THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

The Department of Psychology

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Committee Members

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

• Psychology worldwide has become a laboratory-based natural science, and Psychology departments are increasingly located in the natural sciences

• Consistent with this trend, Psychology at Hebrew University has evolved as a laboratory based natural science, but remains in the Faculty of Social Sciences with resources determined by this affiliation

• Psychology at HU is a world class department in research quality, reputation, and funding; it has achieved a leadership position in Israel and is renowned internationally

• The excellence of psychology at HU cannot be maintained under current conditions; the department is at a tipping point
  o the Department has achieved success under conditions that would be intolerable in any other world-class Psychology department or in any natural sciences; however, the department’s ability to cope with these conditions has reached its limits
  o competition within and outside Israel is increasing
  o psychology can continue to prosper only if significant changes are implemented
  o without such changes Psychology will lose faculty and student recruits, research funding, and excellence

Recommendations

To maintain and increase excellence, the HU Psychology Department must obtain:
• a substantial increase in space, especially for laboratories
• financial resources appropriate to Psychology’s status as a natural and laboratory science, including startup costs, ongoing laboratory support, graduate fellowships, and staff support
• support for the ongoing transition from a traditional clinical psychology program to a cutting edge evidence-based clinical science program, including two additional protected faculty positions in clinical science to help promote this change
• markedly improved access to fMRI and other brain imaging technologies
• improved access to colleagues in the natural and medical sciences, including those in Life Sciences, ICNC, the Center for Rationality, and the proposed Neuroscience Institute
• support for implementing the department’s proposal to shift gradually away from offering MA degrees to an emphasis on the PhD program, consistent with other leading psychology departments
• year round daily access, without obstacles, to laboratories and offices

Implementing the Recommendations

• The entire Psychology Department should move physically to the Givat Ram campus, and administratively to the Faculty of Natural Sciences
• The Psychology Department should be situated in a new and separate Institute for Psychological and Cognitive Sciences. This institute would also be an appropriate home for the Department of Cognitive Science
• Faculty positions in the new institute should be protected for a period of five years, until Psychology’s integration with the natural sciences matures
• The Psychology Department should be a full partner in planning the proposed Neuroscience Institute in order to promote joint interests and synergy
• Everything possible should be done to establish a brain imaging center on the Givat Ram campus

Anticipated Benefits to the Psychology Department and Hebrew University

• HU will continue to lead Israel into the modern age of science-based psychology, staying at the forefront of developments in psychological and brain sciences
• Psychology at HU will spearhead the transformation of clinical psychology to evidence-based clinical science, and the production of the next generation of clinical academics
• Hebrew University will benefit from enhanced collaborations between Psychology and other units, including the Institute for Life Sciences, ICNC, the Center for Rationality, and the proposed Neuroscience Institute
• The move to Givat Ram will eliminate the need to maintain two separate animal facilities

• Positioning Psychology in the Natural Sciences, and at Givat Ram, will better serve science oriented students, including those in the highly successful Psychobiology and Cognitive Science programs

• Laboratories and offices will be readily accessible throughout the year, increasing research productivity

**Alternative Implementations of the Recommendations**

The committee considered the following alternative implementations but judged the first to be less desirable and the second undesirable, because they run counter to developments in Psychology worldwide, and fail to address critical needs.

*Maintain the Psychology Department on the Mt. Scopus campus while substantially increasing, space, facilities and funding*

This alternative would likely be as costly as a move to Givat Ram, would perpetuate the problems created by the placement of laboratory-based psychological sciences within the Faculty of Social Sciences, would continue the difficulties of laboratory and office access whenever the campus is closed, would continue to place obstacles in the way of collaborations with researchers at Givat Ram, and would not serve the needs of science-oriented students.

*Split the present Psychology Department, moving a subset of faculty and laboratories to another campus*

This alternative would eliminate a critical and long-standing component of Psychology departments worldwide, harm both the faculty who leave and those who stay, reduce the reputation of the department, hinder intra-departmental collaborations, harm the teaching mission of the department, leave in place many of the present structural problems, and pose a distinct possibility of dissolution of the department.