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לכבוד
גב' תמר מעגן-אפרתי
מרכזת באגף להערכת איכות והבטחתה
המועצה להשכלה גבוהה
ירושלים 91040

הנדון : תגובת הטכניון לחוות דעת הסוקר
מכתבך בדוא"ל מיום 11.7.2012

בהמשך למכתב הנ"ל, מצ"ב תגובת הפקולטה לארכיטקטורה ובינוי ערים על חוות דעת הסוקר בדבר
יישום המלצות הוועדה להערכת הלימודים באדריכלות בטכניון.

התגובה מייצגת את עמדת הפקולטה והנהלת הטכניון.

בברכה,

פרופסור דניאל ריטל

לוט.

העתקים: פרופ' פ. פייגין, המשנה הבכיר לנשיא
פרופ' י. קלעי, דיקן הפקולטה לארכיטקטורה ובינוי ערים

August 1, 2012

FACULTY RESPONSE TO – REVIEW OF SCHOOL RESPONSES TO THE EC'S REPORT

I am pleased to offer the Technion's Faculty of Architecture & Town Planning (FATP) response to Prof. David Leatherbarrow's comments on the Faculty's response to the EC's report.

Let me start by agreeing with Prof. Leatherbarrow's observation that the quality assessment process itself seems to have had a positive impact on all schools of architecture in Israel, and on the Technion's in particular. As the person appointed to implement the EC's recommendations at the Technion, I can attest that the faculty have taken them to heart. The recommendations also provide a good incentive, not to say "excuse," to making some necessary changes, which are discussed in the following.

The FATP at the Technion has begun the assimilation of the EC's recommendation by formulating a Vision Statement (attached), a process led by Prof. Shamay Asif that took one whole academic year. It involved faculty, students, alumni, and the professional community, using research and surveys. Together with the EC report, the Vision Statement serves to guide the Faculty as it determines and evaluates the steps it will take to achieve its goals.

Before I address Prof. Leatherbarrow's specific comments, I would like to offer my agreement with his assessment of the challenge facing the school in terms developing a faculty that is prepared to teach a subject like architecture—at once a discipline and a profession, a way of knowing the world and of acting in it. That challenge is evident for any school of architecture, and even more so for the Technion, where research in Architecture and related fields is paramount. Moreover, given that the Technion is one of only two Israeli research universities where Architecture is taught, and the only one which offers PhD in Architecture, the criteria for appointment and promotion of faculty are more stringent than elsewhere. Hence, recruiting and promoting faculty who are both researchers and professionals, has been difficult.

A partial solution to the problem has been offered through composing a coherent set of criteria for appointment and promotion, summarized in a document that was shared with the relevant Technion committees and with other schools (attached).

A second partial solution to the same problem is currently being formulated, and will be presented to the Technion in the near future. It seeks to adopt the model currently used by the Faculty of Medicine at the Technion – a Faculty that operates in a mode rather similar to Architecture (discipline & profession). There, faculty whose main work is professional, are known as "Clinical Professors." We plan to propose a similar qualification: "Professor in Practice." Holders of such titles will be evaluated primarily on their accomplishments in the practice of architecture, rather than traditional research.

Regarding Prof. Leatherbarrow's specific observations for the Technion:

The response prepared by the faculty of the Technion is systematic, clear, discerning, and productive. It is plain that the assessment process has been taken very seriously and that both the faculty and the School leadership have committed themselves to a disciplined and creative process of self-evaluation and change. The structure of the School's response (sequential listing of EC's observations followed by the School's response) is very effective.

The faculty acknowledges with thanks Prof. Leatherbarrow's compliments.

1. Faculty- it would be good to know exactly what steps have been taken to: "instill a sense of community, etc. among the faculty. That "less disharmony" exists is a very positive sign. That recruitment efforts are underway is also very positive.

Instilling a sense of community among the faculty is a work in progress. Interestingly, it has been the on-going recruitment process which appears to have contributed most: the process was made public, with all faculty members invited to participate in the discussions regarding the recruitment of candidates to all programs. At first, only those faculty related to a specific program (e.g., Architecture), participated. But with continuing encouragement and coercion, almost all the faculty are now involved. The discussions occur in the dean's office, after the candidates' job-talk, frequently with over 20 people attending. They have become a rather frequent forum to sound off and hear each other's thoughts on the candidates, the positions, and other matters.

Other measure of community-forming are being considered, such as a retreat, workshops on specific faculty-wide issues, and more.

2. Collaboration with relevant programs- the optimism is encouraging, but there is little evidence of changes at the institutional level.

Collaborations are being implemented at three levels: within the Faculty, with other Faculties, and with the community at large.

Within the Faculty joint courses have been introduced between Architecture and Landscape Architecture, in the first, second, and fourth years. In addition, a new course where students participate from all 4 programs (Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Town Planning, and Industrial Design) has been offered twice, and will become a permanent part of the curriculum.

Collaboration with other Faculties has been difficult, to say the least. Other than ad-hoc collaborations, mostly between individuals, we have not been successful in encouraging our students to take courses in other Faculties, or vice versa. Chief among the impediments are course prerequisites: these often form barriers to students, both ways. Scheduling is another problem: given Architecture's students more structured curriculum, it is often difficult to coordinate courses with other disciplines.

