



**The Committee for the Evaluation of Public Policy and Administration
Study Programs**

The Hebrew University Evaluation Report

July 2011

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Chapter 1 - Background

At its meeting on October 07, 2008 the Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to evaluate study programs in the fields of public policy and administration during the academic year 2009-2010.

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. Steve Kelman- John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, USA – Committee Chair**
- **Prof. Eugene Bardach- Richard and Rhonda Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkley, USA¹**
- **Prof. Mark Kleiman- School of Public Affairs, University of California, Los Angeles, USA**
- **Prof. David Nachmias- Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy, Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya, Israel**
- **Prof. Michael Rothschild- Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University, USA**

Ms. Marissa Gross - Coordinator of the Committee on behalf of the Council for Higher Education.

Within the framework of its activity, the Committee was requested to:²

1. Examine the self-evaluation reports, submitted by the institutions that provide study programs in mathematics, 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 entire process was conducted in accordance with the CHE's Guidelines for Self-Evaluation (of October 2008).

¹ Prof. Bardach did not participate in the second round of visits for personal reasons.

² The Committee's letter of appointment is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Chapter 2 - Committee Procedures

The Committee members received the self-evaluation reports in October, 2010, and discussed them via email.

The Committee held its first meeting on December 14, 2010, during which it discussed fundamental issues concerning higher education in Israel, the quality assessment activity, as well as Public Policy and Administration study programs.

In December 2010, the Committee held its first cycle of evaluation, and visited the Hebrew University, Tel-Aviv University and Sapir Academic College. In March 2011 the Committee conducted its second evaluation cycle, and visited the University of Haifa and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. During the visits, the Committee met with various stakeholders at the institutions, including management, faculty, staff, students and alumni.

This report deals with the **Department of Public Policy, at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.**

The Committee's visit at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem took place on December 19-20, 2010. The schedule of the visit, including the list of participants from the institution, is attached as **Appendix 2.**

Chapter 3: Evaluation of the Department of Public Policy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

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.

Mission

The Federmann School is small; its self study lists six senior staff comprising 3.5 FTEs, although it has expanded somewhat since then. The school has two Master's programs: a small, elite program –Excellence is part of its name -- that aims to produce future leaders for Israel's public service and an Executive Education masters program; and a PhD. program. It also runs the Atidim program, which prepares Hebrew University undergraduates from the periphery in public policy. We got little information about Atidim; we will focus on the three graduate programs. The school also has a commitment to produce both public policy research and scholars who will produce public policy research. The school is entrepreneurial; it is actively – and apparently successfully – competing to run new programs in collaboration with the Israeli government and outside foundations.

The school although small has significant resources. It can offer more financial support to its students than any other Israeli public policy program. It is also ideally located for a public policy program -- its students can work part time in key government agencies, ambitious and talented government officials attend its executive education program, and some also serve as guest lecturer and adjunct professors.

The mission of the School was originally to develop “the new generation of professional civil servants that will provide the State of Israel – and Israeli society – with outstanding public service ... and to encourage the production and dissemination of policy-oriented research.” Soon afterward, the School – responding to a perceived lacuna -- reiterated its commitment to producing policy-oriented research and added as an explicit goal training researchers who would produce policy research.

Curriculum/Study Program

Some aspects of the program are excellent. Excellence Program students are dedicated and committed to public policy. We asked students if there was a “Federmann way of thinking” about public policy that they learned in program. We got similar answers. The “Federmann way of thinking,” we were told, begins with problem identification, then generates and evaluates alternative action, with a sensitivity to political factors that may affect policy adoption. That students share values and outlook is a considerable achievement. First year students take the same courses, which encourages the development of a common culture. The executive education program provides both useful skills and an opportunity for reflection according to its graduates,

Since the Excellence Program is small, some of the curriculum challenges we identified in the general report are urgent. With a large student body it is possible to teach quantitative methods at different levels and to offer some courses for those interested in research and others for those who want to acquire professional skills. When all students take the same courses and there are very few electives, a program must make hard choices, and it must work hard to make sure that the different aspects of the curriculum reinforce one another. We believe there is much room for improvement here.

