

## REVIEW OF SCHOOL RESPONSES TO THE EC'S REPORT

### Ariel College of Judea and Samaria

The response is comparatively short, five pages, set out in narrative, somewhat aleatoric form, with summary statements indicating how changes have been implemented, extending and adding to changes that were initiated in the initial response to the EC's assessment.

1. The first change that is described concerns the curriculum; specifically, the broadening of the curriculum to include interdisciplinary studies, complementing the focus on Jewish heritage. Not many new courses have been developed at the elective course level, only new opportunities, which means they will be taken by choice and therefore variably. Students now can elect to study in "general," which presumably means introductory, level courses in the human sciences. Later in the report there are comments on the technology courses. Following the recommendations of the EC, courses in this area have been "re-examined." The changes described in the most recent report (March 2012) indicate a much fuller and more sophisticated technology curriculum, with distinct topics in each of the years, their sequential development, and productive integration into the studio sequence. The matter of theory courses was also taken up later in the report. The addition of eight new courses seems very positive. The same is true for the enhanced teaching in information technology: increased staff, more focused teaching, and more appropriate facilities (hardware and software).
2. The second change concerns the studio curriculum. The faculty has responded to the EC's recommendation that the program's unique location be taken into consideration when selecting the topics for the design problems. This past year there has been greater emphasis on landscape topics, sustainability or "green architecture," and ecology. The reorientation seems to have been successful because a few of the students who took these studios were awarded prizes this past year. Later in the report there is acknowledgement of the EC's recommendation for better integration of technical and design studies.
3. The topic of creativity in architectural design is also addressed in the response, as it was in the EC's assessment. How the Committee's specific recommendations – attention to problem solving, analytical methods, diagramming, etc – were addressed is, however, unclear.
4. The next point concerns overcoming the program's relative insularity. The development of a vigorous lecture series is a very good beginning, as is the use of exhibition space in South Tel Aviv for the end-of-year presentations. The continued dedication to a school journal, *Architext*, is also a good step toward engagement.
5. Faculty workshops are described in the School's most recent report (March 2012). Their topics, sequence, and requirements for participation promise to improve teaching, as well as collegiality and awareness of current themes in

architectural discourse. These workshops appear to be good ways of strengthening the faculty and of achieving its disciplinary goals.

6. The EC's recommendations for refocusing the curriculum of the first and second year studios have been acknowledged. The report describes a re-organized sequence that allows for clear distinctions between levels and incremental and cumulative learning.

7. The report also addresses the EC's recommendations on the structure and development of the faculty, but not fully. There are, indeed, positive developments. A senior architect has been redeployed in the program, and that the procedures for appointing the head of school conform to College guidelines and are published on the internet. Also positive are the improvements of gender balance within the faculty. The proposal that more practicing architects, with expertise in emerging subjects (new media, sustainability, etc) is still to be taken up; likewise, the recommendation on the procedures for faculty appointments and promotions—a significant and serious part of the Committee's report. Also unaddressed, it seems, is the recommendation that appointments be given only to individuals with demonstrable expertise. This may, of course, be happening; but the response does not say this is the case, nor how that expertise is determined. That members of the current staff are encouraged to write and publish is good. One dimension of the framework for this activity has been noted—the Research Authority—but the incentives for research and publication are unclear and, perhaps, should be stated.

8. The profile of the students seems to be improving, perhaps because of higher selectivity resulting from a larger applicant pool.

9. The comments on research and facilities that end the report indicate positive movement toward a more academic culture in the program. The new library will be a major step forward in that direction, and continued support for research initiatives, among teachers and students, will be very important too.

In consideration of the observations set out above, in two years an expert in the field should reexamine the implementation of the recommendations that have not been followed.

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