

## REVIEW OF SCHOOL RESPONSES TO THE EC'S REPORT

### Tel Aviv

The response prepared by the faculty of Tel Aviv is comparatively very short (3.5 pages). The EC's comments and recommendations were addressed in rather summary form, giving few concrete details about the implementation of changes. The formation of two committees to discuss possible responses to the EC report seems to have been a productive step.

1. That the school's mission statement has been rewritten sounds good. It is a pity that it was not included in this response so that one could comment on it. The penultimate draft included in the most recent response (March 2012) also shows good progress toward a redefinition of the school's mission. A final version of this statement should be agreed upon sooner rather than later.

2. The differentiation of agendas for the studios makes good sense; that the basis for differentiation is "teacher preference" is worrying, however, for those preferences may not add up to a meaningful sequence, nor will one teacher's focus necessarily build on preceding "preferences," nor set the stage for those to follow.

3. One of the EC's primary concerns was the integration of material in the taught courses (history, theory, and technology) into studio learning. Nothing in this description or among these changes seems to address that fundamental issue.

4. The strengthening of ties between the academic program and the city seems very positive and connections of this kind should be enhanced and developed still further.

5. The introduction of required and elective courses and studios on sustainability, computation, and digital design is a good step toward updating the curriculum. That these subjects are not isolated or treated in single courses only, but allowed to play a role in a number of offerings would seem to be the next step that needs to be taken.

6. The redesign and addition of courses on history and Israeli culture is positive. As with the other new material, linkages between subjects and the studio should also be considered, and where possible strengthened, so that the curriculum has internal correspondences and unity.

7. The outreach to other locations and schools is a good step toward putting students and teachers in closer touch with recent developments in architecture. The development of the lecture series, a program of seminars, and workshops will help toward this end too; likewise, the alliance with the Cottbus school. All together, these are good steps toward reducing the program's somewhat insular and "conservative" character observed by the EC.

8. The addition of 25 teaching hours to the teaching program is a clear and decisive step forward, one that promises to address a number of the EC's observations and recommendations, specifically those on building technology.

9. While the changes outlined here are positive, they do not seem to address the EC's comments on several related issues: the development of connections between faculty research agendas and the teaching program, the prescriptive character of the studio exercises, the cautious or conservative character of the student work, the cohesiveness (or unity) of the whole program, and—most importantly—the development of a culture of critical thinking.

10. The developments in the staff (a new head and new appointments) are very positive and address some of the EC's observations and recommendations. The additional points made by the EC, however, seem to be overlooked: determination of the correct balance between design and theory staff (and developing a plan for achieving that balance); the clarification of appointment, reappointment, and promotion criteria; research incentives; and institutional structures that will promote exchange and mutual learning among faculty.

11. While the development of the Masters program and the appointment of individuals with or earning Ph.D. hold promise for developing a culture of inquiry and research in the School, no specific steps toward the end—clearly stressed in the EC's report—have not been identified.

12. The initiatives with respect to facilities seem very positive and likely to address a number of the EC's observations and recommendations.

In consideration of the observations set out above, in two years an expert in the field should reexamine the implementation of the recommendations that have not been followed.

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