

**Committee for the Evaluation of Academic Quality
for Industrial Design Studies**
Evaluation Report



Bezalel Academy of Art and Design
Department of Industrial Design

Background At its meeting on October 31, 2006 the Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to evaluate study programs in the field of industrial design during the academic year 2006-2007.

Following the decision of the CHE, the Minister of Education, who serves ex officio as the Chair of the CHE, appointed a committee for the evaluation of academic quality of industrial design studies consisting of:

- **Prof. Rosanne Somerson** Department of Furniture Design, Rhode Island School of Design, U.S.A., Committee Chair
- **Prof. Gabriela Goldschmidt** Faculty of Architecture & Town Planning, Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, Committee Co-Chair
- **Prof. Edward Colker** retired Professor and Provost, Pratt Institute, U.S.A
- **Prof. Haim Finkelstein** Chair of the Department of the Arts, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
- **Prof. Jan-Christoph Zoels** Senior Partner, Experientia, Italy
- **Ms. Alisa Elon** Coordinator of the committee on behalf of the CHE.

Within the framework of its activity, the committee was requested to submit the following documents to the CHE:

1. A final report for each of the institutions, which would include an evaluation of industrial design study programs, the committee's findings and recommendations.
- 2.1 A general report regarding the status of the evaluated field of study within the Israeli institutions of higher education.
- 2.2 Recommendations for standards in the evaluated field of study.

The committee will submit independently to the CHE the documents specified in point 2 above.

The committee's letter of appointment is attached as *Appendix 1*.

The first stage of the quality assessment process consisted of self-evaluation, including the preparation of a self-evaluation report by the institutions under evaluation. This process was conducted in accordance with the CHE's guidelines as specified in the document entitled "*The Self-Evaluation Process: Recommendations and Guidelines*" (December 2006).

Committee Procedures

The Committee held its first meeting on October 23, 2007. At this meeting Committee members discussed fundamental issues concerning Industrial Design study programs in Israel and the quality assessment activity.

During the period December 2007 - January 2008, Committee members conducted a two-day visit to each of the institutions offering study programs in the field under examination.

During these visits, the Committee met with the relevant officials at the institutions in accordance with the structure of each institution, as well as with faculty members, students, and alumni, and also conducted a tour of the campus.



This report deals with the **Department of Industrial Design at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design (Bezalel)**.

The Committee's visit to Bezalel took place on December 12-13, 2007.

The schedule of the visit, including the list of participants representing the institution, is attached as *Appendix 2*.

In light of the fact that Prof. Rosanne Somerson had served as a guest lecturer at Bezalel in the past and in order to prevent the appearance of a conflict of interests, the Committee was headed by Committee Co-Chair, Prof. Gabriela Goldschmidt, during its visit to Bezalel.

The Committee members thank the management of Bezalel and of the Department of Industrial Design for the self-evaluation report and for their hospitality towards the Committee during its visit.

Evaluation of the Department of Industrial Design at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design

Background The Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts was established in Jerusalem in 1906. In the late 1960s the CHE recognized it as an institution for higher education to be known as “The Bezalel Academy of Art and Design.”

In 1975 the B.Des in Industrial Design granted by Bezalel was recognized by the CHE. In 2004 the CHE authorized Bezalel to award a Master’s degree without thesis (M.Des) in industrial design and in May 2006, Bezalel received permanent authorization to grant this degree. However, because Bezalel underwent the accreditation process and received permanent authorization to grant the M.Des degree in ID without thesis shortly before the self-evaluation report was submitted, that degree was not included in the self-evaluation process.

Bezalel’s self-evaluation report stated, based on data received during the academic year of 2007, that the total number of students studying for academic degrees at the institution was approximately 1,600 of whom 172 were studying for a B.Des in ID and 57 for an M.Des in ID.



Our introduction to Bezalel Academy with the upper administration immediately brought to our attention the fact that the Industrial Design Department is highly regarded within the Institution and considered to be one of the “jewels” of Bezalel. The Committee was well provided for in our visit, and appreciated the excellent preparations made on our behalf as well as the hospitality shown the Committee. The Academy’s preparations allowed us a productive and illuminating experience of the Department.

The written Self-Study report was informative, but the Committee found it to be self-congratulatory in some cases, lacking some aspects of the self-reflective nature that we believe should be inherently at the heart of this process. In our site visit, we expressed this feeling, and believe that we were able to gain further perspective from interviews and conversations about an ongoing sense of self-evaluation that is practiced at the Academy. Perhaps since this is the first time for this kind of assessment, a clearer opportunity for self-review will be part of the next sequence of evaluation. However, the Committee believes that the actual construct of the Self-study Report should have had more oversight authorship by senior academic leaders from the Department. A process of interviewing teaching staff was the predominant way that information was gathered, therefore the written report lacked evidence of coordinated input in comparison to more in-depth dialogue that we engaged in at the site visit. The value of a self-study process as a vision-building document was underutilized.

One factor contributing to the perceived lack of depth of self-reflection is that Bezalel is an academy that is currently quite successful and is functioning

extremely well. Therefore, the seeming lack of self-criticism results in part from strong institutional management, from a sound educational program, from good facilities, and from review of alumni prominence. The excellence of the students' experience and of the teaching staff was evident throughout our visit. Still, there is always room for development and modification, particularly if we view design education within the fast-changing discourse of global competition. Our Committee focused our visit on trying to understand what was working well and why, as well as what improvements would suggest the best path for recommendations toward forward advancement.

Mission and Goals The mission and goals expressed in the report were made clear to us as honoring the rich, long traditions of the past history of Bezalel, the oldest art school in Israel, while looking to the future “keeping abreast of the latest innovations”. The mission also stresses broad-mindedness in approach and intellectual thoroughness. The Academy represents itself as a center for research and critical deliberation that helps to determine the Israeli cultural agenda.

