

The Committee for the Future of the Humanities

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Report of the Committee

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Presented to Prof. Menachem Magidor, President

The Committee for the Future of the Humanities

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Executive Summary

The Committee for the Future of the Humanities was appointed by President Menachem Magidor to consider a wide range of issues relating to the future of the Humanities at the Hebrew University. In particular, the Committee was asked to identify fields of strength or weakness within the Faculty of Humanities and to suggest ways to further develop and correct them. We sought to examine both undergraduate and graduate studies and to suggest ways to achieve and maintain high-level, inspiring teaching, and to envisage various structural possibilities that may foster high quality research in the Humanities and encourage cooperation between scholars. On three separate visits to the University, committee members met with many members of the faculty, administration and student body, and the ideas, concerns and suggestions that emerged in these meetings largely shaped the recommendations that follow.

It is the strong belief of the committee that the members of the faculty of Humanities at the Hebrew University rank among the leading scholars of the world. It is, however, clear that there are specific areas of the Faculty of Humanities that require attention and improvement, particularly in light of the ongoing reduction in the number of faculty positions and the prospect of numerous retirements. We propose significant changes in a number of areas. Only full co-operation on all sides will make this possible, but we believe that the work of our Committee has already sparked new conversations on a wide range of issues.

It is the conclusion of the Committee that the Hebrew University must pay special attention to three general areas as it makes new hires in the faculty: the contemporary world in all geographical areas (without at the same time losing the traditional emphasis on earlier or classical periods); the study of gender in all areas; and Israeli culture and society, including social, ethnic and religious groups of all kinds. The Committee also recommends that the following specific areas currently under threat be strengthened and maintained: Yiddish, American Studies, the teaching of modern Arabic and more teaching of courses in Arabic, Russian language and literature, and folklore, theater and musicology. At the national level, the Committee believes that certain fields of study, such as African studies, Romance languages and literature, and ancient Semitic epigraphy are in danger of disappearing altogether and their survival depends of the development of serious cooperation among Israeli universities at the national level. The Committee holds the view that at this crucial stage in the development of the Faculty, there must be a strategic plan that will serve as the basis for making new appointments. It is our view that the set of priorities listed above might serve as the basis for such a strategic plan.

The Committee has given careful consideration to what we take to be weaknesses in the current BA curriculum. Specifically, we have attempted to address the widely held perception that many students arrive at the University with deficiencies in writing modern Hebrew and the equally prevalent opinion that many students lack a solid grasp on reading and writing in English. We have also sought to provide students with the currently lacking foundation in basic academic disciplines, while keeping in mind that most students arrive at the University after military and other forms of service and have consequently been separated from the classroom and from the culture of academic and

intellectual skills. With these factors in mind, the Committee has proposed changes in the BA curriculum, beginning with required courses for first year students in English reading and writing AND in Hebrew writing. We also recommend that students will no longer be required to choose two majors fields of study in order to qualify for the BA. In effect, students will major in (1) a Department or in (2) a Department and a Program or in (3) two Departments.

The Committee has approached the delicate issue of how the existing structure of academic departments might be modified and simplified. It is the view of the Committee that the current structure of departments and programs is no longer appropriate to the proper functioning of a major university, and some departments are too small to maintain an adequate level of academic and intellectual strength. In its own deliberations, the Committee has approached the issue of reorganization from the perspective of the BA curriculum. We propose the creation of four divisions within the Faculty of Humanities: Languages and Literatures, History, Arts and Expressive Culture, and Modes of Thought, with specific departments each being part of one of these Divisions (see report). In addition to the departments, students may also concentrate in one of several Programs, which will be interdisciplinary in character and as complementary to the Departments, though working in close cooperation with them. Each of the four major divisions will be required to develop one or more team-taught gateway courses for first-year students. The teaching of the new BA first year will require a cultural change in much of the over-specialized approach to teaching among the faculty who will need to implement it. But it is the belief of the committee that a principal goal of the Hebrew University is the education of citizens, not merely specialists. More than in the past, many first-year students will be exploring their options rather than plunging into a 'major' at the very beginning. Thus, advising by faculty members will be essential in this new model and the administration of the University will need to provide resources so that faculty will be well trained and willing to undertake this important task.

