



Committee for the Evaluation of Archaeology Study Programs

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

**The Archaeological Division in the Department of Bible, Archaeology, & the
Ancient Near East**

Evaluation Report

November 2011

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Chapter 1: Background

The Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to evaluate study programs in the field of Archaeology during the academic year 2010 – 2011.

Following the decision of the CHE, the Minister of Education, who serves ex officio as a Chairperson of the CHE, appointed a Committee consisting of:

- **Prof. Charles Stanish, Cotsen Institute of Archeology, University of California, USA– Committee Chair**
- **Prof. Susan Alcock, Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology, Brown University, USA**
- **Prof. Ofer Bar-Yosef, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University, USA**
- **Prof. Manfred Bietak, Vienna Institute of Archaeological Science (VIAS), University of Vienna, and Austrian Academy of Sciences, Austria**
- **Prof. Margalit Finkelberg, Department of Classics, Tel Aviv University, Israel**
- **Prof. Amihai Mazar, Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel**
- **Dr. Melinda A. Zeder, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, USA**

Ms. Alisa Elon - Coordinator of the Committee on behalf of the CHE.

Within the framework of its activity, the Committee was requested to:

1. Examine the self-evaluation reports, submitted by the institutions that provide study programs in Archaeology, and to conduct on-site visits at those institutions.
2. Submit to the CHE an individual report on each of the evaluated academic units and study programs, including the Committee's findings and recommendations.
3. Submit to the CHE a general report regarding the examined field of study within the Israeli system of higher education including recommendations for standards in the evaluated field of study.

The Committee's letter of appointment is attached as **Appendix 1**.

The entire process was conducted in accordance with the CHE's Guidelines for Self-Evaluation (of October 2009).

Chapter 2: Committee Procedures

The Committee held its first meetings on February 15, 2011 during which it discussed fundamental issues concerning higher education in Israel, the quality assessment activity, as well as Archaeology study programs.

The Committee held two cycles of visits; the first cycle in February 2011 and the second in May 2011.

During the visits, the Committee met with various stakeholders at the institutions, including management, faculty, staff, and students.

This report deals with the Archaeological Division in the Department of Bible, Archaeology, & the Ancient Near East at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU).

The Committee's visit to Ben-Gurion University of the Negev took place on February 20-21, 2011. The Committee thanks the management of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and the Archaeological Division in the Department of Bible, Archaeology, & the Ancient Near East for their self-evaluation report and for their hospitality towards the Committee during its visit at the institution.

The schedule of the visit, including the list of participants from the institution, is attached as **Appendix 2.**

Chapter 3: Evaluation of the Archaeological Division in the Department of Bible, Archaeology, and the Ancient Near East at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

- *This Report relates to the situation current at the time of the visit to the institution, and does not take account of any subsequent changes. The Report records the conclusions reached by the Evaluation Committee based on the documentation provided by the institution, information gained through interviews, discussion and observation as well as other information available to the Committee.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Archaeology Division at Ben Gurion University has developed a well-conceived mission that uses the archaeology of the Negev as a platform for exploring higher-order cultural and historical questions. This mission is entirely consistent with the University's emphasis on the local region and it defines a clear and distinctive identity for the division within archaeology higher education in Israel. The division pursues this higher mission through a three-pronged approach concentrating on 1) providing undergraduates with a comprehensive introduction to archaeology, 2) training future archaeologists, 3) promoting awareness of the cultural heritage of the region within local communities.

The division succeeds remarkably well in achieving these goals. Despite the small size of its faculty (5.5 positions), the Archaeology Division has developed a broad-based BA curriculum that provides a comprehensive introduction to archaeology to undergraduate majors. The division has also developed a Dig Certification Program that carries higher course and fieldwork requirements than any other certification program in Israel. Although in our General Report we recommend that archaeology programs in Israel defer elements of their licensing programs and the granting of an excavator's license itself to the MA level, we believe that BGU Dig Certification Program could serve as a model for other Departments in the country if they wish to keep the Certification process at the BA level. The division's faculty also has a solid record in grants and scholarly output with research that focuses largely on human adaptation to arid regions. In addition, the division engages in a number of outreach activities geared at increasing

the local community's appreciation of the region's cultural heritage and its involvement in its preservation. Ongoing efforts at framing a collaborative program on building and site conservation with the Desert Institute would be another important and innovative step in this direction and we encourage the University and the Division to move forward with these plans.

The Archaeology Division's graduate MA and PhD programs have some problems that are beyond the control of the faculty and which should be addressed by the administration. The small size of the faculty, coupled with the lack of adjunct faculty involvement in graduate level teaching, results in a thin MA and PhD curriculum. The well intentioned, yet in our opinion misdirected, course requirements in social anthropology further limit the effectiveness of the MA study program at BGU.

