

Self-Evaluation – Faculty of Education

Action Plan for Implementation of the Committee's Recommendations

We are grateful to the Committee for providing us with this unique opportunity to engage in serious, systematic examination of our role and activities as a Faculty of Education in both the local academic context and within the global educational arena. The process we underwent as we prepared the report and in preparation for the Committee's visit triggered collaboration between faculty members and promoted productive scrutiny of the existing programs and departments. Preparation of the final Executive Report enriched us and encouraged us to move to more focused discussions on core issues identified at both the Faculty and departmental levels. To this end, we have already begun taking steps such as holding a faculty retreat, very important action, we believe. The retreat constitutes the beginning of the conversation, at the end of which we will be able to draw conclusions from the Report and implement of at least some of the Committee's recommendations. In the following section, we address in general the Committee's comments and suggestions.

General Comments

We are flattered that the Committee identified our unique strengths and positioned us as leaders in research among all Schools of Education in the country. Ranked as the leading Faculty in the country by the Council of Higher Education is a source of pride for all our members and assigns us a position of stature in relation to other faculties at the University of Haifa. We believe that excellence in research is the first and foremost goal of any faculty within a research university and we are proud of this achievement. The centrality of research comes to the fore in the way in which universities and faculties are ranked and funded accordingly by the Council of Higher Education. Within this competitive arena, and given the clear-cut message of 'publish or perish', we see our leading position as a great achievement.

As described in the larger report, the Faculty underwent a comprehensive structural reorganization. To this end, for the past several years, each department has been engaged in formulating its mission, and then translating this vision into curricular programs, research directions, and recruitment policy. From an organizational theory perspective, this is a natural process of differentiation, which requires focused effort over an extended period. We also know that this effort is followed by equally time-consuming integration processes. After six years of consolidating the various departments, and prompted by the evaluation process, we are now ready to begin new restructuring processes, as suggested by the Committee. In this new effort, we are going to attend to the 'whole as *more* than the sum of its parts'. The final outcome will be a revised strategic plan that identifies potentially productive reciprocal relations between the Faculty and the different departments, both at undergraduate and graduate levels. Such a plan will also identify key areas of growth within and across departments, with a view to how all these address the present state-of-the-art in educational research, as well as to pressing educational issues facing Israeli society.

Indeed, we strongly identify with the Committee's assertion that a Faculty of Education should *"be responsive to the pressing educational needs in its local and national context*, and that it should continue to create meaningful links between basic and applied research. Over time, we have consistently translated research into practice in the field through multiple channels. Regrettably, due to the particular organizational structure of the

Committee's two-day visit, this fact was inadequately represented in the different meetings with the faculty and staff. To substantiate this argument, and as a way of showing our adherence to our stated goal of making "educational research educational" (the issue that the Committee has questioned), the different departments engaged in a systematic process of compiling a summary of their practice-oriented projects in the various educational settings. These summaries were presented and discussed at the faculty retreat mentioned above. It is also noteworthy that a large majority of our graduate students, both Hebrew and Arabic speakers, are practitioners, working in the formal and informal educational system (i.e., teachers, mentors, principals). These students continuously translate insights gained through our research into their immediate setting and become agents of change. Tasks and projects that are part of the curriculum constitute yet another important link to the field. In our last faculty retreat, we engaged in critical discussion of this aspect, both at departmental and Faculty levels. The process yielded a rich list of diverse involvement by faculty members in the practice of educating. This assessment made it abundantly clear that as a whole, we fill an important leading role in promoting educational change at the local and national levels. Having said this, we understand the need for a more systematic vision of the Faculty's commitment to the field, as required by the Committee. Specifically, the Committee suggested that the Faculty must strive toward:

"bringing together and communicating research findings to various education stakeholders—teachers, principals, policy makers and parents. Such an initiative might include new websites, podcasts, email blasts, online seminars, and forms of translational research in Hebrew and Arabic ...[to] increase the visibility and impact of the research conducted by the Faculty of Education".