The Committee has dedicated much thought to the graduate programs of the Faculty. We have found that the MA programs were of unequal quality, and serious attention needs to be directed at elevating their quality and articulating their goals. We have also recommended that **all** MA programs offer a first-semester methodological seminar every year. With regard to both MA and PhD programs, the Committee strongly recommends that admissions standards and procedures should be a matter of Departmental concern and authority. In more general terms, graduate students should be seen as working in a department, not just with a single member of the Faculty. The Committee also strongly supports a program whereby outstanding BA students can be identified and granted generous stipends at the MA level. The Committee is also concerned about the low level of funding for all graduate programs.

We have also made some recommendations for improving the physical plant of the Faculty, including renovating offices to make them more inhabitable for faculty members, and updating classrooms into "smart classrooms." We have also proposed that every department and program prepare an up-to-date website in English and Hebrew. Finally, we have addressed some concerns about the library and future role of the library and its staff as an instructional unit of the university. Personnel must have first-hand experience with the processes of research and writing in order to properly guide students in these areas.

Report of the Committee

INTRODUCTION

The Committee for the Future of the Humanities at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was appointed by President Menachem Magidor to consider a wide range of issues relating to the future of the Humanities at the Hebrew University. In particular, the Committee was asked,

- to identify fields of strength or weakness within the Faculty of Humanities and to suggest ways to further develop and correct them.
- to examine both undergraduate and graduate studies and to suggest ways to achieve and maintain high-level, inspiring teaching.
- to envisage various structural possibilities that may foster high quality research in the Humanities and encourage cooperation between scholars in the Humanities and those in the University as a whole.

At the outset, it is important to lay out some of the general assumptions, considerations and procedures that the Committee has followed in its deliberations. In the first place, we have not operated under the assumption that there exists a world-wide crisis in the Humanities, a crisis specific to our time and place. If anything, we might speak of a “perennial crisis in the humanities,” but only in the sense that departments and programs in the Humanities, broadly defined, are constantly in a process of self-definition.¹ Following on this assumption, the Committee has not undertaken to define or defend the Humanities against the charge – this is sometimes treated as another ‘crisis’ in the Humanities – that such studies have become increasingly irrelevant in an age of high technology, international politics and global economics. There exists an abundance of literature on the relevance of the Humanities in just such a world and we have assumed this relevance throughout the process.

¹ See the article by Geoffrey Galt Harpham, “Beneath and Beyond the ‘Crisis in the Humanities’,” New Literary History 36 (2005) 21-36.

In the second place, we are acutely aware of the fact that the members of the Committee come to this task from countries, cultures and institutions outside of Israel. There is always a danger under these conditions that we not fully understand the history and needs specific to the Hebrew University or that we will, perhaps unwittingly, put forward recommendations that simply mirror our own backgrounds. We have striven to immerse ourselves as much as possible in the conditions of Israel and of the Hebrew University, but we realize that in the final analysis it will fall to those within Israel and within the Hebrew University to work out – modify, reject, accept – our recommendations within the framework of local conditions. At this point it is worth emphasizing that the Hebrew University has a distinguished record of producing distinguished scholars and teachers at every level – BA, MA and PhD and especially in the area of the Humanities. By every available measure, the members of the faculty of Humanities at the Hebrew University rank among the leading scholars of the world. Thus it is important for all to understand that we do not see any local ‘crisis’ in the Humanities at the Hebrew University. Thus the task of the Committee has been rather modest in scope – not to repair serious damage or to head off an impending disaster but rather to isolate specific areas that require attention and improvement. **In particular, our work has been prompted in large part by the reduction in the number of faculty positions and the prospect of numerous retirements. These local conditions rather than any ‘crisis’ have governed our work. It seemed to the Administration and to the Committee that these conditions offered an opportunity to think about the shape of the Faculty of Humanities in the near future.**