The most serious issue confronting this unit is its current status as an essentially autonomous unit within the single Department of Bible, Archaeology, and Ancient Near Eastern Studies. Although there was a legitimate justification for the union of bible studies and archaeology when this department was formed, today the Department consists of two independent tracks-- Bible & Ancient Near East and Archaeology-- whose continued co-existence appears to serve only ill-defined administrative purposes. The artificial union between these two tracks is a source of considerable confusion and tension over issues like budgetary allocations, replacement of retiring faculty, and competition for new faculty lines. More seriously, it stands in the way of Archaeology's ability to meet its appropriate and well-conceived mission and associated goals.

Our primary recommendation, then, is for University administration to work with the Archaeology Division and the larger Department of Bible, Archaeology, & Ancient Near East to develop a stand-alone archaeology department framed around the mission and goals articulated by the current Archaeology Division. This effort will clearly require some increase in the number of faculty. We recommend at a minimum the conversion of a current half-time faculty member to full-time status and the creation of one additional line – preferably for someone who helps round-out chronological coverage as well as brings expertise in some branch of the archaeological sciences to the unit. We also recommend that the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences engage in some creative thinking about retooling upcoming vacancies in the

Department of Bible, Archaeology, & Ancient Near East and, perhaps, in other departments in the Faculty to augment this new unit. Cross-appointments and other linkages with departments in this and other Faculties in the University should be explored as a way of both bolstering the archaeology study program and to better realize the natural potential of archaeology to serve as a nexus between the humanities, social sciences, and the natural and exact sciences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) The University needs to work with the Archaeology Division to create a viable Department of Archaeology. Creation of this new unit will require some combination of new faculty lines and retooling of old lines.
- 2) A course in Scientific Methods in Archaeology should be made a required part of the BA curriculum offered in the first or second year of study. Institutional barriers to the selection of courses in the Faculty of Natural Sciences by archaeology students need to be removed.
- 3) More flexibility needs to be built into fieldwork component of the Dig Certification program. Impediments should be removed that prevent students meeting fieldwork requirements by participating in excavations sponsored by other institutions.
- 4) Budgetary allocations to the Division need to take into consideration the special requirements of archeological training both for students involved in the Dig Certification and BA majors not pursuing this track (including field trips, excavation, and post-excavation laboratory study of artifacts recovered during excavation).
- 5) Institutional support should be given to the creation of a program in site and building conservation and heritage profession. BA students should receive an introduction to issues of cultural heritage preservation and a MA study track in this area should be added to the curriculum. Thought should also be given to the addition of a cultural tourism component to this program.

- 6) BGU administration and the Archaeology Division need to develop a strategic plan for the graduate program in archaeology. Any future efforts at establishing a stand-alone Department of Archaeology must address the needs of graduate level training.
- 7) Graduate course work requirements outside of archaeology need to be more flexible. Students should be able to meet these requirements by taking classes in a much wider range of humanities, social and natural sciences depending on their interests and future career plans.
- 8) Greater emphasis should be placed on encouraging graduate students to engage in cross-university course work in sub-disciplines not available at BGU. Institutional impediments that impede this activity should be removed.
- 9) At least one new senior faculty line should be added to the Division of Archaeology and all upcoming vacancies must be replaced. The strategic vision developed for the creation of a stand-alone Department of Archaeology should be used to guide the selection of these replacement hires. While chronological and technical expertise sought in these lines should reflect the strategic vision for the new department, special emphasis should be given to the addition of faculty with expertise in one or more of the archaeological sciences. Future hiring should be mindful of issues of gender balance.
- 10) The current 1/2 time position in classical archaeology needs to be converted to a full-time position.
- 11) Cross-appointments with other BGU departments should be considered.
- 12) More formal counseling of students at the BA level is needed to help students construct course selections both within archaeology and in their non-major course selections that augments the goal of providing students with a well-rounded and comprehensive BA training in archaeology. This counseling should be mandatory for all BA majors in each

year of the study program. A greater emphasis should also be placed on counseling graduate students, especially at the MA level. In particular, MA and PhD students should be encouraged to look outside BGU for courses taught at other universities but not offered at BGU that are relevant to their interests. Counseling should also include connecting students with scholarship opportunities and in helping students chart their future careers.

- 13) In the short term, the Division and the BGU administration need to devise more effective ways to move people and collections between the Marcus and Tuviyahu Campus so that current laboratory space can be used more effectively.

BACKGROUND

Ben-Gurion University was established in 1970 and formally accredited by the CHE in 1973.