In general the program seems to us too oriented towards a “policy studies” approach (as discussed in our general report) rather than a prescriptive one. We noticed this in a dramatic way in our discussions with Ph.D. students. All of their thesis topics were, in one way or another, in a policy studies tradition and self-consciously avoided prescriptive conclusions (see our further discussion below). Students receive essentially no prescriptive instruction in management and leadership – skills to train them how to manage an organization better, as opposed to understanding why an organization may behave the way it does. The organizational analysis course seems to focus on a very narrow range of topics that are far from the central concerns either of practicing managers or of scholars who study organizations.

This policy studies focus is perhaps not surprising, given that the discipline that is more influential than any other at the School, is political science, out of which the “policy studies” tradition emerged. However, we believe (and we note that three members of our committee are originally trained as political scientists) that this approach is

inconsistent with the mission of the School to train a new generation of excellent public servants, who need to learn to be better at intervening in government – designing good policies, getting them adopted, and managing them – not just at understanding why we see what we have seen.

As far as we can tell, based on the reading of the syllabi, the quantitative skills curriculum needs to be rethought completely. Principles that should guide this redesign are in our general report.

The Excellence Program tries to train both public policy professionals and researchers. The cost of serving both masters is that neither is served well. The tightly structured program -- with many requirements and few electives -- will not serve a perspective research student well. The training in research methods seems quite inadequate for those who intend to do research. The syllabi are not deep enough to prepare students for independent work. But the required masters thesis is often conceived of as the kind of open-ended thesis that a student who wanted a career in research would write. As a consequence, many students drop out of the excellence program before they have completed all requirements. At the same time, the program lacks the kind of integrated policy exercise that is an important requirement of many US public policy programs. We do not recommend that the Excellence Program copy American practices. We are asking that they think seriously about what role a required masters thesis plays in professional as opposed to research training. More generally we think the Excellence program would benefit from a clear focus on producing professionals rather than as a program that seeks to produce both professionals and researchers.

Federmann appears to be expanding its attention to executive education, which is sensible especially given that there are so many civil servants in Jerusalem. We were pleased to see that this year, for the first time, an executive education course will be open to masters students. We believe there are further opportunities for curricular synergies between executive and masters education.

Here we note a specific issue with the Federmann dissertations we discussed with students. The school's *raison d'être* is the need for an interdisciplinary approach to issues in public policy. Yet the dissertations seemed to us to be mostly straight political science, with a focus on "policy studies," to the exclusion of other approaches. We

learned that students were actively discouraged from supplementing their accounts of the evolution of particular policies with evaluations of policy outcomes in terms of such policy-analytic categories as efficiency, equity, and sustainability. One student writing about a major policy change had been explicitly told by his adviser that any evaluative statement about the change would be un-scholarly and un-professional. “Everybody has an opinion,” said the student, in the name of his adviser. It appears that students are being taught that positive statements about how policies develop are appropriate academic work, while evaluative (or, as the committee was told, “normative”) statements are not.

This strikes us as misguided. Even from a strictly positive viewpoint, the statement that a particular policy process systematically produces inefficient outcomes is an interesting one; where it is true, an account of the policy process that omits any mention of that tendency is, to that extent, deficient. Furthermore, while it makes sense for social scientists who have not been trained in evaluative methods to avoid opining about policies, it should be the specific competence of students of public policy to be capable of using rigorous analytic methods to judge the relative advantages and disadvantages of alternative policies. That is not to say that they should claim the authority to choose some best policy, only that they should, where appropriate, make evaluative claims as carefully and convincingly as they make descriptive and theoretical claims. The norm of purely positive analysis is not universal across the social sciences; a considerable amount of contemporary research in economics uses techniques such as benefit-cost analysis to make judgments about policies.

