

## RESPONSES TO THE IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

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The hiring of a new Dean with a practice background is a positive step toward addressing many of the concerns in our review. For a new Dean to be successful, particularly one hired specifically with different credentials than past academic leaders, adequate resources to implement a new vision are crucial. For this vision to be meaningful, the evolution of new directions must be vetted with staff and colleagues, so that there is development of a true shared vision that is supported. Change is rarely successful when applied “top-down”. The best transformations that advance academic excellence build from shared deliberation and development. Graduate students themselves can be very helpful to the development of new directions, as they are often highly keyed-in to global advancements in their fields.

As the vision is further developed and articulated, it is essential to follow through on hiring additional staff with practice background as is indicated to be an intended step.

It is positive to learn that more inter-disciplinary research and a greater number of interdisciplinary theses investigations are being undertaken that make use of the rich and diverse areas of expertise at Technion. However, additional studios would enrich this research and study with a kind of rigor and space for the development of new knowledge within the growing area of Industrial Design and other design research. Space needs to be designated to achieve this, and teaching resources allocated. Without this advancement, the notion of enhancing practiced-based emphasis is not activated except through the theoretical. The result is self-limiting. The real opportunities of integrated research/practice are being realized in top institutions all over the globe. The Technion could become a leader in this space with the right designated focus because of the high caliber of potential internal partnerships among faculties, and the related opportunity to partner in research with various industries.

The connections between design and science are ripe with opportunities globally at present. Science industries are embracing the role of design thinking and creative research in unprecedented ways. The decision to create a new area of focus on medical and social design located in Tel Aviv is a wise and exciting development—the very kind of articulation of an educational focus that can further distinguish Technion. Enhancements in digital fabrication equipment will be an asset for proto-typing products and for better linking design development to potential manufacture. These are positive developments.

The restated Vision is also a positive advancement. However, in the description of "Israel as a Laboratory" it is essential that the "hands-on" nature of design laboratories is further developed and resourced. In the Visions and Goals and Assessment attachments there is a noticeable absence of mention of realized products, as both Goals of research outcomes as well as criteria for assessment for promotion and advancement. Other indicated categories are extremely important and credible, but there is a lack of evident support of true studio practice, and the acknowledgment of the veritable outcomes that demonstrate "cutting edge knowledge", and change and innovation. Design thinking is activated through hands-on encounters, and the haptic learning that results from manipulating materials as well as ideas. The hands and the senses are important receptors and translators of intellectual information that guide and inform innovation and breakthroughs.

The increased emphasis on community and collaboration can only be positive, particularly among the stellar individuals at the Technion and the diverse resources and areas of study. The notion of developing Centers of Excellence should not be ignored. Without acting on development of such, major potential remains unrealized.

Without seeing evidence of student work, recent staff achievements, and new syllabi of curricular developments it is difficult to be very specific. I applaud the changes that have been made but would urge that:

- the new Dean be supported through achieving an additional staff hire
- space allocations for sorely needed studio classrooms be established
- course lines for hands-on laboratory/studios be resourced
- additional collaborative opportunities are supported
- development of a digital fabrication facility is completed

If it is not possible at the moment to hire a full-time staff member, another intermediate solution could be to hire project-based visiting professors that specialize in areas of design thinking and innovation from a studio practice perspective. Bringing such experts into the Technion as guest instructors could be an effective way to bridge curricular development while waiting for the ability to make a permanent hire. There may be grant funding for the invitation of international scholars who could fulfill this role. A robust visiting designer sequence could be very advantageous. One approach might be to invite guest professors to collaborate with staff from other faculties to advance the trials of cross-disciplinary interaction. Technion's reputation and excellent resources would likely yield in enticing top scholars in design. There are many ways that such a program could be designed. Israeli practicing designers might be especially excited to work in leading design studios or in joining in collaborative teams at a world-class institution like the Technion.

One comment from the original submitted report was that though the students were admitted through a highly competitive process, the work was weak and did not demonstrate evidence of clear directed progression of improvement. In this update there is no way to gauge whether or not this has improved. However, based on the results that still have not changed, I have no evidence as to whether or not there is noticeable improvement in the quality of student work. The need for improvement in this area was significantly emphasized in our report and should be addressed or evidence presented to suggest that higher quality work is being achieved. The development of a facility in Tel Aviv may contribute to the needed sense of community, and may be of benefit for some students to help to minimize extensive travel time. It is important to remark that there is essentially no evidence of improvement mentioned in this update, nor are students or their work the focus of the update. This is a bit of a concern.

Since the visit and submission of the first report, there has been enormous development on the web that pertains to student communication, community, and dissemination of work and research. For Technion to have the international presence that it so deserves, featuring staff and student work, and innovative collaborations and projects on the website is critical. The current description is lackluster and does not indicate the changes specified in the goals and vision area of this update. The website is "tired" and does not represent the ideas of medical or social design in any apparent way, nor does it celebrate the interdisciplinary research that is said to be occurring. In general, to attract good designers and/or industry partnerships, the website would benefit from significant updating and enhanced design.

I hope that my comments are viewed as helpful and supportive. I apologize for the delay in completing this report.