According to the institution's self-evaluation report, the number of students enrolled in the Beer-Sheva Campuses in fall 2009/10 was 19,538: 13,047 undergraduate students, 5,061 MA students, 1,926 Ph.D. students and 134 Post–Doc Fellows.

The Archaeological Division is part of the Department of Bible, Archaeology, & the Ancient Near East in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. It originated in the early 1970s as a BA program in the Department of Jewish History. Later in that same decade the program was separated from Jewish History and combined with the Department of Bible to form an integrated Department of Bible & Ancient Near Eastern Studies. In 2004 the name of the department was changed to the Department of Bible, Archaeology, and the Ancient Near East.

According to the university's self-evaluation report, the number of students in the study program during the academic year 2010 was as follows: 65 B.A. students, 20 M.A. students and 11 Ph.D. students.

MISSION AND GOALS

The mission of the Ben Gurion Archaeology Division of the Department of Bible, Archaeology, & Ancient Near East, as articulated in its self-evaluation report, is to advance teaching and research in the archaeology of Israel with a special focus on the Negev, using this region as a platform for addressing larger cultural and historical questions. The report provides three general goals that advance this mission that include 1) training future professional archaeologists capable at performing at a high level of competence, 2) providing undergraduates with a liberal arts education that emphasizes the multidisciplinary nature of archaeology and its relevance to the modern world, and 3) engaging local communities in a way that increases community awareness of archaeology in local and regional issues.

The Committee believes that this mission and related goals for the division's study and research programs are entirely appropriate and complement the University's stated purpose of assisting in "the development and advancement of the State of Israel, particularly in the Negev". The focused and targeted mission and goals laid out in the report also serve the Archaeology Division well in identifying its special strengths and identity within the larger arena of higher education archaeology programs in Israel.

The report provides documentation of the Archaeology Division's general success in meeting these goals. Faculty and student research encompasses a wide temporal span, using local region as a forum to address larger questions of human cultural evolution especially in marginal, desert environments. The BA curriculum is constructed in a way that largely meets the goal of liberalizing the undergraduate program, while the Dig Certification Program provides undergraduates with professional training that equips them for entry-level jobs at the Israel Antiquities Authority. The MA and PhD programs (although severely constrained in the number and range of courses) do contain elements of archaeological theory and advanced analytical methods critical for the training of professional archaeologist operating at high levels. Finally, the focus on community outreach and preservation of cultural heritage in the Division's research programs and its nascent plans of building a heritage component into its curriculum seem effective vehicles for addressing the state goal of engaging local communities and assisting with the development of the Negev.

There are, however, serious impediments that stand in the way of the Division's ability to fully meet these goals. The small size of the faculty, its status as a component of a melded department, the absence of cross-departmental linkages within and outside the University, and a formula for the allocation of budgetary resources that fails to consider the special expenses of higher education in archaeology are among the factors that limit the Division. In this report we detail a number of recommendations that we believe will help redress these shortcomings to assist the Archaeology Division to better meet its obligation to scholarship in Israel.

CONTENT, STRUCTURE, AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY PROGRAM

Organization Structure of the Division

The Archaeology Division is in the Department of Bible, Archaeology, & the Ancient Near East. Although the original intent of combining Bible Studies with Archaeology was to build an interdisciplinary department that focused on the integration of text history to archaeology, today the Department consists of two entirely autonomous tracks: 1) Bible and Ancient Near East and 2) Archaeology. There is little or no overlap in the curriculum of these two divisions. Archaeology students and some faculty interviewed during our visit seemed to feel isolated from the Division of Bible & Ancient Near East and were not aware of its activities. For all practical purposes, the two divisions function as two different departments.

Although the self-evaluation prepared by the Archaeology Division maintains that past tensions between these two units have been resolved, it was evident to the Committee during the site visit that significant points of contention remain. It was also clear to us that these tensions serve at least as distractions and at worse as impediments to the Division's effective functioning. The Dean cited administrative constraints that prevented the formal separation of these two tracks into two stand-alone departments. Finding new partners for these tracks with other complementary departments in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences also did not seem on the near horizon.