In the third place, our mission has been to offer recommendations, supported by careful analysis, not to legislate. That task will naturally belong to the Administration and Faculty of the Hebrew University. It is our hope that a joint effort between the Faculty and the Administration, focused on the report of the Committee for the Future of the Humanities, will contribute to an improved atmosphere of confidence and trust on all sides. A number of our recommendations, if enacted, will require significant changes. **Only full co-operation on all sides will make this possible.** We have no doubt that this process will call forth a great effort from all involved. We know the work of our

Committee has already sparked new conversations on a wide range of issues. Our report is designed to carry forward these conversations in the direction of concrete change.

Finally, a brief word about our procedures. The Committee held an initial orientation meeting at Princeton University on December 17, 2005. Members of the Committee met with the President (Menachem Magidor), the Rector (Haim Rabinowitch), the Vice-Rector (Sarah Stroumsa), the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities (Steven Kaplan) and Dr. Lynn Schler, who has provided invaluable support as Special Assistant to the Committee. At this meeting, the Administrators laid out the mission of the Committee and began the process of introducing us to the history and present structure of the Faculty of Humanities. We also agreed on how we would proceed thereafter, with the chief emphasis being our decision to meet with as many members of the Faculty as possible. Meetings with individual members of the faculty began in October of 2005, when the Chair of the Committee delivered a series of guest lecture at the Hebrew University. On that occasion, I interviewed some 15 members of the faculty from a wide range of departments. The next meeting took place in Jerusalem, January 22-26, with most members of the Committee in attendance. On that occasion we met with roughly 35 members of the faculty and, in addition, with students from all level in the Faculty (BA, MA and PhD). The final meeting took place March 19-24, again with most members of the Committee present. On this occasion we met with, again roughly, 30 members of the faculty. This meeting also included sessions with students (BA ,MA and students from two special programs, Revivim and Amirim) and, at our request, with Arab students. On each occasion, the Committee met also with the senior administrators of the University and the Faculty and with the Development Committee of the Faculty. On the second visit special efforts were made to meet with younger members of the faculty, as they represent the future of the Hebrew University.

THE REPORT

Our report will cover a wide range of topics, some of them closely related to others. We recommend changes in a number of areas: the structure of academic departments; the role of institutes and schools; the shape of the BA curriculum, particularly in the first year of study; refinements of several aspects of programs at the

level of the MA and PhD; improvements in the physical space of the faculty; long-term planning for strengthening of certain areas in the Faculty; and cooperation at the national level among Israeli universities on matters relating to libraries and to the future of certain academic fields now in danger of disappearing altogether.

Long-Term Priorities

A. It is the conclusion of the Committee that the Hebrew University must pay special attention to three general areas as it makes new hires in the faculty:

- the **contemporary world** in all geographical areas (without at the same time losing the traditional emphasis on earlier or classical periods);
- the study of **gender** in all areas, classical and contemporary;
- **Israeli culture and society**, including social, ethnic and religious groups of all kinds.

B. The Committee also recommends that certain specific areas at the Hebrew University currently under threat because of recent retirements must be strengthened and maintained:

- Yiddish
- American studies, including American literature
- The teaching of modern Arabic and the teaching of more courses in Arabic
- Russian language and literature
- Folklore, theater and musicology

C. At the national level, the Committee believes that certain fields of study are in danger of disappearing altogether and their survival depends of the development of serious cooperation among Israeli universities at the national level. It is unthinkable that these fields should not be taught somewhere in Israel. The Committee singled out the following fields (there may well be others):

- African studies
- Romance languages and literature
- ancient Semitic epigraphy

The Committee has given serious consideration to reports from members of the faculty regarding serious holes in library collections. There will need to be cooperation among all Israeli universities and the National Library to ensure that acquisitions in all fields will keep pace with new publications. No single university can possibly maintain its collection in all areas. **Only an unprecedented policy of cooperation, through a national division of labor, will guarantee that all fields will be covered, not at any one university, but rather across the several university libraries.** The failure to enact such a policy risks not only worsening the already existing holes but creating new ones. Implicit in this recommendation is the maintenance and strengthening of a national union catalogue and a highly efficient system of inter-library loans.

