



**Committee for the Evaluation of Political Science and International Relations
Programs**

**Ben Gurion University
Department of Politics and Government
Evaluation Report**

September 2011

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Chapter 1: General Background

During its meeting on October 7, 2008, the Council for Higher Education (hereafter: CHE) decided to evaluate departments in the fields of Political Science and International Relations.

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. Thomas Risse, Otto Suhr Institute for Political Science, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany– Committee Chair**
- **Prof. Gabriel Ben Dor, School of Political Sciences, University of Haifa, Israel¹**
- **Prof. Benjamin Jerry Cohen, Department of Political Science, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA**
- **Prof. Abraham Diskin, Department of Political Science, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel and Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy, and Strategy, Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya, Israel²**
- **Prof. Galia Golan, Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy, Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya, Israel³**
- **Prof. Ellen Immergut, School of Social Sciences, Humboldt University Berlin, Germany⁴**
- **Prof. Robert Lieber, Department of Government, Georgetown University, USA⁵**
- **Ms. Marissa Gross, Coordinator of the Committee on behalf of the CHE.**

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

*Examine the self-evaluation reports, which were submitted by institutions that provide study programs in Political Science and International Relations.

*Present the CHE with final reports for the evaluated academic units and study programs – a separate report for each institution, including the committee’s findings and recommendations.

*Submit to the CHE a general report regarding its opinion as to the examined field within the Israeli system of higher education with recommended standards.

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

¹ Prof. Gabriel Ben Dor did not participate in the evaluation of the University of Haifa.

² Prof. Abraham Diskin did not participate in the evaluation of the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya.

³ Prof. Galia Golan did not participate in the evaluation of the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya. Prof. Golan did not sign this report on Ben Gurion University and wrote a minority opinion (see p. 17).

⁴ Prof. Ellen Immergut did not participate in the visits of Open University, Ben Gurion University, and Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya.

⁵ Prof. Robert Lieber did not participate in the first round of visits.

The first stage of the quality assessment process consisted of self-evaluation, including the preparation of a self-evaluation report by the institutions under evaluation. This process was conducted in accordance with the CHE's guidelines as specified in the document entitled "The Self-Evaluation Process: Recommendations and Guidelines" (October 2008).

Chapter 2: Committee Procedures

The Committee held its first formal meetings on February 15, 2011. At this meeting committee members were given an overview of higher education in Israel and a description of the Israeli CHE. They also discussed Political Science and International Relations programs in Israel and fundamental issues concerning the committee's quality assessment activity. Committee members had received copies of the departmental reports before this date.

During February 2011 committee members conducted full-day visits to three institutions whose programs the committee was requested to examine: Academic College of Tel Aviv Yaffo, Bar Ilan University and Tel Aviv University. In May 2011, committee members visited the University of Haifa, Open University, Ben Gurion University and the Interdisciplinary Center.

This report deals with the Department of Politics and Government at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Studies at Ben Gurion University. The Department of Politics and Government was founded in 1998 and originally offered only BA degrees. In 2009, the department opened a Master's program and a year later a one year-international MA program. During the 2009-2010 school year, 407 BA students, 21 Master's students, and 5 doctoral students were enrolled in the Department. The department is comprised of 10 faculty members.

The Committee's visit to Ben Gurion University took place on May 18-19, 2011.

The committee spent two days of intensive meetings. It also had an opportunity to see the libraries and other facilities, and meet with appropriate administrators, tenure and tenure-track faculty, adjunct faculty, and BA, MA and PhD students. We thank the appropriate individuals for their involvement in our proceedings. Their input allowed us to explore many of the issues raised in the self-study report.

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

Chapter 3: Evaluation of the Department of Politics and Government, Ben Gurion University

** 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.*

3.1 Mission, Goals and Aims

Ben Gurion University of the Negev was created in the years 1969-1973. Its mission and purpose, reflecting the location in Beer-Sheva and in an underserved region, is officially described in terms of four objectives: first, to assist in the development and advancement of the State of Israel and the Negev; second, to develop and advance education, teaching and research in all fields of human knowledge; third, to help crystallize the spiritual and cultural values of Israel and assist in developing the society and economy; and fourth, to help in spiritual and cultural absorption of Jewish immigrants and to develop academic programs for Jews outside of Israel. Within the University, the mission of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences is to advance the understanding of human behavior, society and culture through education and research. In doing so, many students are to be prepared for careers in a variety of professions, while others will study to broaden their horizons and enrich their lives. Faculty research is to promote a better understanding of individual and social behavior and a deeper understanding of Israeli and other cultures. Knowledge is to contribute to the spiritual and material development of the people of the Negev, Israel and the world.