Our Faculty sees itself fully committed to our two-fold role as producers of knowledge and promoters of educational improvement. To advance both goals, we also hold continuous discussions centered on the inherent tension between our being academics in a research university and our commitment to educational practice. As noted by the Committee, while our mission is "to produce rigorous knowledge of the highest quality and rigor while serving the broader society of which it is a part", it is also (regrettably) true that "the latter is granted limited recognition or reward in promotion processes or in the budget distribution of Council for Higher Education. We support the Committee's recommendation that "research that reaches practitioners and directly relates to improving policy and practices should be rewarded in the promotion process" and we add a call to acknowledge the limitations imposed by the existing Council for Higher Education's "Research Model" in realizing this goal.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Dily Orland-Saral". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Dean, Faculty of Education

Committee's recommendations (April 2015)	Action Plan Faculty's (F) response / University Administration (U) (June 2015)	Schedule (Month/Year)
Mission and Goals		
Essential (E):		
<p>E1. Within one year, the Faculty of Education must develop a strategic plan that clarifies priorities, identifies key areas of growth, and justifies decisions by connecting them to a vision for where the field of education is headed, the unique role played by a faculty of education within a research university, and the most pressing educational needs facing Israeli society. This plan would also take into consideration the consolidation or possible elimination of programs that no longer serve vital educational needs.</p>	<p>(F) A strategic plan based on systematic examination of areas of potential growth, collaboration amongst departments and possible consolidation of domains is being developed.</p>	<p>July-October 2015: Establishment of a committee comprising senior faculty representatives from each department. The strategic plan led by the committee will be presented at the Faculty's first general faculty assembly at the end of October 2015.</p>
<p>E2. The Faculty of Education must develop a new faculty-level apparatus for bringing together and communicating research findings to various education stakeholders—teachers, principals, policy makers and parents. Such an initiative might include new websites, podcasts, email blasts, online seminars, and forms of translational research in Hebrew and Arabic. Such efforts would increase the visibility and impact of the research conducted by the Faculty of Education.¹</p>	<p>(F) Please see paragraphs 3 and 4 in "General Comments" that address this recommendation at the Faculty level. Also, see comments below provided by specific departments.</p> <p><u>Department of Mathematics Education</u> The Department is and has always been devoting much attention to this issue. We test and then implement innovative ideas on teaching and learning math in school, work with in-service and pre-service teachers, write articles [also] in Hebrew, take part in curriculum development and in Israeli Department of Education committees. However, we do face some hurdles and conflicts with the field: The more innovative our research is, the more resistance we face either from teachers or from education officials (mafmar etc.). Within academia: Our contribution to the field (including, among other things, articles in Hebrew or educational products such as software etc.) is not rewarded in the promotion process.</p> <p><u>Department of Special Education</u> The SE Department already has several built-in mechanisms that sustain the transfer of research findings to relevant agents. One is the teacher certificate program and another is the "Issues in Special</p>	

¹ Such efforts have been already taken up by the Technologies in Education division (see <http://www.edtech.haifa.ac.il/about>), and serve as a model for this kind of outreach.

