

20.12.2011

The Committee for the Evaluation of Archaeology Study Programs  
The Council for Higher Education  
Jerusalem

Dear Committee Members,

**Re: The Evaluation Report of the Department of Archaeology, University of Haifa, November 2011**

On behalf of the members of the Department of Archaeology at the University of Haifa, I wish to thank you very much for your thorough and detailed report concerning our Department.

Upon receiving your report from the Rector's office I sent it to all members of the Department and a week later (5 December 2011) we discussed it in detail at a special departmental meeting. This letter is, in essence, the summation of this discussion, and therefore, represents the thoughts and feelings of the entire Department.

We wish to thank the Committee for their in-depth analysis of our Department and we were proud to read your objective and positive report on our personnel's high level of research, publications, field and lab work, as well as our teaching curriculum. We are especially thankful that while studying the details in our self-evaluation and on visiting our Department and meeting our staff and students, you felt the unique friendly and collegial atmosphere in which we work and the goodwill of the University administration assisting us in maintaining this positive working environment.

In this response letter I wish, on behalf of all the Department's members, to respond in more detail to your highly important recommendations (numbered 1- 13 on pages 6 - 9 in your report) and your recommendation to define a

specific ideological concept for our Department to improve its presentation of scholarly achievements, as well as the distinctiveness of our home University, and to thereby make our Department unique, both locally and internationally:

**1. Ideological concept:**

Following your recommendation, we accept the idea of defining and conceptually framing the Department's research and teaching in the context of "Land and Sea Archaeology: Paleo-landscape and Mediterranean Cultures" This conceptual framework will – as you discussed and suggested in your report – better reflect the strong and unique aspects of our Department and describe the conceptual targets we wish to follow in the near future.

**2. Collaboration with the Department of Maritime Civilization (Recommendation 1):**

The Department of Archaeology sees the logic of your recommendation, and accordingly, we are willing to accept the idea as detailed in Recommendation 1 and in the detailed plan on pages 11 – 13. However, to implement this recommendation we need the support of the Department of Maritime Civilization's members and the decision and assistance of the University administration. Following this understanding, I sent your report to the head of the Department of Maritime Civilizations and asked her to comment on the suggestion for collaboration. After she consulted with her Department's members I received their answer on December 8, 2011. In her letter she confirmed her Department's willingness to start negotiating a possible collaboration with the Department of Archaeology (3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph) and referred to her Department's earlier letter to the Humanities Faculty Dean in which the members of the Department of Maritime Civilization suggested a joint collaborative framework with the Department of Archaeology.

**3. Planning an undergraduate track in Maritime Archaeology and expanding the curriculum along these lines (Recommendations 2 and 3):**

The Department is willing to plan such a program in collaboration with members of the Department of Maritime Civilization. In our first meeting with members of the Department of Maritime Civilization I received a positive response to the proposal to schedule several special courses for such a program. Next month, following my presentation of the idea to the Departmental committee and getting its approval, Dr. Assaf Yassur Landau, a Maritime and Land Archaeologist from the Department of

Maritime Civilizations, and I will draw up a proposal for such a program. The proposal will then be submitted to both Departments for their approval. The aim is to have a program in place as soon as possible, hopefully for the next academic year. If we manage this, we will proceed with the plan you suggested, to have this program in English for foreign students, as well.

**4. University funding of the Department as a Natural Science Discipline although within the Humanities Faculty (Recommendation 4):**

We would be very happy if this aspect is positively considered by the University and are sure they will do their best to properly balance our Departmental budgeting accordingly.

**5. Hiring an archaeologist in Islamic Archaeology (Recommendation 5):**

We are happy that the Committee members accepted the idea proposed by the Department and Faculty to develop this teaching and research track, which will be novel and unique in Israel, and agree that it is also highly suited to the University of Haifa and its students. The hiring process is going well, with the close assistance and help of the Dean and the Rector. We are currently in the middle of the administrative process to ensure that the prominent young candidate we chose will have a secure tenure track position in the next academic year. The members of the Department are very grateful to the Dean and the Rector for their support and goodwill in providing us with a faculty track position for this important teaching and research area.

**6. Filling the “gap” in Biblical Archaeology (Recommendations 6 and 7):**

The members of the Department acknowledge and accept the idea suggested by the Committee that part of this gap will be filled by the planned collaboration with the Department of Maritime Civilizations and accept that in the future there will be more focus on land and sea interrelation and history.

**7. The understaffed situation of the MA Conservation track (Recommendation 8):**

You are perfectly right. We are very happy that we managed to start this unique program and that so many students wish to study in it. We accordingly adjusted the yearly maximum accepted students to 15 and we

hope that following your recommendation, the University will adjust the amount of staff to meet the needs of future prospects.