Within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Department of Politics and Government was established in 1998. It describes itself as the youngest political science department in Israel. It enrolls large numbers of BA and MA students, many of whom express satisfaction with living in Beer Sheva, with the overall atmosphere for undergraduate life at the university, and with their experiences in the department. In its own mission statement, the Department writes that its uniqueness is reflected in its use of the name Politics and Government, rather than the more common Political Science, which it believes signals its own de-emphasis of the role of science in the study of politics. While the term “Politics and Government” does not appear to be too unusual abroad,⁶ the Department commits itself to combining classic political science with an interdisciplinary approach, alongside a “solid commitment to good citizenship and community activism.” Members of the faculty are to actively engage in research and practical projects enabling them to contribute their expertise and to learn from the world of political organizations, grass roots movements and daily democratic practices.

⁶ A number of important and well established departments elsewhere have long been called “Government” (Harvard, Georgetown, Cornell), “Politics” (Princeton), “Government and Politics” (Maryland), and thus the name of the BGU Department is not unique.

The Department aims to prepare its students for engagement in Israeli political and social life which reflects the mission of the university. However, the committee is concerned that the study of politics as a scientific discipline may be impeded by such strong emphasis on political activism. It is an appropriate mission to encourage students to become active citizens and engage in politics. It is also a normal activity for faculty carrying out research and teaching in politics and government to be engaged in the politics of the society that constitutes their environment. And certainly, political science instructors are entitled to have their own opinion and to express them in class.

But the strong emphasis on “community activism” emphasized by the Department raises at least two questions. First, are students receiving a sufficiently rigorous foundation in the discipline of politics and government to equip them with a necessary grounding in the important ideas and understandings common to the subject and the discipline? At the moment, the committee sees major weaknesses with regard to the Department’s core discipline of Political Science which need to be addressed immediately. Second, is there a balance of views in the curriculum and the classroom? Particularly, political science instructors should see to it that their own opinions are expressed as personal views so that students can take a critical perspective and that there is a broad exposure to alternative perspectives in order to widen and deepen their own understanding.

The committee recognizes that the university leadership and the Department are mindful of these concerns and that the Department itself has begun to make some efforts to address these problems. The committee strongly recommends that these efforts be continued, and deepened. There is a case to be made for a program that distinguishes itself by an emphasis on engagement in society, but the effective implementation of this goal requires an improved grounding in the theoretical and analytical foundations of politics and government as well as a sustained commitment to providing balance and an essential range of viewpoints and perspectives on the great issues of politics.

Such grounding must be based on disciplinary anchoring in the field of political science. At the moment, the Department is too weak in its core discipline of political science in terms of number of faculty, curriculum, and research. The committee believes that this situation needs to be changed immediately and that the Department should institute major changes toward strengthening its disciplinary and methodological core through both hiring more faculty and altering its study programs (see below). Ben Gurion University and the MALAG should support these efforts, for example, by allocating university resources to this end and by monitoring the situation closely. If these changes are nevertheless not implemented, the majority of the committee believes that, as a last resort, Ben Gurion University should consider closing the Department of Politics and Government.

3.2 The Study Program

The Department has defined its mission as being different from other departments in the country in two major ways. The double mission is to be multi-disciplinary, on the one hand, and to be socially and/or politically involved, on the other hand. Yet, on paper, the study program does not differ greatly from the more or less conventional programs in the other universities in the

country. Special courses that truly emphasize social involvement do not really exist, and the preparation of the students for that kind of activity is not done in formal courses.

A more general and pressing need is simply to make sure there are more courses in the central discipline of political science. While the formal and substantive self-definition of the “Department of Politics and Government” expands the boundaries of the concept of politics, the disciplinary basis is still that of political science, and it is not strong enough. There are not enough courses in the discipline, a point noted by the committee and made by students and by leading faculty. The Department itself is aware of this and is beginning to move in the right direction. The committee strongly encourages and supports such effort. The essentials of political science must be taught in the core courses of the study program and the curriculum needs to be changed accordingly and immediately.