A final solution will likely lie in a combination of new faculty lines (see below) and creative replacements of retiring faculty within both halves of this Department with an eye to building a

stand-alone Department of Archaeology. It should be noted that the viability of a separate Department of Archaeology is not only an issue of increasing the size of the faculty. Many highly successful Departments and Institutes of Archaeology outside of Israel operate with a core faculty that is not much bigger than the current faculty of the BGU Archaeology Division. Forging more formal linkages with other relevant units within BGU, perhaps through team teaching and cross-departmental hires, should be a central element of this newly formed department. The Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research, for example, with its emphasis on the ecology and physical dynamics of desert environments, would have a natural partner in the development of curriculum, and collaborative research, focusing on the history of human adaptation to and impact on desert environments. A more systematic and formalized effort at taking advantage of resources and expertise in other institutions of higher education in Israel should also be included in any future plans for the creation of a BGU Department of Archaeology. Such intra- and inter- university linkages would vastly enhance the educational opportunities for BGU archaeology students, while also better realizing archaeology's inherent ability to build bridges between disciplines that, working together, bring special new insight to understanding human history and cultural evolution.

BA Course of Study

The undergraduate curriculum is constructed through a somewhat informal process in which faculty with expertise in the traditional three chronological areas of Israeli archaeology create the curriculum for their areas. The overall result is a BA curriculum that provides a comprehensive overview of the archaeology of Israel in the required first-year introductory courses, as well as basic introductions to ceramic and lithic analysis. There is a commendably robust array of elective courses offered over the second and third year (often taught by adjunct faculty). Particularly notable is the array of courses in the archaeology of the broader Near East and Mediterranean that provide an important perspective on the broader context of the archaeology of Israel. The curriculum also offers courses in more general topics of archaeological practice that are also important to providing students a well rounded grounding in archaeology.

BA students are given multiple options of single major, dual major, minor, or sub-minor programs consistent with the Division's goal of providing undergraduates with a broad and

flexible exposure to archaeology as part of a liberal arts education, and as a platform for a professional career in the field. There is a great deal of flexibility in the selection of archaeology credits and students are not required to declare a single focus on one of these chronological tracks until their choice of the third year seminar (one offered for each track).

Students seem generally pleased by the overall breadth of the course selection offered them. However, several students raised concerns about the lack of depth in coverage of topics in introductory courses. The intermittent offering of elective courses like Scientific Methods that might only be available late in the BA course of study was noted as a particular problem.

Archaeology majors students not engaged in the Dig Certificate Program must take 14 credit hours in other departments. This requirement seems an effective way to underscore the different cross-disciplinary linkages between archaeology and other fields. There are no institutional barriers to taking a wide array of courses offered within the broadly defined Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and students seem to take advantage of these opportunities, creatively combining course selections in archaeology, history, art history, Jewish studies, and geography to craft what appears to be highly individualized BA curricula. Both faculty and students indicated, however, that there are more significant barriers to students crossing Faculty borders to enroll in classes in the Natural Sciences which present a significant impediment to students acquiring training in scientific applications which have become integral parts of modern twenty first century archaeology.

The Dig Certification Program, offered at the BA level, consists of 14 credits of classes that provide critical skill sets needed by the professional archaeologist (in both academic and public sector archaeology). The ten week fieldwork requirement (six weeks more than the field work requirement of regular archaeology majors and four weeks longer than most other licensing programs) gives students essential hands-on experience in both field and laboratory work. The BGU Dig Certificate Program carries the highest requirements of any of the licensing programs offered in the archaeology departments under review. It has the most course hours and the longest required fieldwork component of any program. Its curriculum also most closely matches the IAA guidelines for licensing programs, a fact that we believe is very positive from both an

academic and career perspective. Students currently enrolled in this program and recent graduates of the program seemed generally happy with the Dig Certification Program. Some, however, felt that the program needed a more varied exposure to fieldwork. The committee concurs with this (see Recommendation #3).

Although BGU is to be commended on its Dig Certification Program, we believe that the practice of granting an excavator license to BA graduates needs to be reevaluated. Indeed, we believe that a compelling case can be made for deferring the more technical aspects of the training for this license (i.e. the pottery and lithic typology classes) and that this license should only be granted at the post-baccalaureate level. This issue is discussed at length in the General Report.

The Committee also notes a steady decrease in the University allocation for the study dig program (which includes support for both the Dig Certification Program and the required excavation component of the regular BA major). Excavation, post-excavation laboratory work and field trips are a key element of the undergraduate program in archaeology that carries costs not encountered in other BA programs in the humanities. The application of a budgetary formula for fund allocation that does not take these essential costs into account is a major obstacle to the effective functioning of the BGU undergraduate education in archaeology.

The Committee was informed of Division plans to create a program dealing with building and site conservation in cooperation with architects in the Desert Research Institute. Training in site conservation would be an important new addition to the program, providing BGU archaeology students training in another viable and important avenue of archaeological employment in the growing field of heritage preservation and archaeological tourism. There is an increasing international focus on these issues with major UNESCO and other NGOs actively engaged in developing such programs in a number of countries, including the Eastern Mediterranean. The Committee believes that this is a very forward-looking initiative that should be a high priority for future cross-unit initiatives of BGU.