On many levels we felt that what we evaluated supported this mission and the stated goals. The Committee will point out in this report areas that we feel need to be strengthened to meet the expressed vision.

The administration referred to the process of self-evaluation as a “mirror,” and stated that it conducts internal self-evaluation continually and is not only open to, but welcomes change. This is a productive attitude in an academic environment committed to advancing knowledge. We found an emphasis on the educational relationship between hands-on studio-based learning and conceptual development. This combination further supports the mission successfully. Students not only have to generate strong ideas, but must know how to execute them, and they learn to do so on their own through the educational process. Students therefore feel very competent at both developing and expressing conceptions to a high level of resolution. This emphasis was reflected by the excellence of student work that we saw first hand, bringing these principles of education to life.

We were also impressed by the on-going commitment to evolving educational capabilities, evident to us in our visit. Two examples demonstrate this point. First, teaching staff represents three generations: a solid foundation of senior people, some who have been at the Academy since the inception of the department, a good stratum of mid-level career practitioners, and a growing number of young designers well on their way to success. This balance helps to keep the program grounded while advancing the vision and future of the department. Another example is the fact that traditional skills of drawing by

hand, model making, woodworking, plastic fabrication and metalworking are still required, while digital tools and processes have been integrated fully into the curriculum. It is worth noting that this is the only Industrial Design program housed within an “art” and design context, which makes it unique in Israel. Other programs are in schools with a technical foundation. Therefore, the environment for creative development and for expanding creative practice in related fine arts areas is unique among peer programs in Israel.



The Academy is committed to showcasing the excellence of the work of the department both nationally and internationally, and has supported many prominent exhibitions and publications in Israel and abroad. The department positions itself to be socially responsible, encouraging projects and exhibitions that have broad cultural impact. While in some institutions these goals are announced but not demonstrated, Bezalel has a track record of accomplishment in achieving these goals. The ethical mission of the Academy complements the intellectual mission. An example is a project of street furnishings designed for the Orthodox community of Jerusalem, conceived collaboratively with members of the community. Another is a three-year program where Bezalel projects are brought into high schools in underprivileged areas, and then the young students who participate are eventually brought into the Academy to continue working on projects on site. These are commendable examples of taking mission into action.

Study Program

The Industrial Design study program at Bezalel appears to be very successful and well conceived. It is worth restating that two degrees in Industrial design are offered, a BDes. and an MDes. Since the report and our visit primarily emphasized the Bachelors degree we will focus our comments there. However, it should be said that the two programs interrelate to some extent in terms of facilities, staff, and some courses and opportunities. The study program of the Masters program was presented in less detail to us than was the Bachelors program, so it is harder to comment with clarity. The Committee did feel that there is some uncertainty at the moment about the relationship of these two study programs structurally, and that clarity should be a goal of the Academy. We were told that a new model for graduate education might be developed with the Masters program moving into a graduate school functioning as a separate entity comprising all Masters programs. We are not in a position to evaluate that possibility but urge that the Academy leadership maps out a clear plan rather quickly as strategic and fiscal planning should be in line with future goals for the programs.

Since the current Department Head is transitioning, clarification about the relationship of the graduate program to the department as a whole needs

shaping. The Committee heard in different meetings that these degrees represent two separate departments on the one hand, and a program and a department on the other. Structural cohesion and clarity are needed so that the best combination of individual requirements and cohesive partnership can be achieved. Effective learning and program outcomes must have a built-in system for oversight. Currently, the heads overseeing both degrees are highly talented, dedicated, and effective, but a good structure should support Industrial Design studies independent of the strengths of particular leaders.



The undergraduate program is operating very successfully. Students are extremely satisfied with the quality of their overall education, and there is great harmony across the levels of the department. Students and teaching staff are committed to their individual activities while investing a great deal of camaraderie into the overall environment of the department. This feeling of community is strengthened through departmental activities that involve the whole community, such as a holiday candle lighting that we witnessed and the department project days at the Dead Sea “Low-tech at the Lowest Point on Earth” which brings all of the students together to work on-site in a design intensive workshop utilizing the landscape and natural materials as sources for creating designed environments and objects.

Courses are broadened by a policy that allows 15% of some courses to retain seats for others outside the department (who may take them as elective courses), so the opportunities for multidisciplinary study are readily available and supported structurally. We did not check the actual enrollment figures to determine how accurately these numbers are met, but the intention of the Academy in this area is clear. Students spoke highly of the integration of their History and Theory courses outside of their major (20% of their requirements), and noted that the standards and rigor are high. A perusal of the courses offered by the History and Theory Unit reveals indeed an impressive array of required courses, electives and seminars. Courses in modern art, art history in general and Western Culture constitute first and second year requirements for the whole student body of Bezalel. ID students are required also to take courses in twentieth-century architecture, history of materials and modern design. The second year proseminars and electives, and the third year seminars and advanced electives encompass a broad range of areas and subjects, but these are not geared specifically to ID students. This may not in itself adversely reflect on the program, the more so since the declared aim of the ID studies is to create a “thinking designer.” Some criticism was voiced, however, regarding an insufficient number of offerings more directly related to Industrial Design among the History and Theory courses. This criticism might be related to a perception on the part of some students that the history and theory courses offered within the department (Trends and Styles; Design theories) do not meet their needs especially in what concerns the department’s objective of creating

socially involved designers. This might be remedied by the addition of courses more dedicated to the social sciences (such as cognitive sciences, behavioral sciences, psychology, and so on). We were able to confirm that teaching staff insists that a range of materials is studied and utilized, explicitly overseeing research standards of written work by students, for locating and utilizing source materials. The Library use seems high, and the students have good access to books, periodicals databases and a digital reference library. The Committee will suggest elsewhere in the report that further access to other library and digital databases should be widened.