Collaboration with the community at large has been very successful, particularly due to winning – now for the second time – a significant grant from the Council for Higher Education that encourages outreach and courses that focus on working with the community. Several courses, counting tens of students, have been offered, workshops held, and presentations made.

3. Linkages with the profession and with industry- the joint meetings described are positive; the need for a lecture series is acknowledged but not met.

Sad but true: The location of the Technion in Haifa, rather than at the center of the country, means that professionals, most of whose offices are in Tel Aviv, will come only when major events occur at the Technion. We have been successful drawing them for student-

prize events and final studio presentations, but limited funding hampers inviting major architects from abroad, who would be the main draw for professionals.

Our main link with the professional community has been through adjunct faculty. We employ some 120 of them each semester.

4. Leadership and management- the steps taken with respect to leadership are positive and convincing.

We concur, and acknowledge with thanks Prof. Leatherbarrow's compliments.

5. Mission and goals statement- a review of mission and goal statements for both programs seems timely and productive

We concur, and acknowledge with thanks Prof. Leatherbarrow's compliments.

6. Framework for curriculum development- this response contains very positive steps toward curriculum review and renewal. The decision concerning "structure" (the European or American models) will be decisive, but alliance with one or the other would seem to be secondary to the Faculty's sense of its own academic mission. As is stated by the School, this is a decision that affects all of the programs in Israel, suggesting that the CHE take part in these discussions.

Progress towards reforming the curriculum is being made. Following the workshop held in January 2012 (with the participation of Prof. Leatherbarrow), a committee has formulated a 4+2 curriculum: 4 year undergraduate, non-professional degree program, and a 2 year graduate professional program leading to M.Arch degree. The program has been vetted with the Technion deans for undergraduate and graduate studies. It will be finalized and presented to the relevant Technion committees in Fall 2012.

Prof. Leatherbarrow's suggestion that the program be shared with the CHE is excellent, and will be followed.

7. Studio structure- these revisions to the studio sequence seem very positive, even if they are ongoing.

We concur. The reformed curriculum will add more – hopefully positive – changes.

8. Awareness of other architecture curricula – the discussions between the schools, the CHE, and the Registrar are obviously crucial for the future of architectural education in Israel. That the Dean of the Technion is heading a task force that will address this issue is very good. The outcome of the meetings that have been described will greatly affect this school and the others. A conflict of expectations between the schools and the Registrar cannot be allowed to continue. A common core – with respect to "competencies" rather than teaching methods – seems to be a good aspiration. Core, in this sense however, should not be envisaged as rudimentary subject matter, but kinds of knowledge all parties agree are essential in the training of architects intending professional practice.

I am happy to report that an accord has been reached between the schools and the registrar concerning this specific issue. On 19.3.2012, the accord (attached) has been ratified by the heads of all five schools of architecture in Israel. On 21.3.2012 it has been ratified by the Council for Engineering and Architecture (the statutory body that appoints and oversees the Registrar of Engineers and Architects). On 24.7.12 it has been ratified by the Council for Higher Education subcommittee for Engineering, Science, Architecture, and Medicine. (Ratification by the entire CHE is expected in August, 2012.)

Based on this accord, schools have agreed to certain additions/modifications to their curricula, whereas the Registrar agreed to automatically register all graduates of all schools (thus allowing them to begin their apprenticeship, as well as according them certain professional privileges).

Following this accord, the CHE has appointed a committee, comprising of Prof. Kalay from the Technion, Arch. Irit Tsaraf Netanyahu (head of the Architecture program in the Wizo Academy), and Arch. Naama Malis, representing the Council for Engineering and Architecture, to follow and verify compliance with the accord. The committee has not yet met, but has requested compliance reports – or plans for compliance – from all schools.

Bottom line: the matter appears to have been resolved.

8. Experimental courses -the initiatives described under this heading seem very positive, insofar as the first promises to give amplitude to the educational program, and the second will tie it to surrounding community.

Progress is being made on these initiatives, partially funded by the CHE grants mentioned above.

9. Specific topics- as noted above, the recruitment efforts are very positive. All impediments to success in these efforts should be removed, particularly any impediments that limit the recruitment of the best talent in and outside Israel.

Recruitment has proven to be more challenging than originally envisioned. One of the main impediments – the Israeli government’s rules and regulations concerning obtaining work permits for non-Israeli, non-Jewish scholars, has severely limited the pool of eligible applicants.

Our recruitment efforts over the past two years have yielded 6 new full-time (2 in Architecture), and 2 half-time (1 in Architecture) faculty members. Two more (1 in Architecture) are in advanced stages of recruitment.

Efforts are continuing to recruit additional faculty.

10. Computing - the initiatives with respect to computing seem well conceived, comprehensive, and likely to overcome the deficiencies noted by the EC.

We concur.

11. Quality of teaching - what is meant by “placing a premium on student evaluation” is unclear. Does this mean that student evaluations are taken into consideration when decisions about appointment renewal, promotions, and compensation are made?