MA and PhD Course of Study

The Committee found the graduate level curriculum at BGU is less strong than its outstanding BA program. While this curriculum contains a number of unique courses in anthropological archaeology, spatial analysis, and quantitative methods, the MA curriculum overall is quite thin and relies heavily on students already having a strong foundation in archaeology from their BA studies. In addition BGU requires that PhD students take 6-10 credit hours beyond the required MA course work - a requirement that is hard to meet given the sparse graduate level curriculum offered by the Division. In fact, current MA and PhD students and alumnae expressed considerable frustration over the lack of viable graduate level course offerings in archaeology, especially those who received lower degrees in archaeology at BGU and had already exhausted their options for additional course work in archaeology. Graduate level course offerings are especially deficient in classical archaeology owing to low staffing levels in this area. Students also mentioned frustrations over limited access to laboratory space and poor library resources as impediments to graduate levels studies and research.

The current thinness of the graduate archaeology curriculum raises questions of the continued viability of the archaeology graduate program at BGU. If, as the External Review Committee hopes, the university decides to continue graduate level training in archaeology, serious consideration needs to be given to whether the Division should continue to provide graduate training in all three tracks of prehistory, biblical, and classical archaeology or to instead focus on selected areas that represent Divisional strengths.

The MA curriculum also carries a requirement that students take an additional four credits in anthropology – a requirement featured as an integral part of the graduate program’s emphasis on anthropological archaeology. As a prerequisite, students must have taken six units of introductory courses in anthropology, either at the BA level or, remedially, as part of their graduate level course work. While most students seemed happy with course work in anthropological archaeology offered within the Archaeology Division (especially those following a prehistory track), considerable frustration was expressed about the required course work in the Department of Anthropology. The relevance of the introductory anthropology course work to their training as archaeologists was a real problem for essentially all students

interviewed, especially those pursuing graduate studies in later periods. The committee concurs with this observation. Requiring substantial course work in anthropology (a total ten units including mandatory introductory courses) that is largely irrelevant to archaeological research is a serious waste of student time and tuition.

Another avenue for strengthening the graduate curriculum would be to encourage graduate students to take advantage of courses offered by other universities in Israel, especially those seeking training in the archaeological sciences which are only weakly and sporadically represented in the BGU curriculum. Deficiencies in course work relevant to training classical archaeologists and those pursuing more advanced and varied training in ancient languages could also be addressed in this way.

FACULTY

Senior Faculty

There are 5.5 tenured and tenure-track faculty in the Archaeology Division: two full professors, three senior lecturers, and one half-time lecturer. Two senior faculty members are prehistorians, two focus on biblical periods, and two specialize in classical periods (one of these is half time). Cross-cutting these period specializations, faculty offer expertise in lithic analysis, in ceramic analysis, spatial archaeology, urbanism, and classical history and languages. Archaeological sciences are not well represented in the senior faculty. While the majority of the senior faculty was hired in the last ten to fifteen years, as a group they represent a very narrow demographic group (between 51 and 63 years of age). All of the senior faculty are male.

This group of highly dedicated senior faculty is to be commended on the remarkable job they do in providing a comprehensive BA curriculum and in training the highly competent professional archaeologists that graduate from their MA and PhD programs. These pedagogical efforts are all the more impressive given the active engagement of these individuals in research (see below) and in professional service (both inside and external to BGU). Clearly, however, they are stretched too thin to meet their stated mission and the BGU archaeology program (especially the graduate program) is impeded from achieving its ambitious goals by the small size of its senior faculty. The current need to split new lines between the Bible/Ancient Near East and the

Archaeology tracks of the blended Department of Bible, Archaeology, & Ancient Near East serves as a further impediment to achieving adequate staffing in archaeology and another justification for creation of a separate Department of Archaeology.

The Committee believes a compelling case can be made for additional senior faculty lines in the Archaeology Division. There is also strong justification for the replacement of all senior faculty as they retire.

Adjuncts

Adjuncts and teaching fellows ameliorate the small size of the senior faculty. The self-evaluation report listed nine adjuncts and four teaching fellows offering courses in the academic year 2009-2010, bringing the total faculty of the division to 18.5. Adjunct faculty are especially well represented in classical archaeology, although they also teach classes in all the other two chronological tracks. Non-tenure track faculty also are responsible for courses in a variety of cross-cutting topics in the archaeology of the ancient Near East and the broader Old World, archaeological theory and method, and the archaeological sciences. All of the courses taught by adjuncts are offered as part of the BA curriculum.

