



7 February 2013

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

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing in response to the Follow Up Report that was sent to Tel Aviv University in January 2012.

There are two major issues in the report from Prof. Adler, both related to the suggestions of the review panel to establish programs at the national level. The original report from the panel urged the creation of such programs both to provide training in advanced topics and to serve as a focus for research. The panel believed that a national program would be more effective than the current programs (at each university) due to the relatively small number of faculty and students in the programs.

This proposal was discussed at length when the original report was received by the chairs of the 3 main departments (TAU, HUJI and Haifa) and by the faculty members. We were all convinced that there were significant problems to implementing a national program and were skeptical that our students would willingly participate. As we noted, students now do not take advantage of the option to take courses at other universities.

We do see value in a national research framework and we think that it could be an effective vehicle to begin to provide courses at the national level. Prof. Yoav Benjamini (from TAU) wrote a proposal for such a framework, with input from me and from Prof. Edna Schectman (Ben Gurion University) which I attach here. I think that this proposal is constructive and can set the stage for enriching both the research environment in statistics and the training of future researchers. Implementation of the proposal will require a commitment of resources from the Council.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Steinberg".

David Steinberg
Chair, School of Mathematical Sciences

Cc: Prof. David Horn