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	<p>Education & Inclusion" journal published by the SE Department. The latter disseminates research in the domain of special education in Hebrew. Regrettably, however, publications in our home journal are not given adequate weight by the University when it comes to promotion of Department faculty members. Consequently, SE faculty members submit findings that may potentially make a difference to special populations in Israel—by providing the basis for the development of special tools and treatments—to foreign journals where they are published in English. There these papers often remain unrecognized by teachers, principals, etc. due to the language barrier. This scenario is not likely to change unless the University judges publications in Hebrew adequately.</p> <p><u>Department of Learning Disabilities</u> In our Department, we discussed setting up an online hotline to be open once a week to population in LD matters. We also talked about updating research that appears in layperson language.</p> <p><u>Department of Leadership and Policy in Education</u> The Department transfers its research findings through several mechanisms. For example: 1. In class – most of our graduate students are practitioners that have the opportunity to translate and implement theoretical and empirical knowledge, presenting to their peers who can then put it into practice. 2. Our faculty members serve as active members on national committees focusing on topics of educational policy. 3. Our faculty members present their research findings in professional conferences, as well as in the popular and professional press.</p> <p><u>Department of Counseling and Human Development</u> While there are a number of departmental activities in which research is communicated to professionals and parents (e.g., annual workshops and conferences, lectures in community centers), in order to be more visible and effective in this endeavor we could coordinate the separate activities in a more effective way and increase our visibility in the professional and local communities. We have started to plan a departmental-community linkage that will involve both BA and MA students and have designated three faculty members to plan such a platform for next year. The suggestions made by the Committee will be incorporated.</p> <p><u>Department of Learning, Instruction and Teacher Education</u> The Department of Learning, Instruction and Teacher Education already has several mechanisms that sustain the transfer of research findings to relevant agents in the field of education, both in</p>	

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	<p>Hebrew and Arabic. One way is via the teacher certificate programs for most of the disciplines and another is through the PDS (Professional Development School) model of teacher training. We maintain close contact with principals and senior teachers in various schools in the Jewish and Arab sectors. We transfer our scientific knowledge via conferences and academic days that are devoted to our research work. Our faculty serve as members of commissions set up by the Ministry of Education and have a lot of daily contact with heads of Departments in the local municipalities and the Ministry. We disseminate our findings via "Issues in Education" (the Faculty's academic journal in Hebrew) and academic members publish articles in "Hed Hahinuch" (the journal of the Association of Teachers in Israel).</p> <p>Regrettably, however, publications in our home journal are not given adequate weight by the University when it comes to promotion of Department faculty members. This scenario is not likely to change unless the University judges publications in Hebrew adequately.</p> <p>(U) The University promotion process is based on the highest national and international criteria of academic excellence, and includes (as in any other academic institution) a requirement for continuous and excellent research activities, publications in leading journals and the winning of research funding. Although our evaluation process relies on academic excellence, faculty members' activities and or publications in national and local journals are also taken into account.</p>	
Organizational Structure		
Essential:		
<p>E3. A small committee including the dean of the faculty must be convened to study whether the continued separation of special education and learning disabilities is in the long-term interest of the faculty and its students.</p>	<p>(F) A committee comprising representatives from each Department is being convened to study possibilities of cooperation.</p>	<p>July-October 2015</p>
Advisable (A):		
<p>A1. Before new programs are proposed, a process of due diligence should be undertaken. Such a process would include a needs assessment to determine whether the program truly has an audience, what kind of supports are needed to ensure that it will attract students (e.g., scholarships and other incentives), and a</p>	<p>(F) At Faculty level, we have begun a systematic assessment of all existing programs in terms of target audience, overlap of courses, integration and potential new programs. We launched this process at the heads of Department meetings (once a month) with the Dean.</p>	<p>A final report on the outcomes of the process will be provided at the first Faculty meeting, 2015.</p>