Within the departmental course offerings there is an impressive list of ranging topics that describe a broad view of Industrial Design education. Since the teaching staff meets to review course offerings regularly, the curriculum is dynamic and the ability to add and subtract courses is fluid. This is a positive reflection on the department leadership. From the range of projects that we saw, the departmental focus appears to be centered primarily on product design. Within that scope, the work was broad-based and innovative. However, the Committee expressed some concern that a wider definition of opportunity should be reviewed in a school determined to deliver cutting edge Industrial Design education. In leading programs internationally (with which Bezalel competes) ID studies are expanding to include experience design, interaction design, design of services, events and systems. There was some discussion of exhibition design and some interaction design being integrated currently, but the Committee believes that there are wider opportunities than those demonstrated in our site visit, and that the department should consider expanding its curriculum to include broader current topics in the ID field. Research could also be broadened, but this will be addressed more thoroughly in the section specifically on Research later in this document.



The distribution of credits is unclear and hard to decipher. In our discussion of overall degree credit requirements, there was some uncertainty about how the Academy creates decisions about credit allocations and overall requirements. Students at Bezalel are required to complete fewer credit points than ID students in any other institution in Israel that we are aware of, so the Committee feels that overall credit requirements and allocations should be reexamined and updated using clear and consistent criteria. A BDes degree should have some relativity across institutions in terms of requirements. Since Bezalel has the lowest number of credits required, prospective students looking at a range of programs may be misled about the level of academic commitment required to achieve the degree. From our perspective, this is a rigorous ID program, in no way less demanding than other programs with a much higher number of credit requirements.

Even though the “family” spirit and generosity of the faculty within the

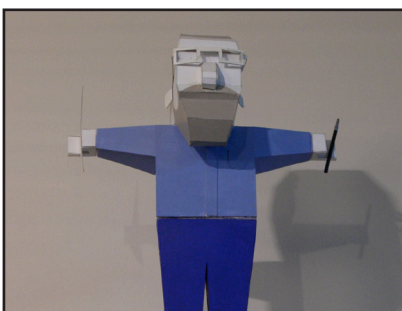
Department was often warmly mentioned (and much appreciated) by students, there were recurrent references to desires for interdisciplinary experiences and internship exposures outside of the Academy to broaden students' career horizons. It is not clear if there is an active enough pursuit of such external opportunities

Note: Although the Masters program is relatively new, the Committee heard that some students are attending on a very limited part-time basis in order to continue working. While this may be a reality as many students in Israel are supporting families and are working, the Committee feels it is important to look at international graduate standards, where students usually are expected to complete studies within a two or three year immersive framework. We encourage the evolving Masters program to create a standard that can be both achievable and clearly assessed in this regard, so that concentrated study is achieved in the degree. To attain this goal, financial assistance in terms of scholarship and other forms of support will be necessary to develop. Otherwise, the program runs the risk of being viewed primarily as enrichment or continuing education rather than as a rigorous degree program.

Faculty and teaching

The department's faculty consists of a balanced mix of three "generations" of designers-teachers, including nationally reputed designers with an international standing. They form a tightly knit yet open and highly harmonious and collaborative community, including regular and adjunct faculty members alike. The students appear to be an extension of that same community, hence the friendly, inclusive spirit that pervades the Department. There is a good balance between more academic and more practice oriented staff members, with the former primarily responsible for knowledge transfer to students, while the latter serve as coaches and role models. Everyone we met, faculty and students alike, is happy to be a member of the Department community. Bezalel should be congratulated on achieving such a high level of camaraderie and team spirit within the ID Department.

Along with the obvious strength the Department draws from the excellent human relations among its various constituencies, there is also a weakness associated with it-- most teaching staff are themselves Bezalel graduates and the Department staff explained that they find in their graduates kindred souls who "fit in" better than anyone else. This limits the introduction of new and different approaches to the Department, and can run the risk of creating a more insular environment. In addition, women are under-represented in the faculty because, it was claimed, "ID is a predominantly male profession." The Committee suggests that a stronger effort be made to recruit teachers with



a more diverse educational and professional background, in order to ensure a constant flow of new ideas and concepts in the Department. Diversity should be further enhanced by hiring more women (whose share in the student population is about 40%).

Despite the friendly ambiance, members of the junior teaching staff feel that they do not have sufficient opportunities for advancement, including research opportunities. Few resources are allocated to faculty development, e.g. travel support for participation in conferences, trade exhibitions etc., sabbatical leaves or investment in research. Investment in these forms of faculty development would have a positive impact on the caliber of exposure to the larger field of industrial design that teaching staff would then bring to the program as direct enrichment. Furthermore, promotion criteria and procedures are not sufficiently formal and clear, especially because the difference between faculty members and adjunct faculty members is in many cases technical (teaching load and years of service). The hiring procedures of adjunct faculty, entrusted almost exclusively to the Department Head, may be somewhat too informal. Despite the great flexibility this allows, more structured clarity may help overcome the aforementioned 'inbreeding' tendency, among other imbalances (such as gender).

Quality control is another issue that may require a somewhat more formal action. In addition to students' feedback (which is collected amply) and word-of-mouth evaluation, an orderly reporting procedure is suggested, to ensure a more complete supervised assessment. Such a structure would also serve mentoring and guidance purposes and would particularly benefit the professional development of less experienced teachers.

Members of the teaching staff expressed a wish for increased collaboration with colleagues from other departments. This should be easy to achieve through multi- and interdisciplinary work in joint design studios, designed for participation of students from different departments. As the desire is evident, the structures should be folded into planning procedures and curricular models.

Another concern was expressed related to the size of classes, which sometimes reach 25 students with a single teacher. This is much too high a teacher/ student ratio, as teachers are unable to give this many students the attention that students require in a studio course. The international teacher to student average in top-level international schools in Industrial Design is generally 1:15 or below.

