



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

### **General Report**

**September 2011**

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- Appendix 1: The Committee's letter of appointment
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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, Israel<sup>1</sup>**
- **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, Israel<sup>2</sup>**
- **Prof. Galia Golan, Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy, Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya, Israel<sup>3</sup>**
- **Prof. Ellen Immergut, School of Social Sciences, Humboldt University Berlin, Germany<sup>4</sup>**
- **Prof. Robert Lieber, Department of Government, Georgetown University, USA<sup>5</sup>**
- **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**.

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

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<sup>1</sup> Prof. Gabriel Ben Dor did not participate in the evaluation of University of Haifa.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Abraham Diskin did not participate in the evaluation of Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya.

<sup>3</sup> Prof. Galia Golan did not participate in the evaluation of the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya.

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

<sup>5</sup> Prof. Robert Lieber did not participate in the first round of visits.

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. Due to the fact that the Departments of Political Science & International Relations at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem had been evaluated by an external committee in 2007, the departments were excused from participating in the CHE's QA evaluation

During each of these visits, the committee 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 reports. These visits resulted in individual reports for each university's Political Science and International Relations programs. In the case of Hebrew University's Departments of Political Science and International Relations, the committee wrote a letter to the CHE based on the 2007 Report and an implementation letter by the Dean of the Social Science Faculty.

### **Chapter 3: Executive Summary**

1. Political Science and International Relations in general are doing very well at Israeli universities. Compared to the size of the country, Israel is a major intellectual contributor to the international Political Science community. Israel boasts a total of 151 faculty members in Political Science and International Relations departments who engage in research in a variety of cutting-edge areas and publish in top peer-reviewed journals as well as through academic presses. The quantity and impact of their publications is impressive; two departments were even ranked among the top 100 departments worldwide. The committee was also very impressed by the enthusiasm of the political science faculty, especially the junior faculty, for their mission in excellent teaching and research, and by the spirit of collegiality in many of the Departments we visited. We found a similar enthusiasm among the students we talked to – on all levels and including the alumni.
2. Israeli universities must invest considerably more resources in Political Science and International Relations, particularly with a view of improving the deteriorating student-to-faculty at many departments which must be corrected almost across the board through hiring more regular faculty and reducing reliance on adjunct faculty. The core curricula at the BA and MA levels ought to be taught by the department's regular faculty.
3. The communication and cooperation between the various Departments or Divisions of Political Science, Public Policy, and International Relations in Israel must be improved and research consortia as well as joint study programs should be considered. In cases of separate International Relations and Political Science departments or divisions, merging into a single Department of Political Science should be considered.
4. The standards of research and teaching achievements in budgeted colleges should not be viewed as inferior to those in research universities. Colleges should take on a leadership role in defining how promotion and tenure standards should be set for colleges, whose mission is different from that of universities. MALAG and the colleges should continue their efforts at recognizing that “scholarship” can mean very different things.
5. Political science instructors should see to it that their own political opinions are expressed as personal views in the class room so that students can take a critical perspective. Curricula and syllabi must reflect the whole range of the field, particularly in mandatory courses. Hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions must be made strictly according to professional standards with regard to research, publications, and teaching, while the political convictions of faculty are irrelevant for these decisions.
6. With regard to the study programs in general, methods training must be strengthened on all levels and the number of courses in (international) political economy as well European studies ought to be increased. Internships should be introduced at the BA and MA levels as regular parts of the curriculum. We also recommend to teach more classes in English and to introduce more seminars in the BA curricula. Supervisory and advisory capacities for students must be strengthened at all levels. Departments should take the necessary steps to attract and maintain a diverse student body.