Adjunct faculty interviewed by the Committee felt well connected to the program and are able to contribute fresh ideas and approaches to the BA curriculum. They saw themselves as valued members of the Archaeology Division. Courses offered by these individuals in the 2009-2010 academic year were very innovative and were clearly highlights in the BA curriculum. These individuals carry a heavy teaching responsibility, with adjuncts and teaching fellows teaching slightly fewer than 40% of the BA curriculum for the 2009-2010 academic year. Adjuncts interviewed also taught multiple classes in other universities, working for the IAA, while also trying to maintain their own research.

The Committee sees this group of non-tenure track faculty as a real asset to the Archaeology Division. Indeed the division relies heavily on this faculty to compensate for the small size of the senior faculty. This group also infuses new energy and approaches into the curriculum. The opportunity of developing innovative courses and teaching undergraduate classes, in turn,

provides these individuals with much needed teaching experience that will help them in their pursuit of more permanent academic employment. This is particularly true for the teaching fellows whose involvement in teaching while enrolled in the graduate program at BGU is an important element in the preparation for future careers. We encourage a continued and even expanded roll of these individuals in the future, even after the addition of new senior faculty lines.

STUDENTS

Enrollment and Completion Rates

At the outset, we applaud the Department for inviting all students to attend the Committee's meetings. Enrollment of students in the BA program has been steady, or slightly declining, over the past five years - moving from a high of 73 students studying in the program in 2007 to 65 in 2010. This reflects a world-wide phenomenon (see General Report). The drop-out rate of BA level students over this period has been about 32%. The relatively high drop-out rate of BA students is attributable both to the generally low entry requirements of the University BA program and the high standards of the Division. The field work requirements of the Division also serve as an effective mechanism for weeding out less committed majors.

The self-study comments on the role that university incentives for high enrollment play in grade inflation and the lowering of standards in undergraduate education. We agree that such perverse incentives should be gradually removed and replaced with a system that rewards well-functioning departments while still providing opportunities at the university level for lower-achieving students. This problem goes beyond this department and must be addressed at the university or national level.

MA and PhD student enrollment has been increasing in recent years, with especially large increases in each program in 2009 and 2010. Here again automatic, and relatively low, admission standards into the graduate program may artificially increase enrollment levels beyond the capacity of the small Archaeology Division to adequately train them (see comments on the MA curriculum earlier) or the profession to absorb them in careers in archaeology.

Data were not provided that would allow us to compute the completion rate of graduate MA and PhD students. However the relatively low numbers of MA and PhD graduates reported over the five year period from 2005 to 2010 suggests either that the drop-out rate in graduate programs is high, or, more likely, that graduate students are taking longer than the 2 year goal for completion of the MA program and the 4 years of support offered at the PhD level.

All of the MA students interviewed took BA degrees in archaeology at BGU, while most of the PhD's had lower degrees from BGU. Even those focusing on classical archaeology, which is the most poorly represented track in terms of number of senior faculty and course work, elected to continue on at BGU.

Financial Support

Financial support for MA students seemed lacking, though some receive support through the research grants of senior faculty. PhD students, on the other hand, generally receive some financial support, through their successful competition for University sponsored and external scholarships, through support from senior faculty grants, and with a stipend from the University.

Counseling

It is unclear whether there is sufficient guidance given BA students in shaping their course selection, both within archaeology and (in certain tracks) in the selection of courses outside of the Division to make sure that the goal of providing a broad based, balanced exposure to archaeology and related disciplines. To a certain extent the web-based course registration system that makes the registration process easier has also the incentive for students to seek out guidance in course selection. Students praised the faculty's approachability and willingness to provide course counseling, but at the same time noted that receiving counseling depended on the individual student's initiative. Given the flexible nature of the BA curriculum, a more structured counseling system is needed.

The lack of formal counseling mechanisms is less of a problem at the MA and PhD levels where students interact closely and on a regular basis with faculty mentors. However, the Committee

believes that a more concerted effort needs to be made in advising graduate students, especially at the MA level, in constructing their course work and in their future career aspirations.

Student Satisfaction

Student satisfaction with the study program, at all levels, was generally high, especially among BA students. All students interviewed praised the high degree of collegiality among their student cohorts and their close interaction with faculty. Indeed, the close, collegial, and supportive nature of the Archaeology Division was an outstanding feature mentioned by all those we interviewed -- faculty, students, and alumni.

