November 26, 2019

**Annual Meeting with Minority Faculty Members—Neubauer Scholars**

Held on November 26, 2019, in the Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Senate Building

Discussion of advancement of minorities at the Technion, students and faculty members, toward advanced studies and in general.

Participating: members of the Technion administration, Neubauer scholars, and faculty members from the Arab sector. For the full list, see the Appendix.

**The Director General, Professor Boaz Golani,** welcomed the participants: I’d like to give you greetings from the Neubauers, whom I met in Philadelphia together with the President, Professor Uri Sivan, and the Vice President for External Relations and Resource Development, Professor Alon Wolf.

They are satisfied with the program for the hiring of minorities to faculty positions. They feel that the program is a beacon for which similar programs at other universities will be created. At the Technion, we began the program with scholarships for faculty members and went on to a program for Ph.D. candidates.

We’re holding this annual encounter in order give the faculty members direct access to the Technion’s senior administration and to allow the administration to send a similar message. The Technion administration looks upon the minority faculty members from an egalitarian perspective, no different from all faculty members, and based on their personal performance.

I wish to note that Ashraf Brik was very helpful and active vis-à-vis the Neubauer family.

The administration was replaced in October 2019; we have a new president, Professor Uri Sivan, and new administration members. Let’s begin by introducing them.

**The President, Professor Uri Sivan—**This is a pleasing forum and I congratulate everyone from the previous administration who was involved, particularly Hossam, who spearheaded the project. I spent years on the Maof Scholarships advisory council and I saw there that the Technion candidates stood out relative to the other candidates, and it pleased me. My door is open to all of you.

Increasing the number of minority faculty members is an important task. The Neubauer family considers this sector a great success and they appreciate what’s been done. I’d also be pleased to see women and members of less-represented faculties here in this forum. There are minority women students, and thought should be invested in finding ways to promote the matter. We will continue to support this effort to the best of our ability. My impression is that it’s a process that fuels itself—the more minority faculty members there are, the more there will be and the faster the pace will be. At the master’s level, [כן? "בהסמכה"—ברמת המוסמכים?] the percent of minorities resembles that of the population and we hope to attain this also among members of the faculty.

**Professor Dan Givoli**—The Neubauers chose to give scholarships for baccalaureate studies, doctoral studies, and faculty members, but not for master’s students and post-docs. We have the feeling that there was a bottleneck at the master’s level. In the percent of undergrads who go on to master’s studies, there’s a large gap between the minority populations and the population at large, but between master’s and Ph.D. the disparity is smaller.

We are making an effort to spread information and encourage students to move on to master’s studies. There were excellent outcomes this year; the number of Ph.D. candidates who began the year nearly doubled relative to previous years. Twenty-eight doctoral candidates began this year, one-third of whom in the direct-path program. Many of them came from other universities in Israel. We’ve never seen this before. I credit this to Hossam’s efforts.

More than 50 percent of the doctoral candidates are women but they are not faculty members. We expect the wave to come ashore in the near future.

**President**—The unfavorable ratio of the number of women Ph.D. candidates and faculty members is a general problem in Arab society. We’re thinking about how to solve it. A focused effort at the post-doc level may be needed.

**On the right-hand side, in the azure-colored shirt (see photos)**—I believe patience will be needed in this matter. It’s also hard for women doctoral candidates to go on to post-doc because they don’t see women faculty members. The first woman post-doc who’ll come back and join the faculty will serve as an example for others and might attract others to follow her lead.

**Professor Hossam Haick**—I thank Professor Dan Givoli for his wonderful efforts to support the program. Twelve or thirteen minorities started the program each year but this year, as stated, we have twenty-eight. Today, faculty members are given encouragement to go on to post-docs. There are lots of women who want to go. Right now I can point to six women who want do to it but don’t have an opportunity because there aren’t any scholarships. The Planning and Budget Committee and the Council for Higher Education say, “Bring [us] a scholarship and we’ll subsidize [it],” but Rothschild and Fulbright scholarships can’t be subsidized. A third source is needed. This year, the Neubauer family did not support any Arab woman specifically.

We can do what they did at the Weizmann Institute: offer post-doctoral scholarships that will be done partly in Israel and only partly abroad. It’s an accepted process. If we do it for all the women at the Technion, Arab and Jewish alike, it’ll help.