In our meetings with both teaching staff and students we were impressed by the prevailing positive and productive spirit of cooperation and good will among students and between students and teachers, as well as by the high accessibility of teaching staff and the Department Head for the students. While the students as a whole expressed satisfaction with their teachers, some were more critical, noting that there are also on the staff some good professional designers who

are not very good teachers. The detailed feedback questionnaires that students fill out for each course might be helpful in enhancing the teachers' awareness in this regard.

Research Before the committee comments on its findings concerning research, it would like to make clear that it is aware of, and accepts, a clear distinction between research oriented institutions and teaching institutions. In industrial design, however, applied research, or practice-based research, are typically key components in developing new designs. Additional forms of practice-based research activity might include research on materials in new applications, on user-centered design issues, or research into trends that reflect cultural and population changes. Students of Industrial Design are required and encouraged to carry out research in this context, defined by the gathering of information, related investigations, and experimentation as part of design development, problem solving, and innovation. In this report 'research' is construed in this sense.



While the Committee understands that Bezalel is not a research university, the mission of the department offers a great backdrop for substantive research from an industrial design perspective. Many interesting research projects have already been achieved at Bezalel. The ID department defines research as research-by-practice within the design process itself. Research activities range from contextual user observations, ergonomic and other user research, empirical data gathering and analysis, material and formal studies, to prototyping, etc. Bezalel also fosters intuitive approaches such as studio explorations, contemplation and personal reflection combining individual viewpoints with rational research processes. The desired research outcomes are innovative, original and creative products. These processes mirror current practices within the profession of industrial design.

These research activities are integrated within the undergraduate and Masters program with more theoretical and methodological classes added to the Masters program. Outstanding examples are studio projects exploring the needs and environments of special populations within Israel, emerging market research or selected final projects.

Industry-sponsored projects expand current research approaches and are actively and successfully pursued. Teaching staff pointed out that Israeli industry is not as aware of Bezalel's capacity to undertake sponsored industry research as could be possible. The Committee suggests that Bezalel's Research and Development Center be re-invigorated and widened to include an international and interdisciplinary scope. This Center also needs to address much needed support

for intellectual property protection and commercialization. Assistance with product launches, patents, and trademarks could be constructed in a manner that benefits individuals as well as the Academy.

Teachers in the Industrial Design Department are all practicing designers. Based on the strength of their professional abilities, the Department needs to rethink how internal and external teachers can be more closely integrated into research activities and collaborative projects. Currently there is little support for faculty research at the Academy, particularly in terms of projects that could utilize student assistance. There is also a lack of project space that could be allocated to projects in process, so that research developments could occur over time and possibly in an interdisciplinary environment.

Further documentation of successful research should be undertaken, with a goal of archiving all past and future research enterprises. These should include not just industry-sponsored research, but also projects of a social nature, since the ID Department maintains a commitment to socially engaged projects that benefit Israeli populations.

Students and Learning The good reputation enjoyed by the Industrial Design Department attracts a large number of annual applicants. The Department has consequently adopted a rigorous selection process involving two stages of admission examinations with the result that, on the whole, it maintains its competitive edge and admits a high percentage of good students.

However, the number of students admitted annually has been growing, and the Department's ability to meet their needs in terms of both staff and facilities has not followed suit at the same rate. Concerns were expressed to the Committee by students and teachers alike with regard to high student-teacher ratio and overcrowded workshop space. With 22-25 students in a studio class, less individual attention can be given to students. It should be also noted in this respect that, while some Department teachers consider class size to be less of an issue in the Theory and History unit, the still relatively large number of students, as reported to the Committee, in pro-seminar or seminar classes (25) and in required courses (about 150 students with no teaching assistants at hand) should be a matter of concern. Teacher: student ratios have been discussed in the section on "faculty and teaching".

The Department employs a rather extensive system for providing feedback to the students and evaluating their achievement with regard to both individual courses and final projects. In addition to the presentation of course projects and the final project, the students are required also to present a portfolio at the end

of the first semester of the second year (containing all projects of the design courses participated in) as well as a portfolio following the final project. The presentations are given in front of teachers from the school, and occasionally, external professionals. However, teachers from the History and Theory unit don't participate in the assessment. The assessments are not written but presented orally. Including teachers from History and Theory would add a wider perspective and help to integrate areas of a student's experience.

The Committee was favorably impressed by the high quality of the final projects presented in the course of our visit. However, the students' learning process appears to require some strengthening in writing and analytical skills. As argued by staff members, writing capabilities are not looked at in the entrance examinations because the teaching staff themselves are designers and not theoreticians. It was also noted by some teachers that students' writing abilities tend to diminish during their studies at Bezalel because they learn a new visual language; as argued, this is not necessarily bad because they will be artists and not art critics. However, it is the opinion of the Committee that this area should not be neglected. This is particularly evident in the light of the Department's declared aim of fostering a "thinking designer" and the broad range of new research activities the Department wishes to integrate within the undergraduate and Masters program, and especially in view of the more theoretical and methodological classes added to the Masters program. Furthermore, with designers participating more and more commonly with business and cultural entities, the value of writing skills should not be underestimated.

The students' writing ability might have some bearing on the problem of student dropout rates. The decline in the number of program graduates in the last two years is accounted for in the Self Assessment Report as resulting from the character of the average student who devotes most of his/ her energy and time to the departmental courses while neglecting the theoretical studies at the History and Theory unit. Also, in some cases, the difficulties in fulfilling the tasks of the advanced courses in this unit result in continuing school on a part-time basis beyond the fourth year. As noted by senior teaching staff, the students perceive their professional studies as important, but the diploma itself is of a lesser importance to them. This attitude appears to be met by the teaching staff – some of whom are also potential employers – with more understanding than is appropriate. Measures should be taken to prevent students from leaving school and going into professional practice without completing their degree requirements.

