

June 23th, 2013

**Response of the Department of Psychology, Ben-Gurion University to the
CHE recommendations, June 2013**

Overview of faculty

The Department of Psychology has 21 full-time faculty members as of October 2012. Dr. Ilan Dinstein, recruited last year, has been awarded the prestigious Alon Fellowship and also has received second place in the Sieratzki Family Prize for Neuroscience. Dr. Shaul Shalvi, who is also one of the new faculty members, has been selected as one of the best teachers in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. All relevant information regarding courses, faculty members CV's, students was sent to the CHE in February 2013 in the follow-up report for the Biology-Psychology dual major.

Promotions: Dr. Liat Tikotsky was promoted to Senior Lecturer.

Dr. Yoella Berebi-Meyer was promoted to Associate Professor and also was selected as one of the best teachers in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities.

Table 1 summarizes the distribution of faculty members according to their rank.

| Full Professor | Associate Professor | Senior Lecturer | Lecturer |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------|
| 7 | 3 | 7 | 4 |

Below are our comments on the points raised by the CHE's letter of 2013.

1. Social Psychology.

- a. The track continues to flourish with the promotion of two of its members: Dr. Yoav Bar-Anan to Senior Lecturer with tenure and Professor Yoella Bereby-Meir, to Associate Professor.
- b. The doctorate students in that track will be hosting a country-wide conference of Ph.D. students, supported by the university in the fall.
- c. The faculty members are negotiating a joint course with Hebrew University. The course will increase interactions between faculty and students in both universities and will encourage research collaborations between the two universities.
- d. The Social Psychology track increased the number of MA students to 11 in 2012 and are planning to have a similar number next year (20 will be accepted).

2. Clinical psychology and an in-house clinic

a. The department has made two attempts at starting an in-house clinic. The first involved requesting funding to start such a clinic from the university administration. The second involved an attempt to take over administrative responsibilities for the university counseling center and, thus, implement a scientist-practitioner model of training. Regarding the first option (i.e., university funding an independent clinic run by the Psychology Department), the costs are enormous. Aside from a half-time administrative coordinator responsible for receiving referrals, scheduling intakes, scheduling sessions, etc., we would need to hire at least two licensed supervisors (since none of the clinical faculty are technically licensed supervisors). In Israel, only people working in the public sector can be "trained" and licensed as supervisors, thus excluding all full-time faculty members. Of course, in the context of such a clinic the faculty would provide supervision in evidence-based treatments, it is just that vis-à-vis the Ministry of Health, such supervision would not count toward students' practicum requirements. In addition, we would need to hire a part-time psychiatrist. A rough estimate of the costs involved hovers around \$3000.00 per month, more money than the university is willing to dedicate to such an endeavor at this time. As an alternative, we attempted to have one of our clinical faculty members be appointed as head of the university counseling center. The idea is that he/she would then emphasize training practicum students and interns in more empirically supported assessment and intervention approaches. The outgoing head of the counseling center, along with the Dean of Student Affairs, strongly opposed this move, taking the position that it was important to maintain separation between the Psychology Department and University Counseling Center. Their position was that students taking our classes would also be our patients or the patients of graduate students we were supervising. They contended that there are no such models of the Psychology Department running the Counseling Center anywhere in the world. At this point, our only option is to have the university decide that it is sufficiently important to fund an in-house clinic.

b. Supervision of students by adjunct faculty.

Regular clinical faculty members now teach three of the four practicum classes. We have also reduced the hours that non-scientifically oriented adjunct faculty teach (e.g., psychological assessment). Our plan is to further reduce the hours of non-scientifically oriented external teachers next year.

3. Developmental Psychology.

The department has been holding ongoing discussions and sub-committees have met to discuss the need for a Developmental Psychology Track. The consensus of opinion is that the department would in future consider opening a Child Clinical track if an appropriate and stellar researcher in the field is recruited. Professor Andrea Berger, chair of the track in Cognitive and Brain Psychology is the academic supervisor of the newly opened University Day Care Center. The department will forge strong ties with the Day Care Center, including seminars, research opportunities. Dr. Na'ama Atzaba Poria, who on sabbatical and her PhD student, No'a Gruen have established a university-wide seminar on parenting in collaboration with Professor Julie Cwikel from the Social Work

Department. The department has several researchers conducting research directly or obliquely on areas related to child psychopathology and will continue to explore the possibility of opening up another applied MA program in this area in the future.