7. We recommend streamlining professional MA programs, to make sure that departments have enough core faculty to teach these programs, and to include a sufficient number of basic political science as well as methodology courses in the curricula. Research-oriented MA programs ought to be completed within two years including a substantially shortened MA thesis. Alternatively, these MA program could be given up altogether and be integrated into structured PhD programs (Graduate Schools of Political Science).
8. The committee recommends a reform of PhD training in Israeli political science. Both universities and the Israeli government must invest substantial resources in PhD training. Universities should limit the number of PhD students in political science admitted per year. One possibility is to institute Graduate Schools in Political Science or structured PhD programs accredited by the CHE. Political Science departments in Israel should consider enhanced cooperation with regard to structured PhD. programs or Graduate Schools, such as the creation of PhD consortia among several Political Science Departments across Israel.
9. Tenure and promotion processes should be streamlined so that less than a year passes between the submission of promotion or tenure materials by the candidate and the final decision. Promotion and tenure criteria should be oriented toward general standards of scholarship in the social sciences and that these criteria be spelled out as clearly and as transparently as possible so that junior faculty know exactly what is expected of them. Junior faculty should be supported throughout the promotion procedure, e.g. through mentoring programs.
10. With regard to gender awareness and equality, hiring processes must be carried out in a non-discriminatory fashion providing genuinely equal opportunities. Wherever possible, women should be on all hiring, promotion, and scholarship committees. Departments should exercise flexibility with regard to the (implicit) requirement for junior faculty to have pursued either their PhD or postdoctoral study abroad. Effective mentoring programs should be introduced which are of particular importance for women facing structural barriers to their professional achievements. Adequate and sufficient childcare facilities must be instituted at the universities and faculty should be given credit for raising small children.
11. Research Authorities of the universities should be more pro-active in familiarizing faculty with funding opportunities and in helping them with sometimes cumbersome application processes. Political Science departments and universities as a whole should develop incentive systems to help faculty improving their publication records and the acquisition of research grants from the outside. Research cooperation and the formation of research groups should be increased at all levels, within Political Science departments, in Israel as a whole, and internationally. We recommend that the competition for Israeli Centers of Research Excellence (I-CORE) include a request for proposals in the area of politics, governance and international affairs.

## **Chapter 4: Evaluation of Political Science and International Relations in Israel**

### **4.1 General Situation of Political Science and International Relations in Israel**

To study and understand politics and international relations is central to any modern and democratic society. In fact, Aristotle called politics the “master science.” Democracy requires an enlightened citizenry and elites who are informed about the core issues of modern politics, political philosophy, governance, and international affairs in a wider and increasingly globalized world. These general statements are even more true and relevant for the state of Israel located in the Middle East, one of the politically and socially most turbulent regions of the world.

Given the significance of politics for a democratic society in general and for Israel in particular, the committee is pleased to report that Political Science and International Relations in general are doing very well at Israeli universities. Compared to the size of the country, Israel is a major intellectual contributor to the international Political Science community.

Israel boasts a total of 151 faculty members in Political Science and International Relations departments who engage in research in a variety of cutting-edge areas and publish in top peer-reviewed journals as well as through academic presses. The quantity and impact of their publications is impressive with a publication rate of over 1200 articles, book chapters and books in the past 5 years; two departments were even ranked among the top 100 departments worldwide. Faculty members contribute to the academic community through their participation on editorial/advisory boards and as peer reviewers of international and Israeli academic journals such as *European Journal of Political Research*, *International Political Science Review*, *Political Behavior*, and *Political Psychology*. Furthermore, they are involved in academic collaborations with both Israeli and international colleagues.

The committee was also very impressed by the enthusiasm of the political science faculty, especially the junior faculty, for their mission in excellent teaching and research, and by the spirit of collegiality in many of the Departments we visited. We found a similar enthusiasm among the students we talked to – on all levels and including the alumni.

However, despite the importance of politics for a democratic society and despite the overall healthy state of Israeli Political Science and International Relations, the committee heard complaints at several universities that the respective departments are not really appreciated and that most resources of universities go to the natural sciences. We are aware, of course, that Israeli institutions underwent a period of severe budget cuts during the early 2000s and that they have only recently begun to re-hire much-needed faculty and to reverse these trends. Yet, the committee feels that more is needed. We strongly recommend that Israeli universities invest more resources in Political Science and International Relations, particularly with a view of improving the deteriorating student-to-faculty ratio with which we were confronted at many places visited.

The committee is also aware of the different missions of the newly instituted budgeted colleges devoted to excellence in teaching as compared to the major research universities. In this context, the standards of research and teaching achievements in a college should not be viewed as inferior to those in a university. Instead, the colleges should take on a leadership role in defining how promotion and tenure standards should be

set for colleges, whose mission is different from that of universities, given their key role in providing excellent undergraduate education (see below).

In some departments, the committee was confronted with the issue of political bias, be it with regard to teaching in the study programs, be it concerning faculty promotion (or lack thereof). Of course, political science instructors are entitled to have their own opinions and to express them in class. But they 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. Curricula and syllabi should reflect the whole range of the field, particularly in mandatory courses. Moreover, hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions should be made strictly according to professional standards with regard to research, publications, and teaching, while the political convictions of faculty are completely irrelevant for these decisions.

Last but not least, the committee recommends to improve the communication and cooperation between the various Departments or Divisions of Political Science, Public Policy, and International Relations in Israel. We recommend “economies of scale” in this context, be it with regard to research consortia (the one on Africa being a step in the right direction), be it concerning joint study programs, e.g. on the MA and PhD levels (see below).

#### **4.2 The Study Programs**

In general, the committee has a very positive view of the Political Science and International Relations study programs in Israel covering the whole range of the field and exposing students to many different perspectives. At the same time, there are some glaring problems. Most important and as noted above, the student-to-faculty ratio has deteriorated in many departments, with 40 students per faculty at the BA level and a 15:1 ratio for MA programs not being particularly exceptional. This must be corrected almost across the board through hiring more regular faculty. Reliance on adjunct faculty is no substitute for the lack of full-time faculty in many of the departments we visited.

In addition, we see room for improvement with regard to the following issues:

- There is a lack of methods training – both quantitative and qualitative – in many of the study programs we evaluated, on all levels. This needs to be corrected.
- Despite the strong International Relations orientation at most universities, students are much less exposed to courses in international political economy than in security studies which is a major weakness given that we live in an increasingly globalized economy.
- In many universities, there are few classes in European studies including European integration which is rather strange given the geographic proximity as well as the political, economic, and cultural significance of Europe and the European Union (EU) for Israel.
- We also found that many study programs at the BA and MA levels do not include internships as a regular part of the curriculum for which students are given credit. We recommend that this be corrected.



- Last not least, we recommend that more classes be taught in English. While some institutions have introduced entire English-language programs in Political Science (particularly on the MA level), we feel that Israeli students should be regularly exposed to English-language classes. Such classes also have the added advantage to help internationalizing the student body and to increase the possibilities for international student exchanges at all levels (e.g. with regard to programs between European, U.S., and Israeli universities).

### *B.A. Programs*

Most BA programs we evaluated are in pretty good shape and give undergraduate students a broad education in political science and its various sub-fields. However, we also found some programs which lack clear criteria and do not expose students sufficiently to the various subfields of political science such as political theory, comparative politics, Israeli politics and society, as well as international relations.

A general problem in Political Science in Israel seems to be that introductory classes are often taught by adjunct rather than by regular full-time faculty. We recommend bringing more senior faculty to the classroom of large-scale, introductory courses in order to expose students to the knowledge, experience and skill of the best among the staff members. We also found that there are generally too many large lecture classes for undergraduate students and too few seminars which would enable discussions in the classroom as well as require students to write papers rather than take written exams. This imbalance is probably the result of the lack of full-time faculty mentioned above, but we nevertheless recommend introducing more seminars in the BA curricula.

### *M.A. Programs*

With regard to the MA programs we evaluated, these also are generally in good shape. We were impressed by the wide variety of programs from which students can choose. At the same time, there are two issues which need to be addressed:

First, the propensity of universities to incentivize quantity over quality through budget allocations often leads to the proliferation of – mostly professional (non-research) – MA programs with very few students in some of them. We advise to streamline the number of professional MA programs and to make sure that departments have enough core faculty to teach these programs. In this context, departments should see to it that enough basic political science as well as methodology courses are included in the curricula of non-research MA programs.

Second, most research MA programs (thesis-track) are in urgent need of reforms. We encountered MA programs requiring students to write a lengthy thesis of 150 pages or more, i.e., basically small PhD dissertations. As a result, many students drop out or are unable to complete their MA degree within a reasonable time-period. In addition, there is very limited funding for thesis-track MA students who then have to work to make a living which further lengthens the time spent in the program. Last not least, it is unclear to us why some of the smaller Political Science departments keep a research-oriented MA program at all, particularly if they do not have a PhD program.