The reputation of the school and the good preparation of the students are conducive to good job placement after graduation. Furthermore, as indicated in the Report, the department communicates with alumni about job offers from an extensive range of companies and design studios. However, academic and career

counseling should be further developed and implemented during studies. The school also makes good use of its extensive international exchange network; however, not all students can afford to participate in international exchanges and there is little institutional support for the less affluent students. An effort should be made to broaden support for students eligible for participation in the exchange program, particularly since the department is interested in international activity.

Many of those interviewed by the Committee, students and faculty alike, feel that, while the Department does provide the students with the skills and tools needed to succeed in their professional career, not enough is being done regarding collaboration with industry and that this might be remedied by setting up a credit-bearing internship program through which the students will gain actual work experience with various design firms throughout the country or abroad. Such an activity might take place during the summer; most of those interviewed feel that it should be undertaken between the third and fourth year.

Infrastructure and Resources

Resources for an intense studio learning experience should comprise both a suitable physical environment and a sufficient numbers of teachers. The Committee heard the ever-present desire for more teachers and more space that often is expressed in assessments. Class sizes were clearly overtaxed as was evident in our classroom visits and related conversations, but the Committee was pleased to see existence of “homespace” for Industrial Design students. This is a welcome and commendable component.

Our campus tour showed relatively good equipment although shops seemed crowded and justified the concern over inadequate space. The presence of safety and health procedures, including inventive warning signage was commendable. Students and staff appeared to enforce health and safety practices. However, machine layouts in workshops are often far too close together presenting potential hazardous working conditions. With a new building being planned, it is hoped that space needs will be well studied and designed, and that the overcrowding of machine layouts in workshops will be addressed. One notable fact is the inclusion of CNC routers and other newer technologies directly within the workshop spaces, creating a philosophical link and a continuum between old and new technologies. Bezalel was the only ID Department that the Committee visited where that linkage was made evident in the mixing of technologies.



Presently, however, there are some serious faculty needs to be addressed such as the absence of faculty office space and private space for teacher-student individual conference. One senior faculty member showed us his “box”, literally a storage trunk, which was his only designated personal space within which to

keep teaching materials and other references. Dignified amenities for faculty members need to be created. This should be a priority in any new space planning for new facilities.

The library presented a favorable, well-staffed and active setting with archival, digitizing and documentation activity underway. The Internet is widely used; electronic access to holdings is available to students. Several senior faculty noted that they are quite firm in directing students to use important book texts and visual sources rather than dependence solely on Internet excerpts. However, a desire for more teaching materials and supplies was expressed by teaching staff and students, particularly in the area of materials research. Budgets seem ample, and most requests for book and periodical purchases are met. There was a desire expressed for more comprehensive data base memberships. With a growing Master's program, the library and program faculty should consult on new needs for contemporary data base access required for advanced study.

The Committee was told that the Hebrew University does not allow borrowing privileges to Bezalel students. This is an unfortunate position by a neighboring institution of learning. We recommend that this arrangement be revisited by the top level of administration to see if some kind of agreement for mutual borrowing privileges can be reached between the two institutions. There are many existing models of this sort in neighboring academic institutions within Israel and around the globe.

Although research facilitation is discussed elsewhere, it may be seen as a resource which is part of the infrastructure affecting students in the Department. The central administration's efforts to generate sponsorships can directly shape Industrial Design's profile toward industry and other institutions, both here and abroad. Senior faculty also cited an absence of "follow up" of potential patent possibilities. Appropriate research spaces that can accommodate on-going projects should be a priority in any future space planning. Ideally, these spaces should be set up in proximity to computer and workshop facilities to allow prototype development. Additionally, observation and testing labs would be substantive additions to any kind of research spaces. Some international ID departments have created versions of "human factors labs" that permit analytical research around ergonomics and usability.

Self-study Process The Committee's observations and concerns about the process for completing the self-study are detailed in the introduction section. However, it is worth restating that the Academy employs a climate of continual self-evaluation, student evaluation and course evaluation. The Committee hopes, however, that the experience of this review will encourage further self-reflection and resulting

action. The Committee also believes that strengthening formal procedures for evaluating teaching staff would benefit the Department. As planning for a new building is under way, the Committee urges that the self-study process and the results of this report be vital components for leading discussions about the next iteration of campus design for Bezalel's Department of Industrial design.

Summary

Strengths Bezalel's Department of Industrial Design is a highly functioning collaborative department that maintains a positive and productive atmosphere, one of openness and caring for student individuality and development. Bezalel's good reputation and high admissions selectivity results in very good students. The Academy's long history of excellence is unique in Israel, and it continues to build its reputation.

The dedicated teaching staff members are successful in their careers and represent a good balance between faculty who excel as knowledge providers, and those who contribute more as coaches and/or professional role models. Teaching staff and students have access to good departmental administrative support. Adjunct Teachers have a representative voice in departmental activities and committees and are included in vision articulation and development after teaching for three years and a certain number of course credits. Students have excellent access to teachers, support staff and the Department Head.

The Department is uniquely stationed in an art and design environment, the only such situated ID program in Israel. Its curriculum represents a model of studio-based learning: students are therefore fluid in developing ideas through studio practice and in producing sophisticated prototypes. While the Department teaches digital representation and use of new technologies for idea development and prototyping, it maintains a traditional emphasis on drawing, modelmaking, and workshop technologies as well in a nicely balanced frame.

The Department is active in events and exhibitions within Israel and internationally and maintains a good network with international exchange opportunities, (though only for students who can finance such opportunities presently). Relationships with industry and civic groups are cooperative and effective.

Students have very good job placement after graduation, and an extremely high satisfaction level with their education at Bezalel.