This point is even more important in light of the emphasis on the multi-disciplinary (or interdisciplinary) nature of the program. In such programs, there is a need for students to acquire sound fundamentals of at least one discipline, so as not to lack exposure to the basics of modern scholarship in at least one major relevant area. In a Department of Politics and Governments, this core discipline is political science.

The study program also must be strengthened in the methodological area. The amount of credits devoted to research methods in both the BA and the MA program is extremely low. Thus, there is only one required research related course at the BA level – “Approaches and Methods in Political Science Research” (second year, first semester, 3 credits, 2 weekly teaching hours, 2 weekly exercise hours). Students at all levels and alumni complained about the limited share of methodological training in the department. We understood that there is no faculty member capable of teaching this course, and that it has been taught and will be taught by external teachers. We were also told that an elective research methods workshop will be added to the curriculum next year.

We strongly recommend, therefore, that future hiring include political scientists and those who are capable of teaching research methods and that the number of courses devoted to methodology – both quantitative and qualitative – be raised significantly in both the BA and MA curricula. This would ensure that the students acquire the necessary skills for a broad political science education and for advanced study.

One way in which the Department could integrate its commitment to social and political activism in the curriculum would be to add an internship program, and to support this program with courses that allow students to make theoretical sense of their internship experiences and that teach the scholarly foundations of political practice or activity. The Department does have workshops and study tours which facilitate at least a practical acquaintance with the real world of politics, and this is apparently in tune with the general direction the department would like to take. Yet, the committee was told that there was only one elective course that offered practical experience. Students wanted more such courses and/or internships, particularly in local government, the Knesset as well as NGOs. The committee endorses these views. It also recommends that serious and constant supervision by the faculty should be exercised at all times to make sure that the scholarly standards of such activities are upheld, and that the assignments, grades and

other components of the course-work and internships are in accordance with the academic standards to which the department aspires.

Another issue which came up during discussions and conversations with the students and the faculty had to do with the problem of balance in the curriculum and in the classroom (see above). Some BA students kept referring to this perception of lack of balance. Any department which emphasizes political engagement as a major objective of its mission has to pay special attention to this question, and criticism from various ends of the public spectrum are almost inevitable. The Department seems aware of this problem and appears to be taking steps to address it. It is also important to note that the majority of students emphasized that the people in charge were willing to listen to them when they identified problems and brought them to the attention of the faculty in the department. The committee appreciates the steps made by the new chair and his colleagues in this regard, and it strongly encourages them to continue these efforts with even greater intensity in the future. In addition to making the program more balanced, the Department should also make an effort that it is perceived as such by the community concerned.

Several students also feel that the program as such is not sufficiently structured. After the first year, there seems to be a rather eclectic set of courses, and they seem to lack a coherent focus. While some students like the freedom of choice implied in this situation, others feel that their course of studies in the department is simply too eclectic. The committee shares the view that the program is not sufficiently structured and recommends, therefore, to make the program more coherent after the first year. We suggest that the Department look at other political science curricula in Israel in order to make its own study program more coherent.

The department has a distinct area of strength in its European studies program, which is fairly unique in Israel. This includes the only Jean Monnet Chair in Israel. We recommend to further build up this program as a unique selling point of the Department and to ensure that the faculty involved have a solid disciplinary basis in political science.

The committee also appreciates efforts by the Department of Politics and Government to cooperate more closely with the Department of Public Policy. We recommend to continue these efforts and to move toward joint degree programs, once the political science component of the Department has been strengthened.

MA students would like to have a more diverse set of courses offered, and they would also like to have courses, which are substantially different from those in the BA program. This aspiration, however, does not seem realistic, given the fact that there are not enough political science faculty to teach even the required BA courses. As a result, the very value of the MA program in its present form is doubtful. The committee recommends, therefore, to hire more faculty in the core discipline of political science (including quantitative and qualitative methods, see above) in order to be able to offer a suitable MA program with a diverse set of courses including an English-language program.

The committee has an additional concern about the Department's commitment to training Ph.D. students. According to its "Update" of 29 March 2011, the Department currently has nine Ph.D., students and expects the number to increase to fourteen in the next academic year. We do not find this a suitable undertaking at the present time. Effective Ph.D. programs require extensive

time commitments by faculty, conscientious mentoring, strong disciplinary emphasis, and sufficient numbers of both faculty and doctoral students for regular seminars and colloquia. The Department lacks these resources, and the situation is exacerbated by the problems cited above. There is little justification for the present commitment, and the committee strongly advises against a PhD program in the current situation.

3.3 Faculty

Regular Faculty

The Department's faculty (tenured and tenure track) appear to be a very close, integrated group from very diverse disciplines. Everyone in the faculty praised the collegiality, cooperation and mutual support within the Department as well as what they described as the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary nature of the Department. Particularly noted was the attention and advice accorded to junior faculty in their research, and the value of the Departmental Research Seminar. The relatively small faculty do, in fact, come from diverse disciplines (Medicine, Geography, History, Sociology) which undoubtedly enriches the Department. Yet, this raises questions regarding needed backgrounds and research in the discipline of political science as the core discipline of the Department. Of the nine tenure track and tenured faculty, only four are political scientists by training.

The others are engaged in related fields, such as Political-Geography, Public Policy in Health, Holocaust Studies, Political Sociology, and the like. On the whole, the faculty themselves see this not only as an advantage but also as part of their interest in interdisciplinarity.

The number of faculty, whether political scientists or not, is far too small for the number of students (there is currently a 1:43 faculty-student ratio). The faculty's time is additionally stretched by administrative tasks, which fall in particular on the few senior faculty. One result is that the Department relies on adjunct faculty for 30-50% of its courses. The Department presently has one more "line" open, which will bring their total faculty to 10. The Department believes that it needs 16-18 faculty to cover their present needs and allow for expansion, including a PhD program. At the moment, there is clearly not sufficient faculty for a PhD program. As a result and given the shortcomings in the Department's disciplinary core and the study programs (see above), the committee strongly recommends that the Department be given the permission to hire three to four more faculty in its core discipline of political science, particularly in (quantitative) methodology and in European studies, a unique strength of the Department.

The committee heard no complaints regarding hiring or promotion practices in the Department. Two of the lecturers were hired from the ranks of the adjuncts, and the tenure/promotion record of the Department was considered very good. Tenure has never been denied a candidate put up for promotion, but one or two cases were mentioned of lecturers who would not have been put up for promotion had they remained. We recommend that common standards of scholarly achievements and excellence are emphasized in the process of hiring and promotion.

Adjuncts

The adjuncts expressed enthusiastic satisfaction with the atmosphere and the attitude towards them in the Department. They said that they were included in all the Department functions, faculty meetings, and research. They also receive support and feed-back in their own research and believe that will be considered when there is hiring for tenure track positions. In fact two adjuncts were hired to tenure track positions recently. Nonetheless, the nature of the “adjunct” position, namely the number of hours they teach and the need to teach in several places (in order to make a living), limits their time for research and therefore their ability to compete for regular faculty positions. As mentioned above, the committee is particularly concerned about the fact that 30-50% of the core courses in the study programs are taught by adjuncts rather than regular faculty. This serves as a further argument to increase the number of regular faculty in political science.

3.4 Students

BA Students

The BA students were enthusiastic about the availability and openness of the faculty (and Department administration), noting the attention and concern for students’ welfare as well as studies. Some said that they were attracted to the Department because of its emphasis on activism. Similarly, some students claimed that the studies were not particularly challenging while others said that they were (especially political economy, political theory, political geography). There was agreement that the courses emphasized critical thinking and activism. The former was apparent in the lively and very articulate discussion that took place among the students when the matter of political bias came up. There was general agreement that a clear political leaning was apparent in the courses but that students seemed to be able to express different views. The committee has no further recommendation with regard to the BA students other than to reiterate the points made above concerning the study programs and the faculty.

MA Students

The discussion with the MA students was almost identical to that of the BA students: great enthusiasm about the open, caring and cooperative attitude of the faculty and the atmosphere in the department, along with satisfaction with the emphasis on activism. Of a critical nature, they spoke of the limited span of fields in the Department, the limited variety (more of the same, for those who had done their BA there as well), though the Department was open to their taking courses outside the Department. Similarly, due to the small number of faculty, students had to seek thesis supervisors outside the Department. In response to the Committee’s query, the discussion of the political orientation of the Department was very similar to that of the BA students. They said that the political orientation of the faculty and of the courses was clear but that one was free to go to other courses and that students were encouraged to be critical even of the lecturers. The committee has commented on these issues above and sees no need for further recommendations here.

