

REVIEW OF SCHOOL RESPONSES TO THE EC'S REPORT

Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design

The response prepared by the faculty of the Bezalel Academy addresses many of the points raised by the EC. A number of the statements are, however, non-specific, indicating intentions and strategies rather than specific steps and implementations. The EC's primary points about commitment to the professional aspects of architectural education and definitive design are cases in point; likewise, the observations on the faculty (expertise, development, and appointment). The EC's comments on research, however, have led to concrete steps, with what seems to be positive results. The overall structure of the response was difficult to follow, because of its two-part structure.

1. Bezalel's involvement with the discussions between the schools and the Registrar, together with the program's new contacts with construction companies, indicate positive responses to the EC's recommendations for greater emphasis on the "professional" aspects of architectural education.
2. The establishment of a steering committee for considerations of the curriculum is a positive step toward addressing the EC's observations on Bezalel's teaching program. The curriculum changes described more fully in the most recent report (March 2012) indicate positive changes in the technology curriculum, as well as improvements in the study of architecture's professional conditions and constraints, and in the study of information technology. These curriculum changes also indicate the integration of technology studies into the studio sequence. The one risk to be mindful of with this "integration" is the possibility of abbreviating the proper subject matter of the technology course for the sake of "applications."
3. The observations on faculty appointment procedures begin to address the EC's concerns. It seems odd, however, that appointment and promotion decisions are handled in a curriculum committee. The EC's recommendation was to separate appointment decisions from other concerns so that this important part of the program—the structure of the faculty—is given the attention it needs. More work, and more institutional structure, is needed in this area.
4. The work on developing a culture of inquiry and research at the Bezalel Academy is very positive and appears to have had good results. It is clear that the specific nature and opportunities of an art academy have been taken into consideration in the definition of the kinds of research that are being encouraged.
5. On students and learning- it is good that an advising procedure for final year students has been established. It is unclear, however, why this procedure is appropriate for final year students only. Also good, but possibly insufficient, is the identification of an academic advisor "for all students of all years." Surely a team of advisors is required, preferably with teachers advising students in the year

that they teach. The exchange and outreach programs are very positive and should be both supported and developed further.

6. All of the steps that have been taken to develop the program's infrastructure and outreach seem positive. The "reality labs" hold the promise of addressing the EC's observations on the professional dimension of Bezalel's educational program. The nature of the "engagement" with professional organizations is, however, unclear. One wonders, for example, if professionals are used as "consultants" in any of the studio projects, and if such a role forms a designated part of the curriculum.

7. Bezalel's program, like the others in Israel, will need to take a decision on the basic structure of its course (whether to follow the "European" or "American" model). Involvement in the TEMPUS project seems a good way to prepare for that decision. The formation of the curriculum steering committee is positive, as has been said. It is not clear, however, that this committee needs to be chaired by the Head of the program. In most faculties, committees are charged by the program leader, expected to undertake their work, and then report to the Head of school and the wider faculty for discussion and vote.

8. On contact with other departments in the Academy- the development of joint courses with other departments seems very positive. Also positive is the development of the cross-departmental project focused on community engagement. More courses of this kind should be considered, for they will take advantage of the unique opportunities of the Academy and give its program in architecture special distinction.

9. On technology courses- the attention to planning and construction legislation seems good, but the structure of the overall technology instruction (the sequence of topics, and the comprehensiveness of the study) is hard to discern from these brief comments. The alignment of technology courses with studios is good, but this again leaves open the nature and sequence of those courses. On support courses. . . the responses to the EC's observations on non-studio courses seem very positive (increase of credits, more work in history and theory, and the math proficiency test).

10. The description of changes to the curriculum does not address the EC's observations on the subject matter of studio teaching. These comments should be addressed. This is a striking omission in the response.

11. On staff development- the strong recommendations by the EC are partly acknowledged, but it seems few concrete steps have been taken to address the issues of assessing staff performance and paths for advancement.

12. On research - as observed above, the work on research in the program (among students and faculty) is very positive and suggests the likelihood of successful results in establishing a culture of inquiry and research at Bezalel.

13. On students - all of the steps outlined with respect to student selection and evaluation seem very positive and in line with the EC recommendations.

14. On infrastructure - all the steps outlines with respect to infrastructure seem very positive and in line with the EC recommendations.

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.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Leatherbarrow', written in a cursive style.

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