Weaknesses If the mission of the Industrial Design Department is in part to push the boundaries of ID, to keep abreast of the latest innovations, and to position the Department as a center for research and critical deliberation that will help to push forward the Israeli cultural agenda, a broader academic range of topics within industrial design practice need to augment the current focus which is centered almost exclusively on product design. Within that focus there is very innovative work being achieved, but greater educational opportunities would arise from a broader scope.

Current facilities do not truly support research goals, as there is no real space for ongoing projects in various developmental stages, nor does teaching staff have ample space for storing research supportive materials. Workshop spaces are already too crowded, and so could not accommodate developing physical models or activities related to research undertakings. In addition, there is a general lack of office space for teachers, as well as little conference space for meetings within the department as well as potential meetings with outside industry representatives. Industry projects need development and expansion within the infrastructure and the curriculum. If there is a design developed that has real industry potential, there is little support for taking projects into reality beyond the school environment (i.e. support for patents, production, etc.)

Other areas that are underdeveloped are international exchange, where little scholarship support means that only students with economic means to travel can take advantage of the relationships that do exist. Also, internship structures are underdeveloped.

For teaching staff, aside from the space issues mentioned earlier, there are some problems around procedures. Currently promotion and tenure procedures are not clearly stated, processed or understood. Younger teaching staff members express concern over a lack of advancement possibilities. There is little mentoring for younger faculty and little teaching evaluation or review by senior faculty members. Distinctions between roles of adjuncts and regular teaching staff are not always clear. Gender diversity is minimal, and hiring of alumni over-weighted if a diverse staff is desired. There is also some lack of clarity about obtaining Sabbatical privileges. These issues viewed together suggest that procedural practices need to be more clearly articulated and enforced, and that teaching staff members need further orientation to policies and procedures.

Class sizes are at unacceptable rates. This impacts educational quality in a negative manner. Additionally, the subject areas of the History and Theory unit need to be better coordinated with directions of development for the department, and adjustments need to be made to enhance learning depth in those areas. Bridge discipline frameworks (design for all, design for people with disabilities, medical design, or sustainability, for example,) are lacking and could be partially addressed through accompanying support courses as

additional courses in this unit. Teaching formats and class sizes need to be reevaluated in History and Theory classes as well, with attention given to lessening the percentage of large frontal classes and adding more small seminars. Greater emphasis should be placed on the students' writing and analytical skills.

Credit structures and allocations need to be reevaluated as well, to insure that the right percentages and allotments exist, particularly in relation to like programs in Israel. At present, criteria for assigning of credit units are somewhat casual rather than clear-cut.

Student support could also use additional resources. The secretarial assistance is not adequate to support the number of events and opportunities that the department engages in. Assigning project coordinators or managers could help on a project specific basis. Advising is also an area that needs additional support resources, as the current student advising system lacks staff and a clear system or process. This may bear on the fact that some students do not complete their studies, and measures should be employed to prevent students from leaving school and being integrated into the professional world without completing their degree requirements.

There is a lack of clarity about the relationship of the BDes and the MDes programs. Clarification about the relationship and management issues will benefit both programs. Without developing clear structures that are understood and agreed upon, over time both programs may be impeded in their ability to develop and excel.

Prioritized Action Steps

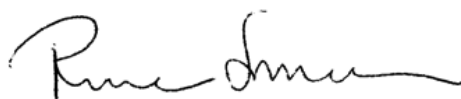
Though we have attempted to prioritize these suggested areas for improvement, as several of these recommendations need to be acted on with urgency at the same time, we suggest that the following steps be used as a guide for prioritization, but that subsequent steps be initiated even if prior ones are not yet complete. We suggest that 18-24 months be targeted for achieving these changes, and that a three-year progress report with results of these changes indicated be submitted to the CHE.

1. Address overcrowding issues immediately. An enrollment planning process should be instituted, with an attempt to meet international standards of teacher-student studio ratios of 1:15. Resulting adjustments in teaching and facility resources must be part of the planning process. An effort to recruit teachers with a more diverse educational and professional background should be a priority for any new hires, in order to ensure a constant flow of new ideas and concepts in the Department. Diversity should be further enhanced by trying to hire more women.
2. Teaching staff and departmental leadership should review the core departmental mission to consider whether or not it is time to expand from the strong product design basis in the department and to promote other kinds of design learning in a greater proportion than the current balance.
3. A clear and meaningful distinction between regular and adjunct teaching positions should be drawn, and the criteria for advancement, promotion, and sabbaticals should be sharpened and communicated. The procedures should be formalized and made transparent, for regular and adjunct teachers alike. An orientation, or at least a handbook with guidelines and policies, should be created to benefit teaching staff at all levels. Teacher quality control measures should be enhanced and systematized so that the background material for assessing promotions and other benefits have a clear basis for evaluation.
4. Teaching staff needs better office space for collections of teaching materials and instructional aids, and as spaces to meet with students and conduct advising.
5. Workshops need to be expanded and revitalized with consideration given to lessening overcrowding that has resulted from increased enrollment. Any forward planning for workshops and studio space must include an enrollment planning process that guides physical space planning.
6. Research resources and spaces to conduct projects should be a main goal of any space planning in progress. Collaborative courses with other departments that allow for interdisciplinary work are much desired by both students and faculty, and could utilize and benefit from a project or

research basis. It may be worth considering developments in this arena in the framework of a research or innovation center, common to all Bezalel departments. Whether or not a center exists, more support needs to be developed for realizing designs in industry. Legal advice, patent support and industry introductions need to be nurtured and supported by the Academy.