That’s exactly right: up until recently, only statistical, numerical summaries of students’ evaluations were available to the Promotion and Tenure committee. We have requested, and received, students’ textual comments for each case that comes before the T&P committee. These comments are now part of each faculty member’s teaching evaluation. (Note: compensation of faculty in Israel is negotiated between the labor unions and the government, and is therefore not a parameter that is available to the P&T committee.)

12. Staff re-development plan - as noted in the EC report, this issue is decisive for the School. The appointment of the Dean from within the discipline was a very good step in the right direction. The agreement to increase the faculty from 30 (22 currently filled) to 40 positions is also an important step forward. As noted above, the net should be cast widely and the candidates with the best preparation and greatest likelihood of making significant contributions to the School and discipline should be appointed, regardless of other issues (nationality, religion, etc; although diversity and gender balance are always important issues in the shaping of faculties).

As noted in my answer to issue #9, recruitment has proven to be more difficult than originally envisioned, partly because issues of nationality/religion are a factor. Combined with our un-compromising strive for excellence, the pool of qualified candidates has proven to be rather small. It should be noted that 24 of the current 30 faculty members (including 4 half-time faculty) hold PhD degrees – a rather high percentage, compared to most other schools of architecture in the world. This sets a very high bar for the recruitment of new faculty members, further limiting the pool of eligible candidates.

13. Promotion and tenure criteria - this response to the report is very positive. The CHE should consider asking the Technion if these proposals could be shared with the other schools, with a view to shared adoption.

We concur. Some schools have asked and received copies of our P&T guidelines, though we don't know if they have been formally adopted by them. We will favorably consider the suggestion to propose the guidelines for adoption by the CHE.

14. Leadership and management - that the Dean was appointed for 4 years seems a very wise decision.

We concur.

15. Teaching load - in addition to this positive step, the next might be to formalize the different combinations of seminar, lecture, and studio courses that could constitute a full-time load, and shared with the appropriate faculty, for purposes of planning different career paths.

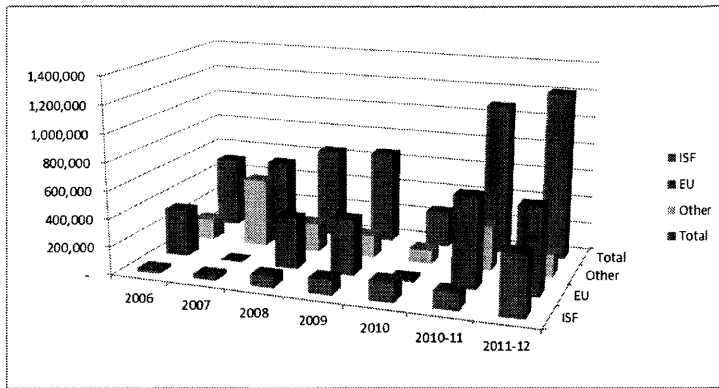
We concur. A current impediment to implementing a reduced teaching load is the relatively low number of full-time faculty. Until we arrive closer to the desired full complement of 40 FTE, teaching loads will remain higher than desired. Still, at the dean's discretion, lighter loads are assigned to junior faculty.

16. Research- the agenda for research is very positive. A corresponding growth in scholarship might be a good parallel initiative.

The volume of research submissions, and corresponding growth in winning competitive grants, has been very gratifying, as can be seen in the following table and chart:

competitive and total funding 2006-2012

Years	ISF	EU	Other	Total	
2006	24,384	338,390	148,116	510,891	
2007	30,554	-	493,257	523,811	
2008	80,673	364,378	206,105	651,156	
2009	109,194	398,026	160,028	667,249	
2010	141,598	18,811	96,206	256,615	
2010-11	120,736	649,540	320,320	1,090,596	
2011-12	430,469	619,567	163,628	1,213,664	estimate



A “corresponding growth in scholarship” is hard to measure, since it is distributed among all faculty members. If needed, such a survey can be conducted.

17. Students and learning - acknowledging the long-term nature of this issue shows a realistic grasp of what is at stake. The steps that have been taken indicate a good approach.

We concur.

18. Studio space - the restatement of the problems with studio space indicates clear awareness of the challenge. The desire for a large space suitable for an entire class is understandable, but it should be remembered that many European programs run studios that happily exist in a number of relatively small rooms. Communication is key, but so is the identity of single studios or studio sections. The removal of partitions seems to be a good partial solution.

We concur.

19. Workshops - the improvement of workshops is very positive and should have a significant impact on student learning and faculty research.

We concur.

20. General - the EC’s recommendation on this point was for consideration. The metaphor of “blurring” disciplinary boundaries is common, but hardly clear. The key issue is the combination of the necessary level and degree of disciplinary identity and the appropriate level (or possibilities) of interdisciplinary opportunities. The EC’s recommendation that a structure be devised to achieve both ends seems still useful.

We concur. Such discussions are underway at present, through the design of the new curriculum for Architecture and for Landscape Architecture.

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.

We’ll be happy to submit to an expert evaluation in two years, though are somewhat unclear of which recommendations have not been followed?

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