Faculty and Governance

The senior faculty of the Federmann School is small and largely junior. Top leadership has historically come mostly from outside the school. No school faculty serve on the committee responsible for hiring new faculty. The head of the school at the time of our visit was a full-time member of the political science department.

Leadership from outside is not unprecedented in public policy schools. Public policy programs are relatively young. Perforce their creators have been outsiders. Even today the overwhelming majority of public policy faculty were not educated or trained in

public policy programs. However, successful public policy programs grow up quickly and govern themselves. Public policy is both interdisciplinary and focused. As schools develop, they come to understand what works for them and what does not. Outsiders, no matter how skilled and devoted, lack the experience and knowledge to govern a mature school. Federmann must make that transition. In particular, we think that Federmann needs to escape the confines of a political science approach to studying public policy.

We do believe that, as things currently stand, Federmann has not lived up to its potential. The School has many really important resources: money, location, and really good students. Given these advantages, we don't feel students are learning enough from the program (see below). The School's faculty is weaker than we would wish, especially in economics and management, and strengthening faculty quality would appear to be a high priority. Beyond the observations we have made, we have no firm conceptions of how Federmann should become self-governing – we don't know enough to make more specific recommendations. But we do believe that the University needs to give Federmann a jolt so the School can live up to its considerable potential. We believe that some form of greater self-governance, led by outstanding faculty fully committed to Federmann, is an important part of any turnaround effort.

Students

That the Federmann students, due to the generosity of an important donor, are able at least in their first year to participate in the program fulltime, is an enormous advantage. Since most need not work at another job during their first year of study, Excellence Program students can devote more time and energy to their studies than those in less well funded graduate programs. We also believe that the modest size of the Excellence program is a strength. It makes it easier to have smaller class sizes and better student-faculty contact, which create a better potential for actually imparting the knowledge and skills a student should receive in a public policy program. Furthermore, our impression was that these students were very smart and that they could express themselves well. Given all these advantages, we were disappointed with the impressions we got from students about what they had learned from the program.

Research

Looking only at the publications of the faculty members, we find the research record to be diverse and moderately productive. Collectively, they publish at a respectable, although not highly impressive, rate and, with the exception of one relatively non-academic culture critic, mostly in English. (About half the publications of another faculty member are in Hebrew, but a substantial number are also in English.) The journals in which they publish tend to be mid-ranking, occasionally slightly higher. Faculty members published articles in journals, such as *International Journal of Public Administration, Governance, Policy Studies Journal, Regulation and Governance, Comparative Political Studies, British Journal of Political Science, Policy and Politics, Public Choice*, and *Journal of Economic Growth*. No information on the citations of publications and other research work by the faculty members of the school was provided in the self-evaluation report.

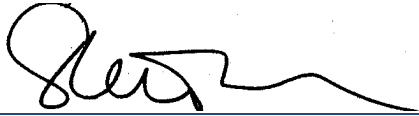
It is particularly striking how diverse are the fields represented. On the one hand, this might suggest that the core faculty have little in common when it comes to research and writing; on the other, it might suggest a rich mix of different interests and personalities.

Chapter 4: Recommendations

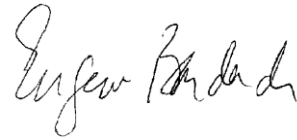
All of the recommendations in our General Report apply to the Hebrew University. In addition, we make the following specific recommendations:

1. The Federmann School needs leadership consisting of high-quality, respected faculty from inside the School to take charge of an effort to help the School realize its as-yet unrealized potential.
2. School faculty should play a central role in the committee to hire new faculty.
3. Upgrading the quality and seniority of faculty in economics and organizational behavior/management should be a priority.
4. The school should look for further opportunities to share courses between executive education and the masters program, and ways there can be curricular or other cross-fertilization between executive and masters education, particularly in terms of giving the masters program a greater professional content.
5. In our general report we recommend eliminating the masters' thesis. Since the faculty recognizes that the thesis requirement is a main reason that students do not complete the program our recommendation seems particularly apposite. We do appreciate that Federmann faculty believe that graduation should entail some kind of capstone project . There are many such projects that enrich professional education. An example is a policy paper for a real client -- possibly after a stint as an intern.

