

Oct. 2018

To: **The Committee for the Evaluation of the Mechanical Engineering Study Program.**

Subject: **SCE Evaluation Report**

We have read in detail the report of the Committee and we would like to thank the Committee for its important, professional work.

Our comments on the Committee’s recommendations and some other remarks regarding the report are listed below.

Committee Recommendations	Steps toward implementation (including a timetable)
<u>Essential Recommendations</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Senior Administration should clarify how the two departments in ME should operate independently on the two campuses, while simultaneously coordinating their teaching, outreach, hiring and research efforts. 	<p>Academically, the two ME Departments are independent. Each Department Head is an expert in the field, but must act according to SCE regulations. The Department Head is responsible for hiring faculty members, setting the Department’s goals and determining departmental, as well as overseeing the course syllabi, the teaching quality, etc.</p> <p>Academic control is held by the SCE Curriculum Committee, which meets at least once a semester, primarily to verify that the parallel study programs on both campuses cover the same contents and are kept at the same levels and depths.</p> <p>Furthermore, in order to allow each campus to evolve uniquely per its own nature, special activities may be initiated independently on each campus.</p> <p>Also see remarks in section 3.2 below.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The faculty should be increased in both Departments, but especially in Ashdod. 	<p>During the next two years we will make an effort to absorb more faculty members in both Departments, to get to 1:35. This is the ratio recommended by the CHE for colleges, considering the amount of teaching hours of the senior faculty members.</p> <p><u>Be’er-Sheva Campus</u></p> <p>Two senior staff members are to be recruited and appointed within 2 years. Two more junior faculty members, currently in the process of completing their Ph.D. studies, are expected to</p>

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	<p>join the Department as senior faculty within 3-4 years. Finally, the Department will act to hire at least 3 more junior staff members immediately.</p> <p><u>Ashdod Campus</u></p> <p>The Department is working very hard to hire new faculty members. The strategic plan includes two ways of action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hiring young faculty members who are Ph.D. graduates from other universities in Israel. 2. Instigating a program for excellent students to do graduate studies at SCE. <p>Thus far, due to these actions, two new faculty members joined the Department. The senior academic staff has filled 7.5 of the 9.5 available positions in the Department as of October 2018.</p> <p>The Department is still working to fill the gaps and hopes to hire two more faculty members during this academic year (2018-2019).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two undergraduate programs should be stabilized before pursuing additional graduate degrees. 	<p><u>Be'er-Sheva Campus</u></p> <p>We believe that our Department is stable and mature enough to pursue a graduate program. However, we are aware of the need to increase the number of faculty members, as well as promoting current members, and agree that such changes would serve as indications of departmental stability.</p> <p>As soon as two of our senior faculty members are promoted to the rank of professors, the Department will file a request for a graduate program (M.Sc. with Thesis). We have been working on a unique graduate program for the last two years, and believe that both the study program and related research will be ready, once our academic staff meets the criteria of number and rank.</p> <p><u>Ashdod Campus</u></p> <p>The Department agrees with this recommendation. However, after all the open positions are filled, it is very important to open new tracks. One of the main reasons for opening new tracks is the increasing demands from local industry.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Ashdod, the space and supporting infrastructures are inadequate for research activities and should be enhanced. 	<p>Presently, SCE is designing a new campus in Ashdod that will include a building for the Mechanical Engineering Department with research laboratories for the Faculty. It should be finished within three years.</p>

Committee Recommendations	Steps toward implementation (including a timetable)
<u>Important Recommendations</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Departments should refine and document their strategic plans, including hiring, space, and research vision. 	<p>In order to fulfill the Department's "Mission" and "Aims and Goals," a strategic plan will be developed during the next academic year in both of the Departments.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Departments should add a more structured faculty mentoring program. 	<p>As part of SCE's program for a new/young faculty, starting this academic year, all new/young faculty members will have departmental mentors.</p>
<u>Desirable Recommendations</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCE and the Departments should enhance their connections with their alumni. 	<p>SCE established an Institutional Committee to write a program to enhance the contact with the College's alumni. This Committee will finish preparing its program within the 2018/2019 academic year.</p> <p><u>Be'er-Sheva Campus</u></p> <p>The Department considers alumni for junior faculty positions and to serve as advisors for final projects. To enhance connections with alumni, alumni will be invited to departmental conferences, seminars and PO course presentations (especially those that are represented during "Mechanical Engineering Week"). Moreover, they may be invited as guest lecturers for departmental and study-track seminars/courses.</p> <p><u>Ashdod Campus</u></p> <p>The Department on the Ashdod campus opened another means for connecting with its alumni via the LinkedIn website. The Department opened a group page named: <i>Mechanical Engineering Department – SCE Ashdod</i>. This group is our main platform connecting our alumni, students, academic staff and friends from Israeli industries.</p>