7. Current credit allocations and requirements should be reviewed and amended to be more consistent with other BDes programs and to better reflect the education provided at Bezalel.
8. In its strategic plan, Bezalel seeks ways to “open the window” of student study more widely to include internships, international study, and interdisciplinary ventures and/or projects as stimulating, maturing events. Creation of a new staff position to oversee such opportunities would go a long way toward insuring success in these vital enriching areas.
9. With a growing Master’s program, the Library and the program faculty should consult on the needs for increased contemporary data base access required for advanced study. Arrangement for courtesy privileges at the Hebrew University libraries should be considered at the top level of administration whether by funding, exchange of services or other means.

Signed by



Prof. Rosanne Somerson

Committee Chair



Prof. Gabriela Goldschmidt

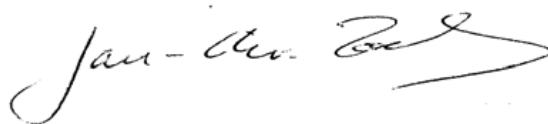
Committee Co-Chair



Prof. Edward Colker



Prof. Haim Finkelstein



Prof. Jan-Christoph Zoels



מדינת ישראל

STATE OF ISRAEL

Minister of Education



October 10, 2007

Professor Rosanne Somerson
Department of Furniture Design
Rhode Island School of Design
Two College Street
Providence, RI 02903
USA

Dear Professor Somerson,

The State of Israel undertook an ambitious project when the Israeli Council for Higher Education (CHE) established a quality assessment and assurance system for Israeli higher education. Its stated goals are: to enhance and ensure the quality of academic studies; to provide the public with information regarding the quality of study programs in institutions of higher education throughout Israel; and to ensure the continued integration of the Israeli system of higher education in the international academic arena. Involvement of world-renowned academicians in this process is essential, particularly as our nation reaches maturity in its 60th year.

This most important initiative reaches out to scientists in the international arena in a national effort to meet the critical challenges that confront the Israeli higher educational system today. The formulation of international evaluation committees represents an opportunity to express our common sense of concern and to assess the current and future status of education in the 21st century and beyond. It also establishes a structure for an ongoing consultative process among scientists around the globe on common academic dilemmas and prospects.

I therefore deeply appreciate your willingness to join us in this crucial endeavor.

It is with great pleasure that I hereby appoint you to serve as Chair of the Council for Higher Education's Committee for the Evaluation of Academic Quality for Industrial Design Studies.

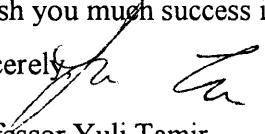
The composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Rosanne Somerson - Chair, Prof. Gabriela Goldschmidt Co-Chair, Prof. Ed Colker, Prof. Haim Finkelstein and Prof. Jan-Cristoph Zoels.

Ms. Alisa Elon will coordinate the Committee's activities.

In your capacity as a member of the Evaluation Committee, you will be requested to function in accordance with the enclosed appendix.

I wish you much success in your role as a member of this most important committee.

Sincerely,


Professor Yuli Tamir
Minister of Education, Culture and Sport
and Chairperson of the Council for Higher Education

Enclosures: Appendix to the Appointment Letter of Evaluation Committees

cc: Ms. Riki Mendelzvaig, Secretary of the Council for Higher Education
ms. Michal Neumann, Head of the Quality Assessment Unit

Appendix to the Letter of Appointment for Evaluation Committees **(Study Programs)**

1. General

On June 3, 2003 the Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to establish a system for quality assessment and assurance in Israeli higher education. Within this framework, study-programs are to be evaluated every six years and institutions every eight years. The quality assessment system came into effect in the academic year of 2004-2005.

The main objectives of the quality assessment activity are:

- To enhance the quality of higher education in Israel;
- To create an awareness within institutions of higher education in Israel of the importance of quality evaluation and to develop internal self-evaluation mechanisms on a regular basis;
- To provide the public with information regarding the quality of study programs in institutions of higher education throughout Israel;
- To ensure the continued integration of the Israeli system of higher education in the international academic arena.

It is not the CHE's intention to rank the institutions of higher education according to the results of the quality assessment processes. The evaluation committee should refrain from formal comparisons.

2. The Work of the Evaluation Committee

- 2.1 The committee shall hold meetings, as needed, before visiting the institution, in order to evaluate the material received.
- 2.2 The committee shall visit the institution and the academic unit being evaluated – if possible - within 3-4 months of receiving the self-evaluation report. The purpose of the visit is to verify and update the information submitted in the self-evaluation report, clarify matters where necessary, inspect the educational environment and facilities first hand, etc. During the visit, the committee will meet with the heads of the institution, faculty members, students, the administrative staff, and any other persons it considers necessary.
- 2.3 In a meeting at the beginning of the visit, the committee will meet with the heads of the institution (president/rector, dean), the heads of the academic unit and the study-programs, in order to explain the purpose of the visit. At the end of the visit, the committee will summarize its findings, and formulate its recommendations.
- 2.4 The duration of the visits (at least one full day) will be coordinated with the chairperson of the committee.

- 2.5 Following the visit, the committee will write its final report, including its recommendations, which will be delivered to the institution and the academic unit for their response.
- 2.6 In the event that a member of the committee is also a faculty member in an institution being evaluated, he will not take part in discussions regarding that institution.

3. The Individual Reports

- 3.1 The final reports of the evaluation committee shall address every institution separately.
- 3.2 The final reports shall include recommendations on topics listed in the guidelines for self-evaluation, such as:
- The goals and aims of the evaluated academic unit and study programs.
 - The study program.
 - The academic staff.
 - The students.
 - The organizational structure.
 - The broader organizational structure (school/faculty) in which the academic unit and study program operate.
 - The infrastructure (both physical and administrative) available to the study program.
 - Internal mechanisms for quality assessment.
 - Other topics to be decided upon by the evaluation committee.

4. The structure of the reports

4.1 *Part A – General background and an executive summary:*

- 4.1.1 General background concerning the evaluation process, the names of the members of the committee, a general description of the institution and the academic unit being assessed, and the committee's work.
- 4.1.2 An executive summary that will include a description of the strengths and weaknesses of the academic unit and program being evaluated.