RESEARCH

Senior Faculty Publications

Productivity of senior faculty is uneven. Divisional prehistorians have the highest productivity in terms of numbers of publications over the past five years (producing more than half of the publication output between 2006 to 2010). And while prehistorians in the division have a solid record in more descriptive publications, they also have the strongest record for producing synthetic publications that seek to place research on the prehistory of the region in a broader context. This work is published in higher profile venues (peer reviewed journals, books, and chapters in edited volumes) that reach a broader academic audience. It is worth noting, however, that publications listed for the last five years do not appear in the high impact venues that the self-evaluation reports mentions as optimal vehicles for such synthetic work. Clearly this part of the Division is serving the profession by producing basic empirical data that places their work within an understanding of the culture history of the region, while also situating this work within a broader sphere of international scholarship.

The publication record of those working on Biblical and classical periods is not as strong, either in overall numbers of publications or in the distribution of published work over these three categories of publication.

Grants

Figures provided seem to show that senior faculty have been relatively successful in obtaining funds to support research, with five senior faculty currently holding grants from the Israel Science Foundation and the sixth faculty member with an active application to this body under consideration. Over the past five years there appears to have been a decline in research support from competitive grants. At the same time, funds from contracts have increased. In short, over the five year reporting period this small faculty has garnered a commendable level of external support.

Student Research

The committee was supplied with an impressive stack of student MA and PhD theses during our visit, a clear indication of the high caliber of training these students have received. Students at all levels are clearly actively involved in both the research of senior faculty (indeed many are co-authors, sometimes senior authors, on faculty publications) and in their own research projects.

A tabulation of recent and on-going MA and PhD thesis titles and advisors indicated an essentially equal division of MA research between prehistory, biblical, and classical archaeology, with classical archaeology MA projects being somewhat more common than MA research conducted in the other two chronological tracks. In each case, one senior faculty has served as mentor for the majority of MA research conducted within the general chronological domain. In classical archaeology this imbalance is likely a result of the more recent addition of a classical archaeologists to the staff (2008) who is still only half-time.

Recent and in-process PhD dissertations, on the other hand, overwhelmingly fall under prehistory, with one of the senior faculty serving as mentor in slightly more PhD projects than the other. But the complete absence of recent or ongoing PhD research in classical archaeology (along with decline in biblical archaeology from 7 MA projects to only 1 PhD) is perhaps a reflection of the more limited staffing levels and thinner graduate curricula in this area.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Offices and Classrooms

Divisional offices and classrooms are located in the Humanities Building of the main Marcus campus in Beer Sheva. Although faculty offices are spread over two floors and two different wings of the building, these offices seem to be adequate. Our understanding is that adjunct faculty are also given adequate office space within this building. Classrooms also appear to meet needs both in terms of space and equipment. A room with study collections is also located in this building though the Committee did not visit it. Pictures provided of the room give the impression that it is relatively large and well equipped with shelving to house study collections. The need to transport collections from off-site laboratories to use in classes was mentioned in the report and during our visit as a problem.

Laboratories

Several years ago three research laboratories were moved from the Marcus main campus to the Tuviyahu Campus some 3 km away. A fourth laboratory, used by an emeritus professor, remained on campus. The self-evaluation report discusses the disadvantages of this move at some length. Staff displeasure over the continued separation of research laboratories from their offices and classrooms was plainly evident during our site visit. The remote location of the laboratories, we were told, limits the amount of time both faculty and students are able to spend in them - an inconvenience that has a negative impact on the both the research and teaching capacity Division.

The Committee found that the current Tuviyahu Campus laboratories were, in layout and size, quite adequate. Currently the two classics and two biblical period faculty each share labs located in the basement/bomb shelter of the building, while the two prehistorians occupy more spacious quarters on an upper floor of the building. Clearly more space would be optimal and in an ideal world each faculty member would have his or her own dedicated lab. Compared to other archaeology departments (both in Israel and outside) that we are familiar with, however, we find that the current laboratory space occupied by BGU archaeologists is quite good.

The distance from campus does seem to be a problem. Although only 3 km from campus, we were told that there is no university-sponsored shuttle that might transport students and staff to the laboratories. Accessing the campus by public transport is made difficult by irregular bus schedules and at least one transfer, so that it may take 40 minutes or more to travel the short distance between the Marcus and the Tuviyahu Campus. Students also reported problems in accessing the laboratories, mentioning in particular difficulty in knowing whether they will have access to locked laboratories after making the trip out to the Tuviyahu Campus.

Libraries

Faculty and students (at all levels) complained about the inadequate library facilities. At least one administrator above the Division level also acknowledged the poor quality of the library holdings and said that it was a University wide goal to address this problem. Clearly BGU would benefit from having access to more digital resources and we address the need for a country-wide digital archaeological library in our General Report.