THE BA CURRICULUM AND STUDENTS

The Committee has given careful consideration what we take to be weaknesses in the current BA curriculum. In thinking about possible changes, we have been cognizant of the specific needs and backgrounds of Israeli students. Foremost in our thinking have been these factors:

- the widely held perception that many students arrive at the University with deficiencies in writing modern Hebrew;
- the equally prevalent opinion that many students lack a solid grasp on reading and writing in English;
- more broadly, the sense that graduates of many Israeli high schools lack solid preparation in basic academic disciplines;
- and the obvious fact, coupled with and exacerbated by those just cited, that many Israeli students arrive at the University after a period of military and other forms of service and that during this period they have been separated from the classroom and from the culture of academic and intellectual skills.

With these factors in mind, the Committee has proposed the following changes in the BA curriculum:

- each first-year student will take a (preferably full year) course in English reading and writing AND in Hebrew writing; these course will be non-credit; the faculty will need to develop a system for determining when individual students may be exempted from these courses.
- students will no longer be required to choose two major fields of study in order to qualify for the BA; students will still be free to choose two fields if they so desire but this will no longer be a universal requirement.
- in the first year of study, students will be required to take gateway courses, one from each of the four major divisions (see below); in the 2nd and 3rd years of the BA, students will concentrate on courses in the home department or program.

In effect, students will major in (1) a Department or in (2) a Department and a Program or in (3) two Departments. The old pattern of two Departments will no longer be required, although some students may still choose this option. Some examples of possible combinations are as follows:

- B.A. in Talmud, Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Languages (one department)
- B.A. in Folklore (one department)
- B.A. in Religious Studies and History (program and department)
- B.A. in Jewish Studies and Theater (program and department)
- B.A. in Philosophy and Comparative Literature (two departments)

The following represents a sample of what a three-years curriculum in the Humanities might look like under these new conditions. The particular case given here is in Musicology, but it could just as well apply to any other department or discipline.

Year 1:

First Semester: 2 gateway courses; English reading/Hebrew writing; music history

Second Semester: Gateway course; English reading/Hebrew writing; music history; music theory; historiography

Year 2:

First semester: intermediate courses in music (history, theory, ethnomusicology, composition); cognate course in art history, theater or folklore

Second semester: intermediate courses in music; cognate course from social sciences

Year 3:

First semester: advanced courses in musicology, ethnomusicology, etc.; honors curriculum or free elective

Second semester: advanced courses in musicology, ethnomusicology, etc.; honors curriculum or free elective

This new curriculum will demand important changes in faculty attitudes. **The teaching of the new BA first year will require not only considerable resources but also a cultural change in much of the over-specialized approach to teaching among the faculty who will need to implement it.** There are many details to be worked in this new curriculum. This work will need to be carried out by the Faculty, in consultation and with the support of the Administration.

A principal goal of the Hebrew University is the education of citizens, not merely specialists. To that end, it is crucial that every graduate of the Hebrew University leave with a sense of how a broad range of issues might be explored from multiple perspectives. Every student should have the experience of being in class with students majoring in other disciplines and should be encouraged to have cross-disciplinary conversations throughout his or her time at the Hebrew University.

THE BA CURRICULUM AND THE FACULTY

The Committee has approached the delicate issue of how the existing structure of academic departments might be modified and simplified. Our main point here is that there are far too many departments, many of them too small to function as meaningful

academic or intellectual units. In some cases these departments represent the legacy of personal differences, long ago transformed into formal organizational differences that by now have outlived the personalities and the clashes that led to their creation as separate departments. There appears to be a consensus among faculty members of the Hebrew University that the current organization of 39 departments is unreasonable and must be changed. But how and following what principles?

One major consideration should be just how effective the fractured set of departments can be in placing their graduates in fields that do not have departmental status anywhere else. There is a very compelling reason to make the Hebrew University's panoply of departments more similar to those at other universities, so that the job markets and the production of scholars map more closely than they now do.

