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Department of Economics

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Ms. Maria Levinson-Or
Council for Higher Education

Responses to the Recommendations of the Committee for the Evaluation of Economics Study
Programs

Dear Committee members,

In what follows, we provide our detailed responses to the recommendations of the committee. To facilitate the exposition we provide a table, which contains the responses alongside the corresponding recommendations, replicated from the committees' evaluation report. The table also contains a preliminary tentative timeframe.

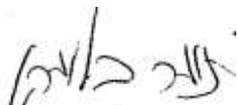
Committee: Essential Recommendations	Steps towards Implementation
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The administration must draft clear and consistent policies for recruitment and promotion in economics. 2. The recruitment process must be streamlined and accelerated. 	<p>The department will advise the university administration in the process of forming a clear set of guidelines for the recruitment and promotion of faculty members, taking into account the unique characteristics of the Economics field, with a special emphasis on ensuring a streamlined recruitment process of new faculty (March 2018).</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The department must formulate a strategic 5-year plan. 	<p>A special committee headed by the chair of the department and comprised of the members of the departmental steering committee will formulate a strategic 5-year plan, focusing on the recruitment and promotion/retention of faculty members and the reform of study programs for the undergraduate and graduate levels. Upon completion, the strategic plan will be presented to the Dean of the Faculty and the Rector of the University. (July 2018).</p>

Committee: Important Recommendations	Steps towards Implementation
<p>1. Budgeting should be based on the international ranking of the economics department and not only on the PBC formula.</p>	<p>The department will advise the university administration in the process of preparing guidelines for the budgeting of the academic activities of the department in order to address the inherent shortcomings of the PBC formula and better reflect the academic merits of the department (in terms of excellence of research and teaching) vis-à-vis the Economic discipline's internationally accepted standards (July 2018).</p>
<p>2. The frozen position should be released for recruiting, given the size of the student body in the department.</p>	<p>The rector will re-evaluate his decision prior to the initiation of the job-market process of the academic year 2017/18 (November 2017).</p>
<p>3. The department should draft an internationalization policy to address both the study program and exchange opportunities, additional English courses, and faculty recruiting policies (eliminating the Hebrew requirement).</p>	<p>The department will evaluate the feasibility of inaugurating international programs in the English language for both the BA and MA levels, with special focus on targeting potential applicants from Eastern Europe and/or South East Asia. To enhance the success chances of such an ambitious initiative, the involvement of the university administration is essential. Additional funding is required for the following purposes: (i) providing scholarships/tuition remissions for promising candidates; (ii) offering research funds to international high-profile renowned researchers in related fields. (July 2018)</p> <p>This effort is in conjunction with a Faculty wide initiative to internationalize entailing the development of MA programs tailored for foreign students.</p>

<p>4. The department should offer more big data and computation courses.</p>	<p>The department will evaluate the possibility of embedding courses on big data in the existing study programs and the feasibility of inaugurating a double-major program with Information-Systems Engineering and/or a single major program with specialization in Data and Computer Science. (July 2018).</p>
<p>5. There should be a better career guidance and placement services for students.</p>	<p>As a supplement to the extended placement services currently offered at the university level, a faculty member will be assigned by the Chair to a new position - a departmental placement-officer - who will coordinate the interactions with potential employers from both the public and the private sectors and provide students with career-orientation. The placement-officer will work closely with the BA and MA coordinators. (October 2017).</p>
<p>6. There should be more Ph.D. courses.</p>	<p>The department will make an effort to secure funding for short-term visits and mini-courses of high-profile internationally acclaimed researchers (including via the Distinguished Visitors Program of the University) during the academic year 2018/19. New graduate-level electives, including those offered by the department's new recruits (joining the department on October 2017), are already embedded in the teaching plan of the coming academic year (2017/18).</p>
<p>7. The department should prepare PhD students for the academic job market.</p>	<p>The Ph.D. coordinator will provide guidance to students during the final phase of their graduate training. 'Shadow' practice seminars will be arranged for those interested prior to participation in the job market.</p>

The Department of Economics would like to thank the members of the committee for taking the time to review the self-evaluation report and pay a visit to the Department and for offering constructive suggestions that will undoubtedly serve us in our continuous endeavor to improve in terms of research and teaching outputs.

Sincerely,



Prof. Tomer Blumkin
Chair
Department of Economics



Prof. Haim (Harvey) Hames
Dean
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences



Prof. Gadi Rabinowitz
Vice-Rector
Ben Gurion University