PhD students

The PhD students appear to receive substantial attention from the faculty as well as strong encouragement in their academic pursuits. PhD students are also required to present their research at the Departmental Research Seminar, but there is no formal PhD seminar or workshop. Presumably this is because the Department does not have its own PhD program but faculty nonetheless supervise political science students pursuing a PhD. This clearly stretches still further the small faculty in the Department and, although the PhD students did not complain about access or time with their supervisors (the opposite was the case), it is hard to understand how the Department can in fact sustain PhD students with such a small faculty. The committee, therefore, repeats its concerns about supervision of PhD students – let alone the move toward a PhD program – in light of the lack of faculty, particularly in political science.

The PhD students' major complaint was that they do not have the financial means sufficient to be able to devote as much time as they want to their studies. This is a general problem of PhD studies in Israel which we will address in our general report.

Alumni

With regard to their studies in the Department, alumni pointed with satisfaction to the link between theory and practice. Those who were doing advance studies (elsewhere) definitely felt that they were up to the same level as graduate students from other universities. They valued the emphasis on activism which, in the case of one of them, had put the student on the path to become head of an NGO as an undergraduate and a high position today in the World Jewish Congress. However, alumni were critical of the level of the BA studies, claiming that the courses were too easy and that there should be required courses after the first year. We have addressed these issues above.

On the whole, the committee was impressed by the diversity of students (particularly the BA students) and alumni who almost unanimously expressed great enthusiasm for the Department's mission of combining academic studies and social activism. Though we have real concerns about this mission and the Department's weaknesses in its core discipline of political science (see above), we do note that – judging from student and alumni comments in our meetings – there does seem to be substantial satisfaction with their experience at the Department.

3.5 Research

The committee feels that the research performance of the Department can be improved considerably. As the mission statement points out, members of the faculty are to actively engage in research and practical projects enabling them to contribute their expertise and to learn from the world of political organizations, grass roots movements and daily democratic practices. Yet, an examination of faculty publications raises concerns about the department's research. Members of

the department have raised the equivalent of more than 700,000 USD in research grants since December 2009 which is certainly impressive. Yet, the new publications mentioned in the “update” to the evaluation report are less extraordinary. While many books were published by good academic publishers, few books in the materials presented to the committee were published by leading university presses and none of the articles mentioned were published by leading political science journals. A junior faculty member whose research focuses on European issues demonstrates an encouraging exception. In the original report, which covered a five-year period, only a couple of articles of all faculty members combined were published in leading political science journals. During the whole period examined approximately 30 articles were published by faculty members in political science journals covered by Thomson ISI

The committee recommends, therefore, to strengthen the overall research performance of the Department and to spell out more clearly individual performance criteria for tenure and promotion criteria, in line with MALAG’s general criteria. One could also develop an incentive system such as additional research funding in case of successful publications in major journals or with leading university publishers, start-up grants to help faculty with the application process for research grants, and the like. Acquisition of research grants should also be an explicit part of the criteria for promotion and tenure.

3.6 Broader Organizational Structure

The Department of Politics and Government is one of some twenty departments formally located in Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences under the general authority of the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, who in turn reports directly to the Rector. Day-to-day management of the Department is the responsibility of the Chair, although much work is apparently delegated to senior academic staff through a network of key committees. Overall, the Department’s organizational structure seems to function reasonably well with a high degree of collegiality.

3.7 Infrastructure

We find little reason to question the overall adequacy of the physical and administrative infrastructure available to the Department’s study program. The Department is located on the sixth floor of the social sciences building, a relatively new structure on the University’s main campus, with 17 rooms available for academic and administrative staff, each equipped with a computer and internet access. Classroom space also appears to be adequate with all the necessary equipment. The administrative staff, we were assured, is first rate.

One specific problem we noted was a lack of sufficient space for graduate students and adjunct professors. Another was the computer lab, which is very small with only six computers. The biggest challenge, however, is the library, which is woefully inadequate. One central library serves the entire campus, with just a single floor dedicated to all of the social sciences. The collection of books in political science is small and starved of funds, and access to electronic

journals is sadly incomplete. The committee strongly recommends that more resources be made available to the library if the Department's educational function is to be served adequately.

3.8 Quality assessment

The Department appears to have a well developed set of internal procedures for quality assessments, including regular reviews of the study program and teaching surveys. We were particularly impressed by the new chair's decision to institutionalize regular meetings with graduate students to assess the quality of instruction on an ongoing basis. However, in light of the changes to the number of faculty and study programs recommended in this report, the committee suggests that the Department prepares an annual progress report with regard to the implementation of these recommendations.