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<p>plan for staffing and sustaining the program over time.</p>	<p><u>Department of Mathematics Education</u> These considerations have always been a part of the decision making process. We do, however, evaluate and re-consider existing programs. The MSc program, offered jointly with the Department of Mathematics has only a few but high quality students, and the program does not involve additional cost (consists of existing courses). Similarly, the program offered jointly with Department of Learning Disabilities has only a few, yet, good students. The program's courses have been redesigned* to answer the program's needs and yet avoid the necessity to open special classes for a small number of students.</p> <p><u>Department of Special Education</u> A goal of the SE Department is to add an MA study track (megama) with a focus on sensory impairments. Trealization of this track is, primarily, contingent on the recruitment of additional faculty members with expertise in hearing and visual disabilities.</p> <p><u>Department of Learning Disabilities</u> The new educational psychology proposal represents such an in-depth analysis of needs in the field.</p> <p><u>Department of Leadership and Policy in Education</u> Aligned with the Faculty mission; we are planning to add an MA study track (spatiality) with focus on Management in Higher Education Systems. In the first stage, we will recruit external teachers; thereafter, depending on the demand, we will recruit faculty members, experts in higher education.</p> <p><u>Department of Learning, Instruction and Teacher Education</u> The Department of Learning, Instruction and Teacher Education is planning to dedicate the 2015/16 academic year to dealing this important issue and will discuss the Department's courses and programs during our faculty meetings. During academic year 2015-2016, we are planning to open a new MA program that includes offering the first ever university-level elementary school teacher certificate as part of the new policy of the Ministry of Education (called Academy-Class).</p> <p><u>Department of Counselling and Human Development</u> One outcome of the self-evaluation process was to reconsider the <i>Gifted and Talented Education</i> program. For now, we will not be accepting a new cycle of students.</p>	<p>*To be implemented already in next year's program 2015-1016 (Department of mathematics education)</p>

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Study Programs		
Essential:		
E4. The Faculty of Education must develop a mechanism to better support students' acquisition of academic writing skills in both Hebrew and English. Course offerings must be increased in those areas.	(F) Since 2013, the Faculty has been running a course in academic English for graduate students. The course aims at reinforcing students' proficiency in academic reading to prepare them for graduate studies.	Since 2013
BA and MA Programs		
Advisable:		
A2. The Faculty should review courses and programs to avoid overlap in course content. This applies particularly to BA/MA sequences.	(F) All Departments in our Faculty are continuing with the process of review of courses and programs. Specifically, we are in the process of creating a revised depository of courses gathered from all the Departments both at undergraduate and graduate levels to examine overlaps. A permanent depository of courses will be open to all Departments. In addition, each Department is undergoing a process of reorganization regarding overlap of courses, missing topics as well as joint work to offer certain courses such as qualitative research methods at the Faculty level.	
A3. The Faculty should create a formal mechanism to exempt students when the overlap between courses in education and other departments is above fifty percent.	(F) This does not happen often and there is a formal mechanism of exemption that works well. <u>Department of Counseling and Human Development</u> This is unclear. In our Department, we exempt students (e.g., psychology students) from similar courses that they take in their second department and instead they have a wider selection of electives. Still, they have to complete 60 points in order to comply with University requirements.	
A4. The Faculty should undertake a review of those BA programs that do not lead to professional certification and look for opportunities to consolidate and/or discontinue these programs.	(F) The Faculty will undertake serious talk during 2015-2016 regarding two programs of this kind that do not lead directly to a professional degree: The Department of Leadership and Administration and the <u>Department of Counseling and Human Development</u> . Within the Department of Counselling and Human Development, faculty members strongly agree that a BA is important in that it leads to MA specialties. In the past three years, a number of changes and improvements have been introduced in the BA program, including additional compulsory courses (such as educational psychology, developmental psychopathology, observation strategies and tools for educational settings); in a third year course, which includes educational field work, we have added a unit that introduces students to educational based professional specialties. These steps could explain this year's current wave of applicants to our MA programs (thirty! as compared to almost none in the last couple of years).	Focused departmental discussions leading to a presentation of the resolutions in Faculty general meeting December, 2015.