Signed by:



Prof. Charles Stanish
Committee Chair




Prof. Susan Alcock



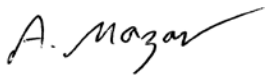
Prof. Ofer Bar-Yosef



Prof. Manfred Bietak



Prof. Margalit Finkelberg



Prof. Amihai Mazar



Dr. Melinda A. Zeder

Appendices

Appendix 1- Copy of Letter of Appointment



January, 2011

Prof. Charles Stanish
Department of Archeology
University of California
USA

שר החינוך
Minister of Education
وزير التربية والتعليم

Dear Professor Stanish,

The State of Israel undertook an ambitious project when the Israeli Council for Higher Education (CHE) established a quality assessment and assurance system for Israeli higher education. Its stated goals are: to enhance and ensure the quality of academic studies; to provide the public with information regarding the quality of study programs in institutions of higher education throughout Israel; and to ensure the continued integration of the Israeli system of higher education in the international academic arena. Involvement of world-renowned academicians in this process is essential.

This most important initiative reaches out to scientists in the international arena in a national effort to meet the critical challenges that confront the Israeli higher educational system today. The formulation of international evaluation committees represents an opportunity to express our common sense of concern and to assess the current and future status of education in the 21st century and beyond. It also establishes a structure for an ongoing consultative process among scientists around the globe on common academic dilemmas and prospects.

I therefore deeply appreciate your willingness to join us in this crucial endeavor.

It is with great pleasure that I hereby appoint you to serve as the chair of the Council for Higher Education's Committee for the Evaluation of Archeology Studies.

The composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Charles Stanish (Chair), Prof. Susan Alcock, Prof. Ofer Bar-Yosef, Prof. Manfred Bietak, Prof. Margalit Finkelberg, Prof. Amihai Mazar and Dr. Melinda A. Zeder.

Ms. Alisa Elon will coordinate the Committee's activities.

In your capacity as the chair of the Evaluation Committee, you will be requested to function in accordance with the enclosed appendix.

I wish you much success in your role as chair of this most important committee.

Gideon Saar
Sincerely,
Gideon Saar
Gideon Saar
Minister of Education,
Chairperson, The Council for Higher Education

Enclosures: Appendix to the Appointment Letter of Evaluation Committees

cc: Ms. Michal Neumann, The Quality Assessment Division
Ms. Alisa Elon, Committee Coordinator

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Appendix 2- Site Visit Schedule



**Ben-Gurion University
Schedule of Site Visit
February 20-21, 2011**

Archaeology Studies –Schedule of Site Visit

Sunday, February 20, 2011: Meeting place of committee sessions – Diller Building (Bldg. 74) Room 301

09:00-09:30	Opening session with the heads of the institution and the senior staff member appointed to deal with quality assessment	Zvi Hacoheh , Rector Yael Edan , Deputy Rector David Newman , Dean Haim Goldfus , Dept. Chair
09:30-10:00	Meeting with the Head of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences	David Newman , Dean
10:00-10:45	Meeting with the Head of the Department of Bible, Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies	Haim Goldfus Steve Rosen
10:45-11:10	Promotion Committee	Haim Goldfus Department Chair Promotion committee MA/PhD students committee Steven A. Rosen Promotions and Hiring committee

11:10 – 11:40	Teaching Committee	<p>Yuval Yekutieli, BA teaching coordinator BA discipline committee Dig Certificate Program coordinator Eilat Campus Archaeology Program coordinator</p> <p>Gunnar Lehmann MA/Ph.D. committee</p> <p>Isaac Gilead MA Teaching coordinator</p>
11:40-12:15	Faculty	<p>Peter Fabian Labs and Study room coordinator</p> <p>Isaac Gilead Steve Rosen</p>
12:15-13:45	Tour of labs outside and on campus	Beit Hayas labs and if time permits- on-campus facilities
13:45-14:15	Lunch (closed working meeting in the same room)	

Monday, February 21, 2010:

Time	Subject	Participants
10:00-10:30	Meeting with adjunct lecturers*	Nitzan Amitai-Price Mordechai Aviam Issac Paz
10:30-11:45	Meeting with B.A. students	
11:45-12:30	Meeting with M.A. students	
12:30-13:15	Meeting with PhD students some of which are Junior staff	
13:15-14:15	Lunch (closed working meeting in the same room)	
14:15-14:45	Tour library, offices of faculty members, and facilities not seen on previous day	
14:45-15:30	Meeting of Alumni	
15:30-16:15	Committee's closed working meeting	
16:15-17:00	Summation meeting with heads of the institution and of the Faculty and Dept. of Archaeology	Zvi Hacohen , Rector Yael Edan , Deputy Rector David Newman , Dean Haim Goldfus , Dept. Chair