Chapter 4: Recommendations

4.1 Congratulatory Remarks

In its mission statement, the Department of Politics and Government commits itself to combining classic political science with an interdisciplinary approach, alongside a “solid commitment to good citizenship and community activism.” Members of the faculty are to actively engage in research and practical projects enabling them to contribute their expertise and to learn from the world of political organizations, grass roots movements, and daily democratic practices. While the committee has major concerns about the weaknesses in the Department’s core discipline of political science, we agree that engagement in politics and society is a normal and appropriate activity for those who teach and do research in politics and government, as long as this does not overshadow academic work. The committee appreciates the efforts that the new chair and his colleagues are making to come to terms with these issues and to improve the academic standards of the program.

The committee was impressed by the collegiality of the faculty which appear to be a very close, integrated group that benefits from their diverse disciplines. Particularly noted was the attention and advice accorded to junior faculty in their research, and the value of the Departmental Research Seminar. The committee also appreciates the diversity of students and alumni who expressed enthusiasm for the Department’s mission of combining academic studies and social activism.

4.2 Recommendations

Mission of the Department

With regard to the Department’s mission to combine academic excellence with social activism, the committee recommends

- that the Department corrects its current weaknesses in its core discipline of political science in terms of number of faculty, curriculum, and research;
- that the Department institutes major changes toward strengthening its disciplinary and methodological core through both hiring more political science faculty and altering its study programs;
- that Ben Gurion University and the MALAG support these efforts, for example, by allocating university resources and by monitoring the situation closely.

If these changes are nevertheless not implemented, the majority of the committee believes that, as a last resort, Ben Gurion University should consider closing the Department of Politics and Government.

Study Programs and Students

With regard to the study programs and the students, the committee recommends

- that the curriculum be changed immediately with regard to adding more core political science courses as required courses and to teaching the essentials of political science in these cores courses;
- that the number of courses devoted to methodology – both quantitative and qualitative - be raised dramatically in both the BA and the MA curricula;
- that the BA program be made more coherent after the first year;
- that a regular internship program be introduced into the curriculum and that this program be supported with courses allowing students to make theoretical sense of their internship experiences;
- that serious and constant supervision by the faculty be exercised at all times to make sure that the scholarly standards of internships and other activities are upheld and that the assignments, grades and other components of the course-work and internships are in accordance with academic standards to which the department aspires;
- that instructors see to it that their own opinions are expressed as personal views so that students can take a critical perspective and that there is a broad exposure to perspectives and alternatives;
- that the Department makes an effort that the program is perceived as balanced by the community concerned;
- that the Department cooperate more closely with the Department of Public Policy and that it moves toward joint degree programs, once the political science component of the department has been strengthened;
- that no PhD program be introduced and that the number of PhD students be greatly limited at the moment.

Faculty and Research

With regard to the faculty and to research, the committee recommends

- that the Department be given permission to hire three to four more faculty in the core discipline of political science, particularly in the areas of (quantitative) methodology and European studies;
- that the European studies program be sustained and built up as a unique selling point of the Department and that the faculty involved be required to have a solid disciplinary basis in political science;
- that common standards of scholarly achievements and excellence are emphasized in the process of hiring and promotion;

- that the number of adjuncts be reduced, commensurate with adding regular faculty, and that the existing adjunct professors be given adequate office space;
- that an incentive system be developed to improve research performance, such as additional research funding in case of successful publications in major journals or with leading university publishers, start-up grants to help faculty with the application process for research grants, and the like;
- that considerably more resources be made available to the library for the social sciences, both with regard to the collection of books and electronic resources including journals.

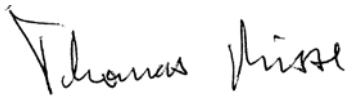
Minority Opinion by Prof. Galia Golan

I agree with most everything in the Report with the exception of the section of the report on the Mission plus the two Recommendations emanating from this.