**President**—It’s important to do a post-doc specifically abroad and it’s hard to survive academically if you don’t become part of the scientific community.

**Hossam**—The advisor can be from the foreign university and the host will be in Israel. The networking will be deficient but it’ll be better than nothing. I have two Jewish women doctoral candidates who could be wonderful faculty members and they can’t go.

**Professor Shimon Marom, Vice President, Academic Affairs**—I think it’s possible to consider something in small numbers and try it out. Let’s toss some ideas around and try to be proactive. In effect, we need the first [woman post-doc] and that’ll give a push to others.

**Director General**—I turn specifically to the group of Forum members who are pre-tenure and ask you what obstacles you’ve encountered and what you find challenging.

**Next to Hossam, in a dark blue sweater (see photos)—**I received a scholarship from the Planning and Budget Committee and they told me that I’d already received a Ph.D. scholarship and therefore I can’t get a post-doc scholarship. That’s why I didn’t do a post-doc back then. They changed the rules later on, but it’s an example of how you can’t keep going if there are no post-doc scholarships.

**Vice President, External Relations and Resource Development**—We’ve always had this matter of post-doc scholarships on the table. It’s pretty hard to raise funds for it; we remain dependent on outside players.

**Slender tall man in an azure-colored shirt on the right (see photos)**—I feel that the process of setting up and equipping the lab is taking a little long. I received a great deal after the post-doc and it took me awhile to focus. My mentor’s support was good and important. Lots of young people don’t know what it’s really like to be a faculty member. Today I already feel that I’m standing on my legs and have a vision.

**Vice President, External Relations and Resource Development, Professor Alon Wolf**—The process of establishing a lab is the only way to become a leader; it’s part of the process of becoming a faculty member. The more involved you are in building and setting up the lab, the more independent you’ll be as a faculty member.

**Professor Yousef Jabareen**—I’m sure the new administration will deal with our cause as the outgoing administration did. The Technion is doing splendid and appreciated work on the topic. Ninety-four percent of our minority graduates are working right after their studies; it’s socioeconomically encouraging.

Administrative staff—The Board of Governors asked for a detailed program on how to make progress in increasing the number of minority members of the administrative staff, but nothing systematic was done. There’s a general government program for the matter and it’s excellent. Something about this should trickle down from the administration to the deans. I feel that a glass ceiling exists and it ought to be torn down. An explicit plan to improve the state of affairs should be put together.

Women—It isn’t a cultural issue because Arab society has undergone a major change in this respect in the past five years. I think it’s basically a question of scholarships.

**Dean of the Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Professor Shlomo Bekhor**—I support what Hossam said: to do integrated post-doc [studies] in Israel and abroad. It’s important for some of the students who went for post-doc return to us, to the Technion, but it’s also important for some of them to go to other universities in Israel and vice versa. It’s also a positive addition to the State of Israel.

**President**—Important and profound points have come up here. The point that Oded brought up, the question of leadership and visibility, is important.

As for a glass ceiling, I think it’s wrong to yield on the criterion of excellence because that would work against us in the long term. The level of excellence should remain high.

I hope all of you find it comfortable to turn to the administration; our door is open to you.

**Participants in the encounter**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Prof. Uri Sivan | President |
| Prof. Oded Rabinovitch | Senior Executive Vice President |
| Prof. Boaz Golani | Vice President and Director General |
| Prof. Shimon Marom | Vice President, Academic Affairs |
| Prof. Alon Wolf | Vice President, External Relations and Resource Development |
| Prof. Dan Givoli | Dean of the Graduate School |
| Assistant Prof. Ayoub Nabieh | Faculty of Biology |
| Assistant Prof. Ramez Danial | Faculty of Biomedical Engineering |
| Dr. Firas Mawase | Faculty of Biomedical Engineering |
| Prof. Noam Adir | Dean, Faculty of Chemistry |
| Prof. Ashraf Brik | Faculty of Chemistry |
| Assistant Prof. Yousef Jabareen | Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning |
| Prof. Hossam Haick | Faculty of Chemical Engineering |
| Dr. Fadi Kizel | Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering |
| Assistant Prof. Jack Haddad | Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering |
| Prof. Yaron Paz | Vice Dean, Chemical Engineering |
| Prof. Mahmood Jabareen | Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering |
| Prof. Shady Farah | Faculty of Chemical Engineering |
| Prof. Shlomo Bekhor | Dean, Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering |