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Report for: The Israeli Council of Higher Education.
From: Professor Gila Sher

Re: The Current State of Philosophy in Israel - Changes and Developments since the External Evaluation Report, November 2009.

The general state of philosophy remained largely the same, with progress in some areas and losses in others.

Overall situation:

1. Strong interest in philosophy among Israeli students and substantial enrollments.
2. Relatively high level of satisfaction by students.
3. First rate senior faculty (faculty min ha-minyan), both research-wise and teaching-wise.
4. Severe, ongoing reduction in the size of senior faculty.

Most of the departments implemented the majority of the external team's recommendations and this led to considerable improvements, primarily in teaching. The universities, too, implemented a few important recommendations. In particular, the overall improvement in financial resources (due to CHE) helped with allocating new senior positions, there is increased support for PhD students, and the agreement reached between the universities and PhD students opened up teaching opportunities to PhD students. All these mark improvements from the situation in 2008/9.

The most severe problem (#4), however, is still unsolved, and the situation has even worsened. While all the universities authorized some senior hiring by the departments, the number of senior faculty continues to drop, and in some places is reaching an unacceptable low point. The situation is especially critical at the Hebrew University, but the viability of other departments is also threatened. The most urgent challenge facing the universities is to reverse this situation. In some cases, immediate action is needed.

A special problem arises for the philosophy program at Bar Ilan university, where there is no *department* of (general) philosophy but only a *small division* of (general) philosophy within the faculty of humanities. This status cannot sustain a serious program in (general) philosophy, and

the external team strongly recommended the establishment of an independent (general) philosophy department. The university, however, has ignored this recommendation and there is no sign of on-going deliberations on this issue.