Section in the reports	Remarks
<p>3.2 Management and Administration</p>	<p>Historically, the organization of the College is unique in the country. A single, shared Administration manages both campuses, though each campus has its own Faculty of Engineering with its own Dean. Each Dean is responsible for the academic operation of his campus' Faculty and its departments. The President and CEO of SCE spend two days a week on the Ashdod campus and three days a week on the Be'er-Sheva campus.</p> <p>The various departments submit their needs for the academic year, such as: faculty positions to be filled, missing equipment, labs and rooms, supplies, etc. The Department Heads, with members of their staffs, are responsible for building the study program. The SCE Budget Committee approves the departmental budgets and then each department receives the approved budget. The Department Heads are responsible for the efficient use of the budgets and improvements in the study programs.</p>
<p>3.7 Faculty 3.7.1 Ashdod campus</p> <p>The size of the ME faculty is insufficient. <i>Because they have only 5 full-time faculty</i>, they bear additional administrative loads....</p>	<p>The ME Department in Ashdod has 6 full-time faculty members and two more half-time faculty members. Those numbers and names were presented to the Committee at the meeting.</p> <p>Senior academic staff members have filled 7 of the 9.5 available positions in the Department: Prof. Amir Eliezer (Associate Prof.) 100%; Dr. Guy Ben-Hamu (Senior Lecturer) 100%; Dr. Bella Gurevich (Lecturer) 100%; Dr. Shlomi HaCohen (Lecturer) 100%; Emanuel Yair (Teacher) 100%; Lucy Shemesh (Teacher) 100%; Amir Zohar (Lecturer) 50%; Itzhak Levi (Lecturer) – 50%</p>
<p>3.8 Research 3.8.1 Ashdod Campus</p> <p>A few of the faculty members would like to engage in research, such as the study of corrosion in <i>collaboration with Ben-Gurion University in its facilities</i>. Other research efforts are limited in quantity and quality.</p>	<p>The Committee members visited the Advanced Manufacturing & Surface Analysis Laboratory on the day of the meeting. Also, the report included a list of the research facilities available in the departments. It is true that a few of the researchers in the ME Department collaborate with researchers from BGU. However, the ME departmental research facilities do meet most of the needs for performing relevant research; the only BGU facility rented by the hour is the Transmission Electron Microscope (TEM) Laboratory. This section neglected to point out that the Committee met with students from abroad, who</p>

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	do their research during the summer months, while visiting the Department.
<p>3.9 Students</p> <p>3.9.1. Ashdod Campus</p> <p>The <i>admission standards are intentionally lowered</i> to allow students from the periphery to attend college. As a result, the student quality is variable and the drop-out rate is high.</p> <p>Students who complete the ME program are prepared to find jobs after they graduate, although they are <i>sometimes underemployed at first. Most students go to entry-level industry jobs.</i> A few students enter graduate studies.</p>	<p>The admission standards of the two campuses are the same.</p> <p>As presented in the report.</p> <p>The admission standards of the ME Departments at SCE are very high and very similar to external ME Departments in Israel.</p> <p>The Department disagrees with description in this section regarding student employment: 90%-95% of our graduate students work as mechanical engineers in various industries – the most important industries in Israel and in very good positions.</p> <p>This section neglected to point out that students from SCE Ashdod participated in international experiences just as much as the students from SCE Be'er-Sheva, as was discussed at the meeting.</p>

Respectfully,

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Dr. Guy Ben-Hamu, Head of the Department, Ashdod

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Prof. Dorith Tavor, Head of the Center of Quality Assessment and Promoting Teaching

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