



המחלקה למקרא ארכיאולוגיה והמזרח הקדום
הפקולטה למדעי הרוח והחברה

**Department of Bible Archaeology and the Ancient Near East
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

Tel.(972) 8-6461031/92

Fax.(972) 8-6472913

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BGU Response to the CHE Evaluation of the Archaeological Division at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

First, we wish to express our deep appreciation to the committee for its interest and its efforts on our behalf.

We respond below according to the numbered list of recommendations, and afterwards selected comments on aspects of the rest of the report.

Response to Recommendations

1. We support the idea of a viable and independent Department of Archaeology and will advance this as part of BGU's strategic plan which includes reorganization.
2. The currently elective course "Scientific Methods in Archaeology" will become mandatory.
3. Although we understand the perceived need to broaden the field work component of the Dig Certification Program, collaboration with other universities would need to be based on reciprocity, both in terms of numbers of students and student excavation responsibilities. In this context, it should be noted that the committee indicated that ours was the most rigorous of all the Dig Certification Programs. We see more potential for expanding field work through collaboration with the Israel Antiquities Authority, where many of our students indeed find work after their studies.
4. The operational budget must be increased to ensure the study program provides the basics which are essential for educating high quality students (e.g., digs, field trips, study laboratories). **We call upon the CHE to ensure the Planning and Budget committee increases the funds allocated to Archaeology students at all levels.**
5. We will continue to try to develop programs such as conservation, cultural heritage and tourism, but the fact is that without significant added resources, these are essentially non-starters. Our small academic staff is already stretched beyond normal demands.

6-7. We are aware of the limitations of our MA program and we will work toward expanding the program through collaboration with other departments. This said, new budgetary policies have directly impaired our ability to collaborate with some departments. Furthermore, the limited manpower in the archaeology program seriously constrains our ability to offer more courses and create a more viable MA/Ph.D. program.

8. Although there is no question that in specific cases students can and should be sent to other universities for courses that cannot be given at BGU (and indeed, have been sent), we believe that asymmetry of such arrangements poses a danger to our program especially considering our location.

9-10. Based on the academic excellence of the faculty, the university is considering to add positions (including half the position in classical archeology as explicitly recommended by the committee) to the department and will enable recruit of excelling faculty. An open call will be executed. This should also help address the comments raised in items 5-7 and raise the quality of our study programs and research.

11. We do not think that cross-appointments provide a good solution since they are problematic both for the scholar and the department, however will advance cooperation between departments which undoubtedly can contribute to our programs.

12. The problem of BA student counseling is indeed acute. It must be addressed at either the faculty or university level. In addition, we are in the process of implementing a standard procedure for counseling and reviewing research students, their progress, and options beyond their studies.

13. The problem of the laboratory is becoming more acute and the university management will discuss this issue. It will be brought up to discussion to university authorities and the status reported in the next report.

Response to Comments in the Executive Summary

We take very seriously the recommendation to remove the course requirements in social/cultural anthropology. To a great extent, our flexibility is limited by the requirements of the MA program in Anthropological Archaeology as approved by the Council of Higher Education as a joint program.

Response to Aspects of the Body of Report

We disagree with the recommendation that the Dig Certification Program be shifted to the MA level. The program was developed at the behest of the Israel Antiquities Authority to provide more practiced manpower at the beginning level of careers in the IAA. It has been very successful. Furthermore, the coursework required for the MA degree is limited to 32 credits for a research degree. Demanding that 14 of these be devoted to the courses required for the Dig Certification program would reduce the

effectiveness of the MA program. Needless to say, adding an additional 14 credits is beyond our means. We see no reason to modify a very successful program.

The report indicates a deficiency in the library which the university is aware of and continuously trying to improve. However, a major budget is required to change the status.

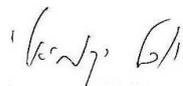
The report indicated deficiency in access to laboratories; this will be discussed by the university management and the status reported in the next report.

With respect to the absence of women faculty members, it is to be noted that no women submitted applications to our recent job announcement (for which Dr. Fabian was offered his half-position). Prior to this there have been no job openings in more than 10 years.

Response to Aspects of the General Report

The general report indicates that in light of the limitations of the job market, perhaps some greater restrictions on advanced studies be implemented, in essence, raising the bar for doctoral studies to only the highest levels of excellence. We see here a threat to freedom of research. Although the problem of employment is acute, discouraging students from engaging in advanced studies in any way is not the appropriate answer. We would also note that a significant culling process is already implemented in the requirement that students arrange a doctoral advisor before applying to admission to the doctoral program. Faculty are interested in advancing high quality research which requires high quality students; none of us are interested in taking on mediocre students.

We fully agree that we need to develop connections with alumni and will contact the university department responsible of this to advance this endeavor.



Dr. Yuval Yekutieli

Head of Archaeology Program



Prof. David Newman

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