**8. Raising admission standards and financial support for post graduate students (Recommendations 9 and 10):**

We embrace this recommendation and hope it will help us in convincing the University to do so too. We are grateful that you acknowledged the current high level of our Department and rightly observed that we are working and researching more along the lines of the natural sciences (labs and field work), albeit being part of the Humanities Faculty. Therefore, the ratio of staff to students has to be evaluated, as you rightly suggested, accordingly. We sincerely hope that the University administration will consider positively your suggestion to raise the financial support for MA and PhD students considering their scope of research as specified above in Section 4. It is worth mentioning here that in my short experience as the new Head of the Department – there is growing awareness on the part of the University administration of the natural sciences' aspects of our multidisciplinary research.

**9. Administrative recommendations (Recommendations 11, 12, & 13):**

We accept and hope that the Vice President for Infrastructure and the Vice President for Research will accept these suggestions as well, including allocation of full-time positions for the Department and Institute administrators and space for new labs such as the ground-stone and conservation labs. Here we are currently in the planning stages and are awaiting the decision about locations and an implementation schedule. The Institute of Archaeology labs, in practice, serve students from the Department of Maritime Civilizations, and their labs currently serve our students, especially several of their labs that are run by scholars affiliated with both Departments.

In conclusion, we wish to state again in general what was discussed in detail above: We accept with thanks and gratitude all of your recommendations. We are determined to do the utmost to proceed in the directions you outlined for us. We will do our best to convince our colleagues in the Department of Maritime Civilizations, our Dean, Rector, and the Vice Presidents for Administration and Research to assist us in realizing the collaboration between the two departments. Within the Department we are well aware of the hard work you invested in preparing your report and recommendations and will update you annually about the progress we are making with the help of the University administration in the tracks you suggested and we will strive to realize our future as an excellent and unique Department.

Thanking you sincerely,

On behalf of the Department Members,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Shalev'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'S' being particularly large and stylized.

Prof. Sariel Shalev  
Head, Department of Archaeology  
The University of Haifa

2 January 2012

Ms. Alisa Elon  
Coordinator  
Quality Assessment Unit (QAU)  
The Israel Council for Higher Education (CHE)

Shalom,

**Re: Response to the report of the Evaluation Committee in the field of Archaeology at the University of Haifa**

We thank the members of the committee for their visit, detailed report and important recommendations. We are glad that the committee found that the 'Department of Archaeology and related faculty members in the Department of Maritime Civilizations perform at a commendably high level', both from the research and teaching points of view.

In general, we gladly accept most of the recommendations concerning the Department of Archaeology, and will consider incorporating them into our activities.

The Department's response to the committee's submissions is enclosed.

Below is our response to the remarks addressed to the University's management:

- Recommendation #1 (Merging Archaeology and Maritime Civilizations into one department):

In light of discussions held by the Rector with the Department Heads and the Dean of the Humanities Faculty and in line with the President's decision – the University's policy is to retain the Department of Maritime Civilizations as a unit of the School of Maritime Sciences within the Natural Science Faculty. Nonetheless, the Departments are considering a possible cooperative effort to develop joint study programs (among which would be an undergraduate degree program in maritime civilizations, joint courses,

etc.), along the lines of the committee's recommendations  
(Recommendations #2, 3, and 6).

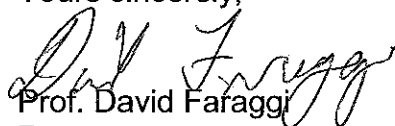
- Recommendation #4 (Adjusting levels of support for archaeology to take into account the natural science focus of many faculty members, instead of humanists needs):

This issue should be referred to the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC) (to the CHE) in order to calibrate the model that determines the compensation that the University receives for each student belonging to the Department of Archaeology.

- Recommendation #10 (Raising financial support for students at the MA and PhD levels):

Over the last three years, the University's management has consistently raised the allocations for scholarship within the regular budget: in 2008/9 the scholarship budget was NIS 26.1 million, in 2009/10, it totaled NIS 28.9 million and in 2010/11, NIS 31.5 million (an increase of NIS 5.4 million from 2008/9). We plan on increasing the budget for all our students, and at the same time expect our researchers to attain competitive research funds in order to finance research students as well.

Yours sincerely,

  
Prof. David Faraggi  
Rector

cc: Prof. Aaron Ben-Ze'ev, President  
Prof. Reuven Snir, Dean, Faculty of Humanities  
Prof. Sariel Shalev, Head, Department of Archaeology  
Prof. Nahum Finger, Chairman, Subcommittee for Quality Affairs, Council for Higher Education  
Ms. Michal Neuman, Head, Quality Evaluation Unit, Council for Higher Education