The Hebrew University has followed a sensible policy of letting the university develop in various ways over the years but to intervene on occasion — possibly the occasions have been too rare — to set it on a firmer track. There is, however, a danger that the Hebrew University might see itself as somehow requiring coverage of almost all disciplines just because it is Israel's premier institution. But it is the premier institution in a very small nation that cannot expect to have a large number of universities. **In short, the Hebrew University cannot and should not attempt to cover everything.** International reputations depend in part on a perception of how strong each unit is rather than merely on how broad the university is. Like other great universities, the Hebrew University must be recognized because it is very strong in what it does cover, not because it covers everything.

There is, of course, another big issue that hangs over most universities everywhere at the moment and that is not unique for the Hebrew University: finances. A sufficient reason for action on some of the weak units is to relieve the budgetary burdens of the university. But the intellectual reasons for merging some units and closing others are strong enough in their own right to justify such actions.

In its own deliberations, the Committee has approached the issue of reorganization from the perspective of the BA curriculum. Given our recommendations for a new BA curriculum, not just in the first year but for the second and third years as

well, how can the departments and programs best be organized so as to carry out that curriculum? What follows is our recommendation.

We propose the creation of four divisions (below) within the Faculty of Humanities. As stated above, each student will select one of these divisions as his/her area of concentration. Under each of these four divisions, departments would be arranged as follows. Students will receive a degree in one of the four Divisions, along with a certificate in one of its associated Departments or, as will be made clear below, a degree from the Department or Departments and a certificate from a Program. The proposed Divisions and their associated Departments are as follow; *each box represents a department*. Faculty members should be encouraged to belong to more than one department when this is appropriate for their expertise.

Four Divisions for Faculty of Humanities

Languages and Literatures

Arabic

English

Classics

Talmud and Bible,
Ancient Near Eastern Languages

Asian and East Asian Languages
And Literatures

Comparative Literature,
European Languages, German,
Slavic and Romance Languages

Hebrew Language and
Literature, Yiddish, Ladino

Modern Language Instruction

History

Jewish History

Middle Eastern History,
European History, Asian and
East Asian History
African History, North and South
American History

Archaeology and Antiquity,
Ancient Near East

Arts and Expressive Culture

Folklore

Art History

Theater

Musicology

Modes of Thought

Philosophy
Philosophy of Science

Linguistics

Religion and Religious Thought
Judaism and Jewish Thought
Islam and Islamic Thought
Christianity and Christian
Thought
Buddhism and Buddhist Thought
Hinduism and Hindu Thought

In addition to the departments listed above in the boxes, students may also concentrate in one of the several Programs listed below. **The list is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive. In general, we see the Programs as interdisciplinary in character and as complementary to the Departments, though working in close cooperation with them. The Faculty will need to appoint a coordinator for each program and to give to each coordinator authority to negotiate with heads of department to ensure that teaching provisions provided for the program by members of different departments is organized in a coherent fashion.**

- African Studies
- American Studies
- Ancient Civilization Studies
- Central Asian Studies
- Cognitive Studies
- Contemporary Jewish Studies
- Cultural Studies
- East Asian Studies
- European Studies
- Islamic Studies
- Jewish Studies
- Latin American Studies
- Middle East Studies
- Religious Studies
- Slavic Studies

The Committee sees several important implications flowing from this new curriculum:

Each of the four major divisions will be required to develop one or more team-taught gateway courses for first-year students (although other students may also enroll). These courses and the Divisions themselves will replace the existing Schools of History and Literature. We offer, as examples, the following titles for possible gateway courses in each of the four Divisions:

- Languages and Literatures: “Literature and Society in Cross-Cultural Perspective”
- History: “The Past in the Present” “The Study of the Past in Comparative Perspective”
- Arts/Expressive Culture: “The Arts of Everyday Life” “The Study of Performance”
- Modes of Thought: “Analytic and Moral Reasoning” “Form and Meaning in Religion