I do not see how, as stated in the Mission section of the Report, “the study of politics as a scientific discipline may be impeded by such a strong emphasis on political activism.” I fail to see the connection, which actually is repeated in the statement that the “strong emphasis on community activism raises two questions.” I agree with the content of the first question listed, namely, “are students receiving a sufficiently rigorous foundation in the discipline of politics and government to equip them with a necessary grounding in the important ideas and understandings common to the subject and the discipline?” but, again, I do not see this as connected with an emphasis on community activism, but, rather, it is connected with the absence of sufficient core Political Science courses. Further, as this section continues, there is also a reference to “balance [of views]...in the classroom.” I am not certain who or how a “balance” might be determined, but I believe that such a demand runs directly counter to the principle of academic freedom, a basic principle of university education.

From this, it is clear that I cannot agree with the recommendations that refer to “broad exposure to perspectives and alternatives” and “an effort that the program is perceived as balanced by the community concerned.”

Signed by:



Prof. Thomas Risse, Chair



Prof. Gabriel Ben Dor




Prof. Benjamin Jerry Cohen



Prof. Abraham Diskin



Prof. Ellen Immergut



Prof. Robert Lieber

Appendix 1: Copy of Letter of Appointment



November 30, 2010

Prof. Thomas Risse
Otto-Suhr-Institute for Political Science
Freie Universität Berlin
Germany

שר החינוך
Minister of Education
وزير التربية والتعليم

Dear Professor Risse,

The Israeli Council for Higher Education (CHE) strives to ensure the continuing excellence and quality of Israeli higher education through a systematic evaluation process. By engaging upon this mission, the CHE seeks to: enhance and ensure the quality of academic studies, provide the public with information regarding the quality of study programs in institutions of higher education throughout Israel, and ensure the continued integration of the Israeli system of higher education in the international academic arena.

As part of this most important endeavor we reach out to world renowned scientists to help us meet the critical challenges that confront the Israeli higher education by accepting our invitation to participate in our international evaluation committees. This process 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 enterprise.

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 Political Science and International Relations. The composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Thomas Risse (Chair), Prof. Gabriel Ben Dor, Prof. Benjamin Jerry Cohen, Prof. Abraham Diskin, Prof. Galia Golan, Prof. Ellen Immergut, and Prof. Robert Lieber.

Ms. Marissa Gross 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.

Sincerely,

Gideon Sa'ar
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. Marissa Gross, Committee Coordinator

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Appendix 2: Site Visit Schedule



The Department of Politics and Government
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
18-19 May 2010, Room 666 Building 72

Wednesday, May 18, 2011

Time	Subject	Participants
10:30-11:15	Opening session with the heads of the institution and the senior staff member appointed to deal with quality assessment	Rector: Prof. Zvi Hacoen Deputy Rector: Prof. Yael Edan Dean: Prof. David Newman Dept. Chair: Dr. Dani Filc
11:15-11:45	Meeting with the Dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences Department	Prof. David Newman
11:45-12:30	Meeting with the chair of the Department of Politics and Government	Dr. Dani Filc
12:30-13:15	Lunch	
13:15-13:45	Tour of campus (classes, library, offices of faculty members, computer labs etc.)	Dr. Dani Filc, Prof. Renee Poznanski, Prof. Neve Gordon, Dr. Sharon Pardo, Dr. Becky Kook
13:45-14:45	Meeting with senior faculty and representatives of relevant committees (teaching/curriculum committee, admissions committee, appointment committee)*	Prof. Renee Poznanski: Admissions Committee and Appointment Committee Prof. Neve Gordon, Director Graduate Students Dr. Ahmad Saadi, Curriculum Committee
14:45-15:30	Meeting with junior faculty (all non tenured faculty)	Dr. Sharon Pardo Dr. Lynn Schler Dr. Dina Zisserman-Brodsky
15:30-16:15	Closed door working meeting of the committee	

Thursday, May 19, 2011

Time	Subject	Participants
9:30-10:15	Meeting with adjunct lecturers	Dr. Shani Bar-On, Dr. Noam Yuran, Dr. Ayelet Harel-Shalev
10:15-11:00	Meeting with Alumni***	
11:00-11:45	Meeting with Bachelors students***	
11:45-12:30	Meeting with Masters Students***	
12:30-13:15	Meeting with PhD***	
13:15-14:15	Lunch & Closed door working meeting of the committee	
14:15-15:00	Summation meeting with heads of the institution and of the department	Rector: Prof. Zvi Hachon Deputy Rector: Prof. Yael Edan Dean: Prof. David Newman Dept. Chair: Dr. Dani Filc

* 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.