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A5. The number of TAs should be increased for the large courses of the BA program.	<p>(F) We agree. This is, of course, contingent on the larger budget of the University. We have been going through severe budget cuts over the past three years.</p> <p>(U) The University is aware of the importance of TAs. With the present state of budget allocations, regrettably, we are unable to increase the number of TAs. We hope for a positive change in the future.</p>	
PhD programs		
Advisable:		
A6. The Faculty should create a physical or virtual space where PhD students from different programs can share their work and become part of a community of scholars.	(F) From 2013 onwards, the Dean has done much in this respect. A community of doctoral students run by a selected group of excellent doctoral student leaders was established. A physical space within the Faculty building was allotted for this purpose. Numerous initiatives have been led by the group including two big conferences run by the doctoral students where all PhD students present their work to each other and to the faculty; workshops have been initiated including a web site for a doctoral students to share experiences, ideas etc. Doctoral students have been considerably supported at all levels for the past two years.	
A7. PhD students should prepare short summaries of their research in Hebrew and Arabic, which should be posted on a website available to the public. This strategy should be part of an overall plan to publicize and disseminate research to a broader public.	(F) This is a good idea but requires resources for creating adequate translations. To date, students are required to prepare short summaries in Hebrew and English, as in other universities in Israel.	
A8. The Faculty should undertake efforts to increase the number of fellowships for PhD students by aggressively seeking outside funds for this purpose.	(F) Strongly agree. We are constantly seeking opportunities for outside funding for specific programs. To this end, we have managed to recruit funding for a number of fellowships in the Departments of Learning, Instruction and Teacher Education, Counseling and Human Development, Learning Disabilities and Leadership and Policy. This is still very limited and a fundraising apparatus for the Faculty of Education under negotiations with the Division for External Relations and Resource Development.	
A9. Additional courses at an advanced level should be offered in quantitative and qualitative research methods.	(F) Next year we are offering a higher-level course in statistics to our doctoral students, which is open to all the Departments. We will be offering advanced qualitative and quantitative research methods. We also see the importance of offering these courses as contextualized in the particular domains of research in each Department.	
Teacher Certificate Programs		
Advisable:		
A10. Faculty should continue refining and studying the	(F) The Faculty is constantly revising its practice models. We are in	July-October 2015

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PDS model and sharing it with colleagues.	the process of establishing a committee to examine possibilities of refining the overall organizational structure of practice within the different programs.	To be presented at the first faculty assembly October 2015
<p>A11. Better efforts should be made to locate schools in which teacher certification students can see and experience the kind of teaching they encounter in their coursework.</p>	<p>(F) At the Faculty level, we will be consolidating a general plan to develop a Center for Professional Education, which will (amongst other functions) be responsible for coordinating and developing an improved mechanism of access to relevant school and educational settings for all students in the Faculty. Having said this, there is already a well-structured mechanism working separately in various Departments that deals with this issue (see below).</p> <p><u>Department of Special Education</u> Research with special populations is always difficult as the motivation of principals, teachers, and parents to collaborate is usually not very high.</p> <p><u>Department of Learning, Instruction and Teacher Education</u> Our Department conducts an annual evaluation of the schools that are part of the PDS model. As part of this intensive pedagogical process, we decided to change some schools over the last two years. This process is combined with the evaluation process of our student' 'needs and ideas.</p> <p><u>Department of Counseling and Human Development</u> A variety of schools already work with the Department but there is a need to extend collaborations. These will be part of the general Faculty effort to create a coherent platform and structure for creating collaborations with the field.</p>	A committee has been appointed to consolidate and present a plan for the establishment of a center at the Faculty meeting 2015.
<p>A12. Faculty should review program requirements to eliminate overlap in content, especially for students who double major in special education and counseling.</p>	<p><u>Department of Special Education and Department of Learning Disabilities</u> The SE Department already took action in this regard when restructuring its different programs. Especially in relation to students of the LD Department, working toward their teacher certificate in the SE Department, taking into account overlap has significantly reduced the study requirements of such students. Still, we are exploring new ways to overcome overlaps.</p> <p><u>Department of Counseling and Human Development</u> It should be clarified that students do one or the other teaching certificate but never both.</p>	
Human Resources / Faculty		
See Essential Recommendation #1 under <i>Mission and Goals</i> .		