1. **Advising by faculty members will be essential in this new model.** More than in the past, many first-year students will be exploring their options rather than plunging into a ‘major’ at the very beginning. The administration of the University will need to provide resources so that faculty and teaching assistants will be well trained and willing to undertake this important task. These advisors will need to be fully versed in the entire curriculum, not just in their own Departments and Divisions. This will require careful training and preparation.
2. The Programs will need to develop requirements for students who pursue a certificate in their area. It is our intention that these requirements should allow enough latitude to permit students to enroll in relevant courses in other Programs, Departments and Divisions. Similarly, each Division will be required to develop its own distribution requirements for students in particular Departments, i.e., it is the intention of the Committee that students should be required to take some courses in other Departments of that Division.

3. For the future, the Faculty and Administration should consider a broader system of distribution requirements. The goal here should be to require students in the Humanities to take one or more courses in the Social Sciences and/or Natural Sciences (and vice versa). In order to achieve these goals, the Administration will need to revise the current funding model which now functions as a barrier to cross registration in other Faculties.
4. Together, the Faculty and the Administration will the need to determine specifically what they see as the significance in terms of teaching, administration and finance of the new departments. For instance, will the head of each of these departments have the authority to instruct department members where they should concentrate their teaching efforts? We think so. Otherwise, the new structure may well be undermined by inertia.
5. These recommendations involve serious implications for the present system of Institutes. We recognize the value of the Institute of Jewish Studies, the Institute for Contemporary Jewry, and the Institute of Archaeology as mechanisms for the receipt and disbursement of external funds donated to the university for research in these areas. These institutes also serve as coherent units to which members are attached and they are well recognized internationally, and we therefore recommend their retention for these purposes. But we do not see any role for other institutes.

Finally, it goes without saying that the existing honors programs at the BA level (Amirim and Revivim), programs that have achieved an extraordinary level of success and have involved students not just from Humanities but from other Faculties (including Natural Science and Medicine) as well, must be celebrated and protected. The Faculty should consider whether it might be possible to undertake a modest expansion of the programs, without diminishing their quality. Beyond this, each Division should be encouraged to create its own honors program, along the lines of the Revivim and Amirim, though on a more modest scale. In order to accomplish this goal, the Administration will need to provide the necessary funding.

THE BA CURRICULUM AND THE ADMINISTRATION

The Committee encountered a consistent complaint, primarily though not exclusively from students, that the current funding model makes it difficult, and sometimes impossible, for students from one Faculty to enroll in courses offered by another Faculty, e.g., Social Sciences. Under the current system, one way around this difficulty is to choose a second major in a different Faculty. But under the new system, whereby students will no longer be required to pursue two majors, the current funding model would become an even more serious obstacle to enrollment in courses across Division lines. This is a major issue. **Some solution must be found to eliminate this barrier.**

The Committee holds the view that the new hiring plan, created by the former Dean, for making appointments in the Humanities based on merit alone, introduced a much needed correction of former practices. **At the same time and at this crucial stage in the development of the Faculty, we believe that there must also be a strategic plan and that a committee of the Dean and heads of the Divisions, along with representatives from the Interdisciplinary Programs, should see to it that the strategic plan will serve as the basis for making new appointments.** It is our view that the set of priorities listed above, under **Long-Term Priorities**, might serve as the basis for such a strategic plan. How to balance considerations of merit with the needs of a strategic plan lies beyond the scope of our Committee. This is a problem faced by universities throughout the world and there is no one solution that suits all cases.

THE MA CURRICULUM

The Committee found that the MA programs in the Faculty were of unequal quality. Serious attentions needs to be directed at elevating their quality and articulating their goals, particularly if, as we expect, more training is needed in skills specific to the specialty to be studied as a result of the more general education provided by the BA syllabus. The following considerations emerged in our discussions with students and faculty:

- The Committee strongly supports a program whereby outstanding BA students, who are interested in pursuing the MA, can be identified and granted generous stipends at the MA level.
- Some supervision must be directed at regulating and limiting the length of MA theses. It is clear that there has been a relentless and unmonitored tendency to allow, to expect and even to require MA theses of excessive lengths. One clear advantage to be gained will be to shorten the average time to completion of the MA for all students.
- It came to our attention that not all existing Programs and Department offer a first-semester methodological seminar every year. **In our view, this is an absolute requirement for all MA programs.** These seminars should be offered by senior faculty.
- The present system of a two-level MA, one for students who will not pursue the PhD and one for those who will, should receive serious examination in the faculty. Do the pragmatic benefits (e.g., salary increase) of the terminal MA justify its continued existence and the expenditure of faculty time to teach its courses? What are some of other consequences of this two-level system?
- As will be stated below for PhD programs, the Committee strongly recommends that admissions standards and procedures should be a matter of Departmental concern and authority. They should not be left to the discretion of individual faculty members.

THE PHD CURRICULUM

It is worth re-emphasizing that the Hebrew University has a distinguished record of producing distinguished scholars at every level – BA, MA and PhD. Our view is that the PhD programs at the Hebrew University are in very good condition. However, there is currently a serious lack of funding for PhD students and we would like to see more fellowships made available. The Committee has two concrete recommendations to make:

- PhD admissions should be a matter of full departmental control, i.e., admission decisions should be made by the full department or program. In more general

terms, graduate students should be seen as working in a department, not just with a single member of the Faculty.

- We wish to stress the great importance of creating a research culture (with regular research seminars; common space; opportunities for student-sponsored conferences, etc.) for both MA and PhD students. The creation of a research culture at the University is also the responsibility of the faculty and this should be a top priority.

At the same time, it must be clearly understood by all that it is unreasonable to expect that any but a very few of the best students will find academic positions. While the same can be said of many other parts of the world, it seems to us to be especially true in Israel. This observation has important implications for the traditionally heavy emphasis on doctoral programs at the Hebrew University.

The Committee is concerned about the low level of funding for all graduate programs (M.A. and Ph.D.) and for the effect that this low level has on the length of programs, again at both levels.

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

In many ways the campus on Mount Scopus is an elegant and inviting place. The gardens, the cafes, the art on display, and the public areas on the main level all contribute positively to the distinctive environment of the campus. But there are problems.

Offices

One of the recurrent complaints, from all sides (faculty, students and staff), is that the Faculty of Humanities is a physically unfriendly place, most notably on the upper levels of the building.. Indeed, for visitors or newcomers to the Hebrew University, it is a daunting task to find one's way to any office or classroom. Furthermore, the offices themselves are unsuitable places for study. They are small, isolated and not air-conditioned. **Thus it is little wonder that many faculty members spend as little time as possible in their offices.**

These physical conditions yield a number of negative consequences:

- Faculty spend as little time as possible in their office and in warm weather no time at all;
- Students rarely find professors in their office; this has a serious negative effect on advising;
- Faculty do not interact with one another because they are rarely there together; this is a serious barrier to the formation of departmental cultures;
- Students in Departments and Programs have no comfortable or inviting place to gather for academic, intellectual or social interactions.

It is the view of the Committee that serious renovations and planning must take place in order to make the Faculty of Humanities a congenial and effective working place for all -- faculty, students and staff.

Classrooms

We have heard from students and faculty that many classrooms lack adequate electrical outlets for the use of laptop computers. Similarly, few classrooms are provided with WiFi facilities. Along with this, few classrooms are provided with facilities for PowerPoint presentations or Internet access. In short, ‘smart classrooms’ are a pressing need.

The Web

At present, the Hebrew University Faculty of Humanities has an inadequate presence on the world-wide web. This state of affairs does a major injustice to the stellar faculty and departments at the Hebrew University, as well as to the outstanding research produced in these departments. Every department and program needs to prepare an up-to-date and attractive web-site, in English and Hebrew, with full information about the courses of study available, faculty profiles and information about special events and programs. Some departments already have such sites, others not at all. One solution might be to create a fellowship in Information Technology to be awarded to a graduate student in each department for the purpose of creating and maintaining the local website.

