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March 15, 2014

Report for: The Israeli Council of Higher Education.

From: Prof. Charles Stanish

Re: Tel Aviv University Implementation of the Recommendations made by the External Evaluation Team of Archaeology Departments in Israel, November 2009

This report is based on:

1. The report of the Committee for the Evaluation of Archaeology Study Programs in November 2011
2. The implementation report sent on 20/11/2013 by Professors Ran Barkai and Oren Tal of Tel Aviv University “Working Plan of the Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures at Tel Aviv University against International Committee's Recommendations (2013)”

Implementation of Recommendations

1. **Recommendation:** Strategic Plan. The Committee recommended the creation of a Departmental strategic plan for the future. A strategic plan could provide the road map for a more efficient administrative structure. TAU easily ranks in the top 20 departments in the world. We (the committee) find that it is important for such elite departments to periodically review their mission and the means by which they carry it out. This avoids complacency and intellectual inbreeding. Such mission statements are difficult, but we believe that they are necessary for the long-term health of any institution.

Implementation: No information was provided in the Response letter for this recommendation.

2. **Recommendation:** BA and MA course of study. The Committee recommended that the Department should more clearly delineate its BA and MA study programs. Specifically, we felt that the more technical course requirements that usually require undergrads working in faculty research labs were not always in the students' best interest. We felt that some of these courses should be shifted to the MA, freeing up course time for BA students to gain more substantive knowledge about archaeology, language and ancient history and to develop more transferable skills for other careers.

Implementation: The Department rejected this recommendation.

3. **Recommendation:** We suggested that the Department include more contemporary archaeological and anthropological theory to the curriculum.

Implementation: The Department rejected this recommendation suggesting instead that these courses were already offered in the elective (monograph) courses as described in section 3 of the response letter.

4. **Recommendation:** The Committee recommended administrative changes that allows students to more easily obtain language training.

Implementation: The Department rejected this recommendation suggesting instead that students can already obtain this training in the ways outlined in section 4 of the response letter.

5. **Recommendation:** The Committee recommended more hiring more faculty in archaeological sciences.

Implementation: The Department hired Dr. Erez Ben-Yosef . We note that he is an outstanding young archaeological scientist.

6. **Recommendation:** The Committee noted that the placement of the Ph.D. program in the School of Jewish Studies created unnecessary impediments to student progress.

Implementation: According to the response letter, various people in the university are discussing this matter.

7. **Recommendation:** We recommended that the Department make faculty replacement hires based upon the strategic plan in #1 above.

Implementation: Since the Department rejected #1, this recommendation is moot.

8. **Recommendation:** The Committee recommended hires in both Hittitology and Egyptology.

Implementation: The Department hired Dr. Amir Gilan in Hittitology.

9. **Recommendation:** The Committee was concerned about the glaring gender imbalance in the department and recommended concerted action to address this problem.

Implementation: After the Committee report was submitted, the Department hired two males indicating that the Department has, up to the time of the response letter, rejected this recommendation.

10. **Recommendation:** The Committee recommended that the yearly academic hours of adjuncts should be increased as well as an increase in opportunities for graduate students to serve as teaching fellows.

Implementation: The Department noted that this would require extra funding from CHE and the University. They likewise pointed out that preparing courses is time-consuming and would slow down a PH.D. student's research. This recommendation seems to have been rejected by the Department.

11. **Recommendation:** The Committee recommended more effective counseling of BA students.

Implementation: The Department accepted this recommendation and instituted more effective consultation to both MA and BA students.

12. **Recommendation:** The Committee recommended increased support for the lab and administrative personnel.

Implementation: The Department is actively discussing this recommendation with the Dean and Rector.

Discussion

The Committee noted in its report that the biggest impediment for this otherwise excellent department is its incapacity for critical self-assessment. By implication, we also noted that the Department was incapable of accepting constructive criticism.

The aggregate responses by the Department to the Committee's recommendations reinforce this last assessment.

Sincerely,



Charles Stanish

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Professor, Department of Anthropology