4. Faculty in Cross-Cultural Psychology

No significant progress has been made in this area since June 2012. As the report from 2012 and the present document indicate, the department has focused its efforts in strengthening the current tracks in Clinical, Cognitive and Social Psychology.

5. Ph.D. student funding.

a. The department has 65 active Ph.D. students. Due to budget cuts, the departmental funding supplement for Ph.D. students was reduced in 2012 to 924 NIS/month from a monthly stipend of 1389 NIS that was received in previous years. Many faculty members subsidized Ph.D. student stipends from grants when possible.

b. Some effort has been made in the department to reduce the number of hours devoted to tutorials in some of the classes and it is anticipated that these cutbacks will enable us to fund research students in the future and to cope with past and impending budget cuts. We note that the potential and current Ph.D. students have to deal with a great deal of uncertainty from year to year as they don't know if their faculty stipend (approximately NIS 3700) will be supplemented by the department. Moreover, as mentioned in the 2012 report, teaching opportunities within the university have dwindled, due to the high cost of hiring Ph.D. students. Doctoral students continue to be employed in the Eilat Campus and Orthodox (Haredi) College in Jerusalem.

c. Notably, the Department continued to award the "Chairman's Prize" to Ph.D students who published articles in peer-reviewed journals. Last year three students were awarded the highest prize, enabling them to teach a seminar course and 12 others were awarded a monetary prize. This policy will be continued if there is a need for these courses and if the budget allows.

d. Three Ph.D. students from the Psychology department were awarded the Faculty prize in Social Sciences and Humanities, one student was awarded the John R. Goldsmith Prize for research in Environmental Sciences and one student won two competitive grants from the MINERVA Foundation and from Israel Foundation Trustees.

6. M.A. Program

The MA program continues at the same pace as last year. There was no substantial change in the number of applicants and since we offer some teaching positions or stipends to the best candidates, we do not anticipate a decrease in the number of students. The researchers in the Cognitive and Brain track are actively supervising graduate students from the university's Cognitive Neuroscience Program, as well as Psychology students.

7. Undergraduate Program

- a. The dual major in Biology –Psychology is in its second year. Professor Avraham Zangen from Life Sciences is head of the Program. Together with representatives from Psychology, Prof. Andrea Berger, Prof. Ora Kofman and Dr. Ilan Dinstein, some changes have been made in the program, which were reported in a separate report in February to the CHE. Importantly, Prof. Zangen and the representatives from Psychology (next year Ilan Dinstein) continue to meet with the students and to monitor their progress and needs.
- b. The dual major in Administration and Psychology will be coordinated by Dr. Shaul Shalvi who will teach the course in Organizational Psychology instead of an adjunct teacher.
- c. In general, the department has invested effort and resources into improving the English language web page. This effort was spearheaded by Drs. Bar-Anan and Dinstein who are working with an MA student on the site.

8. Infrastructure

- a. The department has received the necessary support for lab courses that are required for the Biology-Psychology Program from the university. Other forms for support for laboratory research are lagging behind. For example, repeated requests were made to the faculty for support for a program for on-line experimentation (Qualtrix) which would benefit the social and clinical psychologists; however, the request has been turned down due to lack of budget.
- b. There is a serious need for lab and office space. A plan has been drawn up and is being processed by the CEO's office. Briefly, Dr. Nirit Soffer-Dudek did not get adequate lab space when recruited. There are no offices for post-docs and not enough office space for Ph.D. students. The emeriti of the department have no office space. In addition, we have requested a teaching lab for the imaging courses which require recording brain potentials (EEG, ERP). These courses are currently given in the research laboratories of Prof. Berger or Dr. Kessler, disrupting the ongoing research.
- c. The department fully appreciates the recommendation of the CHE to regard Psychology as a laboratory science with respect to lab space, technical support and equipment. These needs have been partially met only for the dual major with Biology. In addition to the lack of technicians and lab equipment, the department notes that the computer support technician has a half position only and has to deal with more than 300 computers used for research. Notably, many researchers in all tracks require lap top computers for testing non-student populations outside the university and there is an unacceptable delay in attending to needs of the various labs because of this work load. This problem has been reviewed by the university resources office, but thus far, no solution has been offered.

9. Alumni

Professor Nachshon Meiran spearheaded an effort to contact alumni on a Facebook site. Further effort and funding is required to pay someone who will maintain contact, monitor and update this page. As mentioned above, the department invested in the English web page and has not yet had the funds to pay someone to maintain this enterprise adequately.

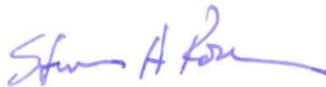
Sincerely,



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