Signed By:




Prof. Steve Kelman, Chair



Prof. Eugene Bardach



Prof. Mark Kleiman



Prof. David Nachmias



Prof. Michael Rothschild

Appendix 1: Letter of Appointment



שר החינוך
Minister of Education
وزير التربية والتعليم

October 12, 2010

Prof. Steve Kelman
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University
USA

Dear Professor Kelman,

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 Public Policy and Administration.

The composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Steve Kelman (Chair), Prof. Eugene Bardach, Prof. Mark Kleiman, Prof. David Nachmias, Prof. Michael Rothschild.

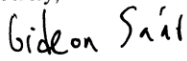
Ms. Marissa Gross will coordinate the Committee's activities.

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כתובת אתר המשרד: <http://www.education.gov.il>

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 a member of this most important committee.

Sincerely,



Gideon Sa'ar
Minister of Education,
Chairperson, The Council for Higher Education

Enclosures: Appendix to the Appointment Letter of Evaluation Committees

cc: Ms. Riki Mendelzvaig, Secretary of the Council for Higher Education
Ms. Michal Neumann, Head of the Quality Assessment Division
Ms. Marissa Gross, Committee Coordinator

Public Policy – Schedule of site visit- The Hebrew University

Sunday December 19, 2010

Time	Subject	Participants
8:15-9:00	Opening session with the heads of the institution and the senior staff member appointed to deal with quality assessment	Prof. Menahem Ben-Sasson, President Prof. Sarah Stroumsa, Rector Prof. Yaacov Schul, Vice-rector (President's office, Minhala Bldg., 2nd floor, Room 506)
9:00-9:45	Meeting with the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences	Prof Avner De-Shalit, Dean (All meetings will be held in the School of Public Policy, room 1750, The Faculty of Humanities).
9:45-10:30	Meeting with the academic head of the School of Public Policy	Prof. Dan Avnon , Head, Federmann School of Public Policy & Government
10:30-11:30	Meeting with Teaching Committee & Heads Of Academics Programs	Dr Momi Dahan , Head Of Honors Program Dr Raanan Sulitziano Kenan , Head of EMPP Dr Anat Gofen , Head of Atidim Program [cadets] Galit Cohen-Blainstein - Coordinator, MA Theses
11:30-12:15	Lunch with junior academic staff	Dr Daniel Sperling, Dr Claude Berrebi, Dr Sharon Gilad
12:15-12:45	Tour of campus (classes, library, offices of faculty members, computer labs etc.)	Prof Dan Avnon
12:45-13:30	Meeting with doctoral students	
13:30-14:15	Closed-door working meeting of the committee	

Monday December 20, 2010

Time	Subject	Participants
09:00-09:30	Steering Committee	Prof Moshe Maor Prof Joseph Zeira (All meetings will be held in the School of Public Policy, room 1750, The Faculty of Humanities).
9:30-10:00	Meeting with adjunct lecturers from the HU academic staff	Dr. Gail Talshir
10:00 – 10:30	Meeting with adjunct lecturers	Mr. Yarom Ariav Mr. Ran Cohen
10:30-12:00	Observation-Lecture	Dr Momi Dahan Economic & Public Policy
12:00-12:45	Meeting with masters students	
12:45-13:45	Lunch	
13:45-14:30	Meeting with Alumni	
14:30-14:45	Closed-door working meeting of the committee	
14:45-15:30	Summation meeting with heads of department	Prof Dan Avnon
15:30-16:00	Summation meeting with heads of the institution	Prof. Sarah Stroumsa, Rector Prof. Yaacov Schul, Vice-rector (Rector's office, Minhala Bldg. 1st floor, Room 408)

* The heads of the institution and academic unit or their representatives will not attend these meetings.

*** The visit will be conducted in English with the exception of students who may speak in Hebrew and anyone else who feels unable to converse in English.