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March 15, 2014

Report for: The Israeli Council of Higher Education.

From: Prof. Charles Stanish

Re: Hebrew University of Jerusalem 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) Letter from Dr. Erella Hovers, Head of the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem regarding the implementation of the Committee report of the department of Archaeology and Ancient Near East.

Implementation of Recommendations

1 and 2. **Recommendation:** Vision statement and 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. We (the committee) find that it is important for elite departments like HUI 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 about this suggestion in the Response letter.

3. Recommendation: Openly explore the consequences for erasing the sub-departmental distinctions in the Department and move to a more open form of curricular planning across the entire Department; energetically seek ways to better integrate Ancient Near Eastern Studies into faculty and student conversations and curricula.

Implementation: The department started a new BA program that allows more flexibility for interaction across sections. HUI also initiated an administrative process to restructure the department of archaeology into a “School of Archaeology and the Ancient World”. This is a very welcome change and will most certainly strengthen research and teaching.

4. Recommendation: Explore or further develop other forms of undergraduate training that would prepare BA students for careers outside of archaeology.

Implementation: The creation of two study modules in geoarchaeology and archaeogeology is a very positive step in this direction. The Department reports that the BA studies program was strengthened in Biblical, Classical archaeology, Egyptology and Assyriology. The Department also modified the MA program to provide more flexibility and to allow outstanding students to substitute BA courses to complete the degree. Finally, the development of a GIS course, described as having received “a very warm welcome” by Dr. Hovers, is a very welcome addition to this goal as well.

5. Recommendation: Continue and strengthen efforts at creating a cross-cutting program in archaeological sciences that includes both inter-departmental courses and positions within Hebrew University, and collaborative relationships with other universities.

Implementation: The creation of a joint program with the Institute of Earth Sciences is an excellent step to increase interdepartmental collaboration. The Department commendably created two new MA programs in 2013 for “Late Antiquity” and for geo-archaeology. The former program was based upon an external grant and is restricted to excellent MA students. This is consistent with the Committee’s recommendation to increase focus on a smaller number of excellent students.

6. Recommendation: Pursue future strategic hires that combine geographical and temporal specializations.

Implementation: The Department hired Dr. Leore Grosman, Dr. Orit Peleg-Barkat, and Dr. Uri Gabbay. These are excellent hires that conform to our recommendations and to the vision of the department as articulated by many faculty members.

7. Recommendation: Promote the teaching of Islamic archaeology and develop further its particular identity and importance in the curriculum.

Implementation: No information was provided about this suggestion in the Response letter.

8. Recommendation: Regularize the career mentoring of junior faculty and prioritize their essential need for office and research space in the Department.

Implementation: No information was provided in the Response letter regarding career mentoring. The space issues were addressed in recommendations 11 and 12.

9. Recommendation: Revisit urgently the question of ancient language training, given its importance in ensuring professional recognition and success.

Implementation: A special committee has been created by the University to provide additional credits and waving fees for language study.

10. Recommendation: Broaden the graduate curriculum to prepare individuals for international conversations in archaeology, and the international job market; implement procedures that allow graduate students the opportunity to teach, and to be mentored on their teaching practice.

Implementation: The development of a GIS course is very welcome in this regard.

11 and 12. Recommendation: Undertake rapid interventions to improve the overall physical condition of the departmental space,... improve the security of the collections against theft and damage.

Implementation: The physical infrastructure in the department is a crucial area where there has not been any substantial improvement. Apart from fixing the HVAC in three classrooms, the university has apparently done nothing to ameliorate the severe space shortage that continues to hamper research and teaching. Our committee cannot overemphasize the fact that archaeological research is conducted as both a science and humanistic discipline. As a science, it requires laboratory facilities similar to geology, paleontology or any other field science. Archaeology at HUU is world renown but this valuable contribution to Israeli and global scholarship requires at the very least a minimal physical infrastructure. We urged in the strongest possible terms that the administration at HUU address this problem urgently.

Discussion

The committee had a number of suggestions to strengthen the academic programs of the Department. Virtually all of these ideas were the subject of considerable discussion

among the HUU faculty at the time of our visit. Our committee was able to provide some structure to these suggestions and offer a perspective from outside of the department culture. We are pleased to see that, according to the letter of Dr. Hovers, the Department embraced many of these ideas and have implemented a number of our suggestions. This is an outstanding department with an international reputation. We urge CHE to address the physical space issues and increase support of this excellent faculty.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Stanish', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Charles Stanish
Director Cotsen Institute of Archaeology
Professor, Department of Anthropology