

HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS

Main Office (617) 495-2171  
Undergraduate Studies Coordinator (617) 495-9116  
Graduate Studies Coordinator (617) 496-5211  
Fax (617) 495-5132



Science Center 325  
One Oxford Street  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138  
[www.math.harvard.edu](http://www.math.harvard.edu)

August 15, 2012

**Review of the Implementation Report of Hebrew University**

I want to thank the faculty and administration of Hebrew University for their report on the implementation of the committee's recommendations. In all reviews of this nature, the most important goal is to stimulate an internal review of departmental practices. I am convinced that this has occurred.

Some of the recommendations of the committee were at a national level, such as the adjustment of level of the material covered in first year courses and the consideration of a national program for graduate students. Although these were not adopted as a whole, I note that several institutions have added preparatory courses for entering students, and that the separate graduate programs are now coordinated under the auspices of the Israel Mathematical Union. Both represent steps in the right direction.

At Hebrew University the preparatory course was extended, optional midterm exams were introduced for first year students, and the drop-out rate was cut by a factor of three. The entire undergraduate program was revised, and the University agreed to give teaching assistants contracts two months prior to the beginning of each term. A remaining problem is the hiring and retention of senior faculty. The competition with Weizmann for the best candidates in Israel is bound to be a difficult one, as are the challenges related to the Jerusalem syndrome. But I am convinced that the faculty can rebuild and remain one of the very top mathematics departments in the world.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Benedict H. Gross', written over a horizontal line.

Benedict H. Gross  
Leverett Professor of Mathematics  
Harvard University