

Response to Prof. Wolfgang Donsbach's Review over the Implementation of the Recommendations Made by the External Evaluation Team of Communication Departments in Israel (January 2013)

Summary of the Self-Evaluation Committee's Original Recommendation by Prof. Donsbach (WD; December 2012) + Committee's Recommendation (CR; November, 2009)	Prof. Donsbach's Opinion Regarding Implementation of the Recommendation (December 2012)	Department's (D) / University's (U) Response (January 2013)
<p>(WD) The Committee suggested to address immediately the high drop-out rates in both the B.A. and (even more so) the M.A. program. The department should renew its commitments to understand and remediate the drop-out rates for both programs. <i>(short-term recommendation)</i></p> <p>(CR) We do not assume that we know what solutions might be best for all parties involved, but we are certain that these problems are soluble. Specifically, we put forward as catalysts for the solutions adopted the following (admittedly incomplete) list of considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Gather evidence about drop outs at B.A. and M.A. levels (surveys, interviews, focus groups) •Establish liaison with students on a continuing and institutionalized basis about their needs and expectations •Increase the mentoring of M.A. students and monitor its effectiveness •Institute writing workshops in the second year to assist in completion of the thesis •Restructure the M.A. curriculum, particularly during the second year, to insure thesis completion within a two year period. <p>(p. 12-13, CR, 2009)</p>	<p>The Department embraced four out of the five suggestions that the Committee had given: Gathering evidence about drop outs, establish liaison with students on a continuing and institutionalized basis about their needs and expectations, increase the mentoring of M.A. students, and institute writing workshops to assist in completion of the thesis.</p> <p>The department did not restructure the MA curriculum per se in order to insure thesis completion within a two year period but it added a course ("Thesis Writing Workshop") and offered non-thesis programs.</p>	<p>(D) It is important to mention that the normative time (set by the CHE) for completion of thesis programs is three years, not two.</p>

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<p>(WD) On the second issue the Committee held that the Department can retain its commitment to theory and research while using practice to enhance the subtle appreciation of theory. <i>(short-term recommendation)</i></p> <p>(CR)...We see three significant and immediate needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Willingness of the faculty to truly address the role of practice in its under-graduate curriculum •University support of a faculty member who can bridge practice and theory/research in the curriculum <p>•University support of the re-opening of the television studio and development of laboratory environments for more realistic and high-quality hands-on study of journalistic writing, editing and design; advertising and public relations practice. (p.13, CR, 2009)</p>	<p>All points were addressed as recommended by the Committee.</p>	<p>(D) About 50,000NIS were spent on the purchase of radio equipment. This equipment has been sitting in boxes for over three years now because the University has not committed the necessary space for a studio. Video cameras that were purchased at the same time are used on a regular basis.</p> <p>(U) An arrangement was reached such that the Department of Communication's students could use the Academic Channel's facilities to gain academic experience under the supervision of the Department. The Rector's Office was recently put in charge of the Channel and the Faculty of Social Science is aware of this development.</p>

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<p>(WD) The middle- and long-term recommendations also focused mainly on the high drop-out rate particularly in the M.A. program. <i>(Middle- and Long-term Recommendations)</i></p> <p>(CR) •Consider granting course credit for thesis work or thesis proposal preparation •Structure the second year to insure motivation to complete the thesis</p> <p>•Seriously consider an M.A. without thesis should other solutions fail; the committee is aware of the concern that the quality of MA applicants could decline if the non-thesis option exists. (p.13-14, CR, 2009)</p>	<p>I recommend that faculty still thinks about further alterations to the existing Master <i>with</i> thesis in order not to lose those students with higher academic ambitions.</p>	<p>(D) Following the opening of the non-thesis study programs (and an additional pending non thesis study program), the thesis track has become more selective in admission and we thus expect a significantly lower dropout rate.</p>
<p>(WD) A final point raised by the Committee concerned interdisciplinary research with other units at Haifa University. <i>(Middle- and Long-term Recommendation)</i></p> <p>(CR)•Increase the degree of interdisciplinary research with other units in the University. (p. 14, CR, 2009)</p>	<p>Information on both topics is rather vague and no evidence given on concrete research project proposals with other disciplines.</p>	<p>(D) Some collaboration currently occurs, including joint appointments (Prof. Tamar Katriel – Education, Prof. Gabriel Weimann – Sociology, Dr. Ouzi Elyada – History, Dr. Eli Avraham heads the Comper Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism and Racism). As a matter of principle, however, the Department does not intervene in the research interests of its faculty members, including their collaboration with faculty in other departments.</p>