Such a program would display the prestige of the Hebrew University to the on-line world in a manner that reflects the real achievements of the Hebrew University and its faculty.

Library

In its most general terms, the problem of the library on Mount Scopus concerns its fundamental character and mission. Is it to be a reference library for undergraduate studies or a research library for all students and faculty? This issue must be addressed in a systematic fashion.

One particular area that requires careful attention is the future role of the library and its staff as an instructional unit of the university. Many university libraries now support such units and they have become an increasingly and indispensable important element in the educational mission. At the physical level this means creating a fully computerized teaching classroom in the library where faculty can send students for sessions on all aspects of research and writing. More importantly, at the level of personnel, this means hiring and/or developing library staff who are competent to teach these sessions. Such staff must be fully trained in the field of information technology. At the same time they must also be trained scholars, at least at the level of the MA, in one field or another. In short, they must have first-hand experience with the processes of research and writing. One possibility worth considering is whether a select group of MA students could be trained, and paid, to carry out these functions.

Another issue that requires attention concerns the protocols for library acquisitions. At present, the system appears to depend largely on recommendations from members of the faculty, with library staff functioning primarily as cataloguers. This system is seriously out of step with most academic libraries at major universities. Without entirely abandoning the option of faculty recommendations, the faculty and administration must undertake a serious analysis of the present system and consider significant changes for the future.

Special Needs

The Committee recommends that a room be set aside as a prayer site for Muslim students. This will be a small but meaningful gesture toward making Muslim students feel that they are fully members of the Hebrew University community.

Transportation

The separation of the two campuses (Mount Scopus and Givat Ram) is an unfortunate and inescapable fact of life. Not only does this separation reinforce the phenomenon of two cultures, noted long ago by C. P. Snow, but it makes it virtually impossible for students in the Humanities and Social Sciences to enroll in courses on the Givat Ram campus and vice versa. Indeed at least one excellent Program, Cognitive Science, is fully divided between the two campuses.

One obvious solution to this problem is to provide more frequent shuttle service for students between the two campuses. Another solution, with a view to the future possibility of requiring students on Mount Scopus to enroll in one or more courses at Givat Ram (and vice versa) would be to offer gateway courses, for instance, by Humanities and Social Science faculty on the Givat Ram campus (and vice versa).

CONCLUSION

Each member of the committee approached our mission with a strong commitment to the future of the Faculty of the Humanities at the Hebrew University. We believe that the faculty at the Hebrew University ranks highly in the world, and we are convinced that it is possible to maintain and strengthen this position for many years to come. The Faculty is currently at an important crossroads, and a rare opportunity has presented itself for thinking about the education currently offered to students at all levels, and for redefining priorities with regard to larger structures within which research and teaching are conducted. The recommendations in this report have been made with an eye to the unique position of the Hebrew University within the larger Israeli society, but also to its position within the broader international academic community. If the Faculty is to produce the future generations of leadership for Israeli society, it is necessary to instill in

students a broad and contoured view of society, and to provide them with the basic skills and analytical tools needed for them to succeed in their future roles. The Hebrew University has always succeeded in producing top-tier academic specialists, but it must also aim to produce knowledgeable and capable graduates.

We have recommended many significant changes in the curriculum, structure and infrastructure of the Faculty of the Humanities, and it will require a serious commitment on the part of the administration to provide the financial backing to ensure the success of these reforms. The successful implementation of these changes will also be dependent upon the cooperation of the faculty, and their willingness to adapt new views of their roles as teachers and advisors to BA students in particular. It is only with the cooperation and goodwill of all sides involved that we can expect any kind of success in the implementation of these recommendations. It is the hope of our committee that our work has implemented an essential process of dialogue and creative thinking, and that these processes will continue to shape any program for change in the Faculty of the Humanities.

John Gager, Princeton University (Chair) _____

On behalf of the committee members:

Averil Cameron, Oxford University

Gerhard Endress, Ruhr-Universität Bochum

Shelley Fisher Fishkin, Stanford University

Martin Goodman, Oxford University

Russell Hardin, New York University

Kay Shelemy, Harvard University