



Monday, December 13, 2012

Ms. Daniella Sandler, Coordinator  
The Council for the Higher Education

לשכת הרקטור

Office of  
The Rector

Dear Ms. Sandler,

The Dunn committee visited the Hebrew University-Hadassah School of Occupational Therapy School of Occupational during June 2012. Following the visit, the committee submitted evaluation report. Attached to this letter is a letter written by Professor Shula Parush, the School's head, which refers to the school-level concerns of the committees. In this letter I will refer to the University-level concerns.

The committee made major recommendations in four areas:

- The Hebrew University should take over sole responsibility for the School of Occupational Therapy. Specifically, all occupational therapy positions currently supported by Hadassah for senior academic faculty, non-academic track faculty and adjunct faculty should be moved to Hebrew University faculty positions, with the rights and responsibilities of faculty on par with other units, and as is true for occupational therapy units in universities across the country.
- The University should create 4 additional positions in addition to the current positions funded by the university and Hadassah.
- The Hebrew University should create a Health Professions Center or Institute to provide a formal mechanism for bringing the various health professional schools together for teaching and research.
- The School of Occupational Therapy should be relocated to the Ein Kerem campus..... Yet, the School of Occupational Therapy should retain space for research labs, offices for graduate students and teaching lab spaces in the School of Occupational Therapy building to continue to foster these collaborations.

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Finally, the committee recommends that during the fall 2012, the Hebrew University design an action plan for accomplishing this change in responsibility, and one year to implement the action plan, in collaboration with Hadassah, the Government, the Dean of Medicine and the School of Occupational Therapy.



As is the case with every evaluation report, the recommendations will be discussed by the University's Committee for Academic Policy, which decides on steps to be taken both in the long and in short term. Because this discussion will take place only in January, let me briefly make a few preliminary comments.

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Taken at its face value, the abovementioned recommendations are visionary. They create opportunities, and may allow the School substantial freedom to develop and excel both academically and professionally. Unfortunately, however, the recommendations are not feasible within the current financial situation of the University. They require construction of at least one major building in the Ein Kerem campus and the allocation of at least 8 new academic positions to the school. The Hebrew University is currently beginning a far reaching Strategic plan that will involve substantial changes in the structure of the university. The challenges raised by the committee could be considered once this plan is underway, a process that will take at least several years. Implementing the recommendations without such a plan would come at a severe cost to other academic plans and may do more damage than good. Moreover, the restructuring of the relationship with the Hadassah organization is a complex process, with wide implications that may have not been apparent to the committee. Accordingly, we are sorry to say that the time frame suggested by the committee for such major restructure is completely unrealistic.

We would like to thank the Dunn committee for their effort and their vision.

Sincerely,

Professor Yaacov Schul  
Vice Rector

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11/12/2012

To the Council for Higher Education

Re: The committee for the Evaluation of Occupational Therapy Studies Program

We would like to provide the following response regarding those points raised by the committee which do not fall under the auspices of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and/or Hadassah Medical Center.

1. The evaluation committee, partly due to our claim that the non-research track needs a clearer perspective, recommended a clearer delineation between the two master's tracks (research and non-research). They also addressed the fact that the school of occupational therapy lacks senior research faculty to teach and supervise research of the master's students. The recommendation of the committee to help address the faculty problem was to provide an opportunity for a direct doctoral track for students in the M.S. research track.

Response:

A) The non-research master's track - We agree with the committee's suggestion that we need to clarify the non-research program as it is not significantly different from the research program. We believe that our program should be designed to provide a learning opportunity for individuals interested in furthering their professional careers but who are less interested in the research aspects. Emphasis should be placed on critical thinking, evidence based practice, target clinical populations and advanced evaluation, assessment and intervention strategies. We have already started implementing these proceedings by adding courses such as Autism, Developmental Coordination Disorder, three geriatric courses, sensory modulation disorders, underlying mechanisms of pain – evaluation and treatment, and others.

B) The research master's track - With regards to a direct doctoral track we do not foresee it providing a feasible solution to the current dearth of senior research faculty. The implications of a direct program would be to accept fewer master's students (currently we admit approximately 15 students a year in the research track) and a lower turnover of students. This is due to the fact



that faculty can accept only a limited number of doctoral students and must wait for a student to graduate before accepting a new research student.

2. The committee recommended expanding the PhD program to include individuals from different academic backgrounds.

Response: Addition of students with diverse backgrounds to our program may provide additional perspectives and approaches to research and expand opportunities for conducting interdisciplinary research. Indeed such a move is feasible as we constantly receive requests from students in fields such as biology, behavioral sciences, and neurosciences. Such a move also fits with the school's vision is to create a Disability and Rehabilitation Research and advanced studies center to promote research between disciplines. However, our current shortage of senior research faculty, and the lack of support demonstrated by Hebrew University and/or Hadassah Medical Center to further develop the program, limit our ability to expand our admissions beyond the scope of Health Sciences.

3. The committee recommended creating a formal mentoring program between junior and senior faculty.

Response: This is the official policy of the Hebrew University, which was approved 2 years ago by the Senate (see <http://academic-secretary.huji.ac.il/.upload/MoreMelave.pdf> for description in Hebrew).

4. The committee recommended that the school develop strategies for recruiting post-doc fellows.

Response: In light of our previous statements regarding the current senior faculty situation and the dearth of resources available to our school, we restrict our active recruitment of post-doc fellows. However, those individuals who



בית הספר לריפוי בעיסוק  
של הדסה  
והפקולטה לרפואה  
האוניברסיטה העברית, ירושלים



School of Occupational Therapy  
of Hadassah  
and the Faculty of Medicine  
Hebrew University, Jerusalem



turn to us and fulfill our requirements, in terms of research interests, are gladly  
accepted.

In review of the recommendations made by the committee, apart from the  
comments addressed above, we believe that all the other issues raised need to be  
addressed by the Hebrew University and/or Hadassah Medical Center.

Sincerely,

The Directors of the School of Occupational Therapy:

Prof. Shula Parush,

Dr. Tami Bar-Shalita

Cohavit Levi-Mazaaki