: **Prof. Arch. Gad Heller**; Class Advisors: **Arch. Dan Price**; Class Advisors: **Arch. Ayala Ronel**; Class Advisors: **Arch. Leonardo Calichman, Arch. Tzvi Harel Arch. Danny Lazar**; Curriculum Development Committee: **Dr. Arch. Eran Neuman, Dr. Esther Grabiner, Dr. Avi Mosseiri**	*
11:30-12:15	Tour of Campus	**Laiwand, Schocken , Elad,**	
12:15-13:00	Lunch	QA Committee members	
13:00-14:00	Closed door working session of QA committee	QA Committee members	

Tuesday, March 24th 2009

Time	Subject	Participants	Comments
09:00-09:45	Meeting with senior academic staff	Dr. Arch. Eran Neuman, Dr. Esther Grabiner, Arch. Sari Klauss, Arch. Orit Pinchas, Prof. Arch. Gad Heller, Arch. Chilik Korin, Arch. Amnon Baror, Prof. Arch. Elinoar Barzacchi, Arch. Ayala Ronel, Arch. Danny Lazar, Mr. Moshe Salomon, Dr. Henry Unger, Dr. Edina Mayer-Meril, Prof. Moshe Fuchs	*
09:45-10:30	Meeting with junior academic staff	Arch. Leonardo Calichman, Arch. Esti Carmon, , Arch. Ruth Shapira,	*
10:30-11:15	Meeting with adjunct lecturers	Arch. Tula Amir, Arch. Dafna Matok, Arch. Sergio Lerman; Arch. Ohad Yechieli; Arch. Peter Keinan	*
11:15-12:15	Presentation of projects by 6 students	Laiwand, Schocken, Elad Students to be determined.	5 min. per presentation + 5 min. per discussion
12:15-13:00	Meeting with 12 students	Students to be determined.	* Students of all years of study
13:00-13:30	Meeting with alumni	5-6 alumni to be determined.	
13:30-	Lunch	QA Committee members	
14:15-	Closed door working session	QA Committee members	
14:15-	QA		
14:45-15:15	Summation w\Heads of TAU & Dept.	Leviatan, Shai, Naveh, Laiwand, Schocken	