4.2 *Part B – In-depth description of subjects examined:*

- 4.2.1 This part will be composed according to the topics examined by the evaluation committee, and based on the self-evaluation report submitted by the institution.
- 4.2.2 For each topic examined the report will present a summary of the findings, the relevant information and analysis.

4.3 *Part C – Recommendations:*

- 4.3.1 Comprehensive conclusions and recommendations regarding the evaluated academic unit and the study program according to the topics in part B.
- 4.3.2 Recommendations may be classified according to the following categories:
- *Congratulatory remarks and minimal changes recommended, if any.*
 - *Desirable changes recommended* at the institution's convenience and follow-up in the next cycle of evaluations.
 - *Important/needed changes requested for ensuring appropriate academic quality* within a reasonable time, in coordination with the institution (1-3 years)

- *Essential and urgent changes required, on which continued authorization will be contingent* (immediately or up to one year).
- *A combination of any of the above.*

4.4 Part D - Appendices:

The appendices shall contain the committee's letter of appointment and the schedule of the on-site visit.

5. The General report

In addition to the individual reports concerning each study program, the committee shall submit to the CHE the following documents:

- 5.1 A general report regarding the status of the evaluated field of study within the Israeli institutions of higher education.
- 5.2 Recommendations for standards in the evaluated field of study.

We urge the committee to list clearly its specific recommendations regarding each one of the topics, to ease the eventual monitoring of their implementation (both in the individual reports and in the general report).

Industrial Design Bezalel – Tentative schedule of site visit 12-13/12/07

First day Wednesday

Time	Subject	Participants
09:00-09:30	Opening session with the heads of the institution and the senior staff member appointed to deal with quality assessment	Prof. Zuckerman Arnon- President of the Academy Dr. Bar-On Yaarah- Vice Presiden of the Academy In the president's office
09:30-10:30	Meeting with the academic and administrative heads of the department	Drach Ami- Head of the industrial design department Maoz Galit- The Department administrative coordinator Prof. Ezri Tarazi- Head of the M.des programme Eran Neta/Ayelet Filmus- The Department administrative coordinator Maya Vinitzky- as the Evaluation Report editor
10:30-12:30:	Meeting with representatives of relevant committees *	+Pedagogic Committee members B.Des Degree- Bruno Ido, Lederman Eran, Parnas Haim. + Senate member from the department- Hefetz Safi + Self-Evaluation Report committee members- Prof. Kaufman Yaacov and Vinitzky Maya + Prof. Kaufman Yaacov also as the Appointing Committee representative +Prof. Chanan de Lange- M.des Pedagogic Committee member

12:30-13:15	Lunch	<p>As requested, 4-5 staff member and students as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Friedlander Ronen- 4th year - Savir Lior- 4th year - Zimerman Ido- 3rd year - Zafran Adi- 2nd year - Azoulay Daniel - M.des - Stern Reut- M.des
13:15-14:15	<p>Tour of campus (Including classes, workshops, studios, exhibition space, library, offices of faculty members, computer labs etc.)</p>	<p>Will be held by – Ami Drach, Dr. Yaarah Bar-On, Ido Bruno, Prof. Tarazi Ezri</p>
14:15-15:00	<p>Closed-door working meeting of the evaluation committee</p>	

Second day Thursday

Time	Subject	Participants
9:00-9:30	Meeting with the head of the History and Theory Unit, Bezalel	Dr. Dana Arieli-Horowitz
09:30-10:15	Meeting with senior academic staff*	Professor Shmuel Kaplan- M.des+ B.des lecturer Professor Yaacov Kaufman- M.des+ B.des lecturer Prof. Aryeh Kurzweil Safi Hefetz Ido Bruno- M.des+ B.des lecturer Dori Regev Linet Anat Shamoia-Ofer- M.des+ B.des lecturer Hadar Shapira Alexander Okon
10:15-11:00	Meeting with junior academic staff*	Feodor Bazubov Tal Gur Dov Ganchrow Cecilia Vitas-Walkov Asaf Warshavski Zivya Kay Elisha Tal Elad Persov- M.DES Ilanit Kabesa- M.DES Eliav Eyal- M.DES
11:00-11:45	Meeting with adjunct lecturers*	Dr. Shmuel Aroas Amos Boaz Oded Friedland Jonathan Roth Blonder Yedidya Havkin Ygaal Lovaton Yaron Lior Ilan Volk Raanan Galit Shvo- M.Des

11:45-12:45	Presentation of projects by students**	Ami Drach, Bruno Ido, Hadar Shapira+ 6 student: Sat Zemer, Magriso Shiran, Shafranek Shay, Kucik Gili, Laniado Itay, Marzan Meidad (2 final projects; 1 3 rd year studio project; 2 2 nd year studio projects; 1 1 st year project)
12:45-13:45	Meeting with students* **	+ first year- Michal Dolev, Itay Galim Second year- Yasmin Poplovsky, Yekutieli Ori Third year- Keler David, Habas Noa, Tal Ophir Forth year- Yael Gur, Doron Hadar, Siso Yaniv David Spectre- M. Des Rosin Liora- M.Des
13:45-14:30	Lunch	Graduates: Shay Goytein, Keynan Ifaat, Roth Roei, Dover Noam, Chen Michal, Sharif Eitan
14:30-15:00	Summation meeting with heads of the institution and of the department	Prof. Zuckerman Arnon Dr. Bar-On Yaarah Drach Ami Prof. Ezri Tarazi In the president's office
15:00-15:30	Closed-door working meeting of the evaluation committee	

* The heads of the institution and academic unit or their representatives will not attend these meetings.

** The visit will be conducted in English with the exception of students who may speak in Hebrew and anyone else who feels unable to converse in English.