

**Response to Prof. Benedict H. Gross's review over the Implementation of the Recommendations made by the External Evaluation
Team of Mathematics Study-Programs in Israel, December 2012**

Specific Report

Committee's Recommendation (Specific Report; August, 2010)	University's (U) / Department's (D) Implementation of the Recommendation (July 2012)	Prof. Gross's Opinion Regarding Report on Implementation of the Recommendation (August 2012)	University's (U) / Department's (D) Response (January 2013)
<p>1. Both the University and the department should explore possibilities for cooperation or even an alliance in mathematics with the Technion. The committee recommends setting up a joint Ph.D. program in mathematics.</p>	<p>(D) At the beginning of this year we approached the administrations of the Technion and the University of Haifa asking them to allow students from each mathematics department to take classes in the other institute without having to pay additional fees. Both institutions agreed informally and one of our students has already completed a course in the Technion's Mathematics department in semester A. In order for students to get formally accredited for such courses it is important that both administrations set up a formal track for such an exchange.</p>	<p>I was glad to hear that they (HU Dept. of Mathematics) have reached an informal agreement with Technion to allow students to cross-register for courses without any additional fee.</p>	<p>(U) We thank Prof. Gross for his detailed and important review of the implementation report in the field of Mathematics at the University of Haifa and, in general, we are glad that he acknowledged that most of the recommendations concerning the Department of Mathematics were properly implemented.</p>
<p>2. In view of the increasing relevance of mathematics to all academic disciplines, the University should consider offering a mathematics course as part of the general curriculum for students in the Humanities.</p>	<p>(D) The course "A window to Mathematics" was offered this year for the second time to all students of the University. In academic year 2012/13, the course "Mathematical Thinking" will be offered to all undergraduate students as part of the University's enrichment program "Derech Haruach" (The Mindscapes Program). We plan to keep offering this course in the coming years depending on budget availability.</p>	<p>I was also delighted to hear that they (HU Dept. of Mathematics) have increased their presence in the general education curriculum at the University, offering courses for students in the Humanities.</p>	
<p>3. Given the segmented structure of the University, with the unusual positioning of mathematics, computer science, and statistics, the deans should ensure that the potential of the Department of Mathematics is fully exploited.</p>	<p>(D) As a result of efforts of previous years, many of the University's mathematics courses are given by the Department of Mathematics. At the same time, the size of our faculty is constantly decreasing, and the faculty's departmental teaching load (8 hours per year), together with other teaching obligations, already exceeds the teaching load of all other math departments in Israel. In this sense "the potential of the Department of Mathematics" is fully exploited. (U) The administration would like to clarify that this teaching load is common across the majority of departments at our university.</p>	<p>---</p>	<p>---</p>

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<p>4. The leadership of the department should design a strategic plan to safeguard and extend its core mission in view of the upcoming retirements and the planned developments in the Faculty of Science and Science Education.</p>	<p>(D) Since the committee's report was published, two additional faculty members have retired (one of the two is retiring this year). While we have recruited an excellent young geometer, who will start next academic year, the depletion of our faculty is still our greatest concern in terms of the department's future and our ability to maintain a basic program for undergraduate and graduate studies and a vital research group.</p>	<p>There still remains a problem with the size of the faculty, which has continued to shrink and has definitely had a negative impact on morale. I hope this University will address this in the years ahead.</p>	<p>(D) Each year the universities in Israel produce excellent PhD graduates in mathematics, ensuring Israel's high international reputation in the field. Most of these graduates look for jobs after several years of post-doctoral research abroad. This should enable us to recruit mathematicians of the highest academic quality in the next few years in accordance with the University's hiring policy, and thus to address the urgent needs of the Department. Indeed, We have just hired a new faculty member, Dr. Yael Algom-Kfir, who specializes in the field of Geometric Group Theory. Her appointment as lecturer is from Oct 2013; she will be replacing Prof. Moshe Roitman who will be retiring then.</p> <p>(U) In regard to the problem of the number of faculty members in the Department, we want to stress that the University Administration has fixed increasing of the number of young faculty members in all departments in the next 5 years as a University priority. To this end, we are conducting a thorough and methodical recruitment process, which includes an international search for potential candidates and a careful review of the academic excellence of potential candidates as well as on specific priorities of the University.</p>

General Report

additional comment of the committee (General Report; August, 2010)	Prof. Gross's Opinion Regarding Report on Implementation of the Recommendation (August 2012)	University's (U)/Department's (D) Response (December 2012)
<p>The faculty members at every Israeli University complained that the entering Undergraduates were not as well prepared in mathematics as they had been in the past. This often resulted in high failure rates in the first year courses, frequent re-taking of exams, and a high dropout rate. We have no sound basis to determine the true extent of the problem, its causes, and ways to solve it. ...We believe that the basic curriculum in mathematics needs to be adjusted to account for the level of the entering students, with the first courses offering more review material and gradually bringing the students up to mathematical speed. This adjustment in the curriculum needs to be made on a nation-wide basis. <i>(This recommendation appeared in the General Report)</i></p>	<p>Some of the recommendations of the committee were at a national level, such as the adjustment of level of the material covered in first year courses and the consideration of a national program for graduate students. Although theses were not adopted as a whole, I note that several institutions have added preparatory courses for entering students, and that the separate graduate programs are now coordinated under the auspices of the Israel Mathematical Union. Both represented steps in the right direction.</p>	<p>(D) We recently began investigating this possibility, acknowledging the fact that our BSc students are not sufficiently prepared for their University studies. We hope that budget considerations will make it possible to start such a program at our University as well.</p>