



7 ביולי 2013  
מל"ג - 156

לכבוד  
גבי תמר מעגן-אפרתי  
רכזת באגף להערכת איכות והבטחתה  
המועצה להשכלה גבוהה  
ירושלים 91040

הנדון : תגובת הטכניון לחוות דעת הסוקרים  
מכתבך בדוא"ל מיום 22.5.2013

בהמשך למכתב הנ"ל, מצ"ב תגובת הפקולטה להנדסת תעשייה וניהול על חוות דעת הסוקרים בדבר  
יישום המלצות הוועדה להערכת הלימודים בפסיכולוגיה ומדעי ההתנהגות.

התגובה מייצגת את עמדת הפקולטה והנהלת הטכניון.

בברכה ,

פרופסור דניאל ריטל

לוט.

העתקים: פרופ' פ. פייגין, המשנה הבכיר לנשיא  
פרופ' א. בן טל, דיקן הפקולטה להנדסת תעשייה וניהול

TECHNION - ISRAEL INSTITUTE OF  
TECHNOLOGY



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July 02, 2013

The Council for Higher Education external review committee

Dear review committee

I wish to open this email with an apology: we were not aware that the material we sent was related to the committee's report, and therefore we did not translate the material into English and also did not focus on this year's courses but rather on those given in the past few years. The syllabi of courses mentioned below are attached. If you require the complete current course syllabi in English at this stage, please just let us know and we'll be happy to translate and send them to you.

I would like to address the remaining concerns of the committee:

A. Courses:

The committee writes "If the set of syllabi was meant to represent the entire set of course offerings, then there is further reason for concern about coverage. Standard basic courses in psychology are missing, for example, cognition, perception, development, and social. There is no anthropology and no economics and there is still no sociology. The courses offered look like a set of topics in applied psychology, primarily to business, somewhat to human factors. The program bears resemblance to the kind of program offered in some engineering schools in Industrial Psychology. This may in fact be a fine program, reflecting unfolding developments and needs in the fields, but it does not appear to be Behavioral Science. Perhaps for this reason, the Department refers to itself as IE, Industrial Engineering."

A few corrections:

1. There is a mandatory course in Economics (dedicated to behavioral Science students), "Economics for Behavioral Science" (No. 094592).
2. There is a course in Organizational Sociology. It was not given in the last two years due to our faculty constraints. Next year we plan it will be given by an adjacent instructor. Dr. Nadav Gabai whose background is in Sociology and is also a faculty candidate

3. Concerning cognition, perception, developmental and social, some these topics – especially cognition and perception – are given in two basic courses:

a. Industrial Psychology – An introductory course for students with no specific background in Psychology. We realize the name might be inappropriate and we plan to change it to “Introduction to Psychology”

b. “Human factors Engineering” – A more advanced course which has a strong emphasis on perception and cognition and we plan to change its title to “Cognition and Human Factors Engineering”.

The syllabi of these courses (in English) are attached. The updated curricula for our M.Sc program –the new three tracks approved by the Council for Higher Education - is enclosed here as well. The undergraduate program (in Industrial Engineering and Management) was described in a previous report to the Council for Higher Education enclosed here (see pages 20-29). A concise summary of the main track updated for 2012, is also enclosed.

## B. Faculty

The committee writes “In order to carry out the program it recruited new faculty in the areas of economics and business who specialize in marketing. These are backgrounds that are not typically considered part of behavioral sciences, but nonetheless this does contribute to the interdisciplinarity of the program and expands it beyond psychology. Secondly, the department states that it is interested in recruiting a sociologist with specialization in areas that are relevant to the program and note that they currently are hosting a post-doc (Dr. Julia Bear) who they may eventually recruit. Since Dr. Bear's CV was not included it is difficult to evaluate this potential recruit (and it may be too early) but her achievements listed in the report seem promising and I would encourage the program to either hire her if suitable are continue the search for a sociologist (judging from candidates for departments of sociology in Israeli universities there are not many with a background relevant for the Technion's program, but the few I know of have strong academic records).”

We agree that the number of our Behavioral Science and Management faculty has shrunk considerably. In the last 4 years four faculty members have retired: Miriam Erez, Daniel Gopher, Al Goldberg, and Avi Kirshenbaum. Additionally one has left (Peter Bamberger). Only two were recruited: Ella Miron-Spector and Rakefet Ackerman. Particularly, in the area of Sociology no new recruitments were made to replace Al Goldberg and Avi Kirshenbaum.

The Technion has made an offer to Dr. Julia Bear whose research is in this area, but unfortunately because of family concerns she favored another university in the USA. We are thus still left without a sociologist. To speedily address this issue, and given the planned retirement of Dov Zohar about 3 years from now, we plan to recruit three new faculty members

1. A sociologist – An active search is currently in process.
2. An organizational psychologist – an active search will commence this year for a position that should start next year.

3. In addition, two of the faculty members, Ido Erev and Eldad Yechiam have won a grant for a center of Research Excellence in Empirical Studies of Decision Making and the Law; the grant is coordinated by the Hebrew University, but will possibly allow the recruitment of a faculty member in Decision Making Processes and the Law. The search for this position has started last month.

Additionally, the cognitive faculty is now increased by the addition of prof. Avi Parush (who left Carleton University in Canada to join us). Prof. Parush will join the faculty this summer, and will teach courses in Human Factors Engineering, potentially freeing other faculty members to give additional advanced courses. His CV is attached.

#### C. Program

We agree that more advanced courses would be helpful, and we hope to achieve this by recruiting three new faculty members and the recruitment of Avi Parush (see item B above). Additionally, the department head at the University of Haifa (Prof. Goldsmith) and the area head at the Technion have agreed to allow students from both institutions to participate in all advanced courses related to Cognitive Science. There is still negotiation between the departments regarding the organizational courses. As noted by the committee, the tuition remission nevertheless creates a hurdle in making this practice more common and easy to implement.

Also, we should note that graduate students at our program get very high scholarships especially in comparison to other, comparable programs in Israel. These scholarships enable our students to devote full time to their studies and to engage in research activities in addition to their courses, and this is consistent with our declared mission to be a research oriented program. These research activities are sometime equivalent to the experience of an advanced course and beyond. This results in nice academic achievements and publications while students are still completing their M.Sc and Phd studies. A list of papers that faculty members published with their students before the students completed their studies is attached to this letter.

#### D. Alumni survey

Approximately 50 former students attended the recently held reunion, and approximately 40% of those contacted responded positively by coming to the reunion. The questionnaire that these graduates were asked to respond to included the following sections: 1) current position 2) advanced studies 3) how helpful were Technion studies to your professional development. The main results are as follows: 100% of 16 respondents (40% females) were employed, 88% as salaried employees. Positions included lecturer (40%), organizational advisor, research personnel, human factors expert. About 50% completed PhD at the Technion and 50% completed MSc. About 20% of the latter continued to advanced studies afterwards. Varied courses were indicated as contributing most to their professional development: Controls and Displays, Attention, Training, Statistics courses, Research methods, Work motivation, Industrial Psychology, Group dynamics, Group guidance, Decision Making.

We were happy to hear that the committee thought that our program appears highly successful. We hope that adopting the recommendations of the committee as noted in this letter will maintain our excellence in the years to come, and despite the retirement of two key personnel.

Sincerely,

Eldad Yechiam

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eldad Yechiam". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.