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Students		
Advisable:		
<p>A13. The Faculty should gather systematic data on alumni and dropouts to inform future planning.</p>	<p>(F) The information regarding dropouts at the institutional level can be found in the unit of academic planning. The Faculty plans to ask for this information periodically every year in order to analyze it. Regarding students who do not complete their studies, there is a regular follow-up of these students at departmental levels. Students are contacted personally in order to urge them to renew/finish their studies.</p> <p>In addition, several departments have already started organizing social and academic events for their alumni (Learning Disabilities and Leadership and Policy), including a link for alumni on the Faculty's new website. All Departments will hopefully use this link in order to strengthen ties with our alumni.</p>	
<p>A14. The Faculty should develop more accommodations for students for whom Hebrew is not their first language. More courses on writing in Hebrew and English should be offered at the Faculty level.</p>	<p>(F) This is, of course, a worthy goal, yet is not likely to be reached if we are not given the necessary resources and credits. There is a considerable amount of funding by the Dean of Students in support of Arab students.</p> <p>With the appropriate resources from the University, in particular, the Department of Math Ed. has dealt with this issue: <u>Department of Mathematics Education</u></p> <p>Our program is a graduate program and our courses require a lot of reading in English. We support all students in reading articles in English by requiring them to take (as their first course) an introductory course to mathematics education. The course is designed to also teach the students how to read an English-language academic article efficiently and comprehensively without getting it translated.</p>	
<p>A15. The Faculty should consider making accommodations for students who face special demands such as pregnancy or reserve duty.</p>	<p>(U) As far as equal opportunity for pregnant women, they are given parking stickers free of charge from their seventh month on. Nursing and baby diapering rooms are available in a number of washrooms around campus.</p> <p>Regarding students and reserve duty – the University of Haifa makes every effort to ease the academic burden of students called to reserve duty and when they return to class. Assistance and services are available through the Students Union, the respective Department/Faculty, Students Administration, Office of the Dean of Students, etc. These services include: opportunity to submit a request to the Committee for Coordination of Reserve Duty (VALTAM) using video conference facilities on campus; and after returning from reserve duty: a photocopy card, assistance in getting</p>	

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	reimbursed from the National Insurance Institute, a discount card to the University bookstore, "Academon", eligibility for a special exam date, postponement of due dates for papers or waiving the requirement to submit them, eligibility for an exemption from labs/seminar/workshops/practical training courses, opportunity to register late for classes, exemption from payment for study material/extra classes, not have to pay for courses that were cancelled due to reserve duty, not have to pay tuition for an extra semester that may be needed because of reserve duty, eligibility to take advanced courses or graduate courses "conditionally" until taking the exam during the two exam sessions in the prerequisite course, awarding additional points for eligibility for an assistance scholarship for students in second year and above, providing individual tutoring, opportunity to watch videotaped introductory courses, recognition of the reserve service as a social activity awarding academic credits.	
Teaching and Learning Outcomes		
Essential:		
E5. Faculty must post syllabi prior to course registration so that students can plan their programs and identify areas of overlap.	(F) This is an important comment that is implemented in most cases in all Departments and will be further pursued systematically by all Departments.	
Advisable:		
A16. The Faculty should experiment with alternative assessments, since in leading faculties of education, multiple-choice examinations do not reflect best practice.	(F) Many of our programs test their students via papers and not through exams. This is especially true at the MA level and in seminar courses. There are also numerous projects and papers, but this is also related to TA support. (U) Please see response to Recommendation A5.	
Research		
Advisable:		
A17. Research that reaches practitioners and directly relates to improving policy and practice should be rewarded in the promotion process. Such scholarship should be valued in a structured and transparent manner and be given greater weight in promotion decisions.	(F) We agree; see response at the Faculty level in the general comments. (U) Please see response to Recommendation E2.	
A18. In future hires, consideration should be given whether research supports the pressing educational problems facing Israel, such as educational access, the integration of the Haredi community, and the growing demographic shifts in the country among both Haredi and Arab populations.	(F) This is an aspect that we are fully aware of at the Faculty level. (U) Hiring is based on a strict search process, including calls at national and international levels and it is based primarily on the demonstration of academic excellence.	