We see two options to correct these shortcomings:

- If departments want to keep a research-oriented MA program, they must see to it that it can be completed within a two-year period with an MA thesis of no more than 60 pages to be written during the fourth semester. This also requires sustained funding for MA student through – e.g. – teaching assistantships.
- The more radical solution would be to give up research-oriented MA programs altogether and to integrate them into newly structured PhD programs (Graduate Schools of Political Science) of about five years of combined MA/PhD studies. What used to be the MA thesis would then become an extended research outline for the PhD dissertation to be approved by a dissertation committee. Students who – for whatever reason - are unable to proceed to the PhD level at this stage, could still leave university with an MA degree. At the same time, students with a professional MA degree could be admitted to the third year of such programs after passing an entry exam.

### *Ph.D. Programs*

The committee met many talented and enthusiastic PhD students during its visits to the various universities and departments. However, while we see little necessity for radical reforms with regard to most BA and (non-research) MA programs in Israel, most PhD programs evaluated require profound changes. First, the prioritizing of quantity over quality noted previously is also visible with regard to the large numbers of Israeli PhD students who then can find no adequate jobs (in academia or elsewhere) and/or take too many years to complete their dissertations. This leads to a misallocation of scarce resources, if there are no jobs for PhDs, and, as a result, further encourages a brain drain which Israel can hardly afford.

Second, at the same time, some departments recommend their best and brightest students to pursue a PhD abroad (mostly in the U.S), which further contributes to the brain drain and tends to create a two-class society of PhD, those with a degree from abroad and those who stayed in Israel (and are considered inferior). In addition, this practice leads to implicit gender discrimination, since parents – in many cases women - cannot simply leave their families to study abroad. Last but not least, as mentioned above, Israel has excellent political science departments and should, thus, be able to attract first-rate PhD students, both from Israel and abroad.

Third, the existing programs suffer from various deficiencies:

- severe lack of funding for PhD students;
- insufficient PhD level training in political science proper, methods, academic writing, publication strategy, etc.;
- lack of opportunities for PhD students to present their work in faculty colloquia and at international conferences;
- in some cases, insufficient supervision and only irregular contact with advisors.

As a result, we recommend a reform of PhD training in Israeli political science:

1. *Funding*: Both universities and the Israeli government must invest substantial resources in PhD training. Most important, this requires making available many

more stipends for at least a three-year-period for PhD students (in addition to teaching as well as research assistantships, and the like).

2. *Quality rather than quantity*: Universities should limit the number of PhD students in political science admitted per year. One possibility would be instituting Graduate Schools in Political Science or structured PhD programs accredited by the CHE (see below). The committee believes that only few such Graduate Schools or structured PhD programs are sustainable in Israel as a whole, since only a few universities with large enough Political Science departments are likely to afford their own Graduate Schools of Political Science or structured PhD programs. We recommend, therefore, that Political Science departments in Israel consider enhanced cooperation with regard to structured PhD programs or Graduate Schools. One possibility would be the creation of PhD consortia as joint programs among several Political Science Departments across Israel.
3. *Structured PhD Programs*: We suggest well-structured PhD programs or Graduate Schools of Political Science including research-track MA programs in the first two years (see above). These programs should include the following components of PhD training:
  - Substantive survey courses covering up-to-date research in the subfields of political science (political theory, comparative politics, Israeli politics, international relations)
  - Methods training, both quantitative and qualitative
  - Regular PhD workshops enabling students to present their research
  - Supervision of PhD work by dissertation committees
  - Workshops with regard to academic writing, publication strategies, grant writing, as well as career planning.
4. *Internationalizing the PhD Programs*: We recommend that departments and Graduate Schools in Political Science make a stronger effort at internationalizing their programs. Israeli political science has much to offer to foreign PhD students and the departments should, therefore, recruit globally for their programs and Graduate Schools. In addition, much more can be done to foster cooperation with leading Graduate Schools in Europe and the U.S. All this requires, of course, that classes and PhD seminars are regularly offered in English.

These proposals for structured PhD programs do not preclude, of course, individual supervision of PhD students outside of Graduate Schools. But we recommend that the scarce resources of Israeli universities and of the MALAG available for PhD students are directed primarily to structured programs such as Graduate Schools.

### **4.3 Faculty**

As mentioned above, the committee met extraordinarily enthusiastic and committed faculty at most departments we visited. However, working conditions in many departments remain inadequate given the extraordinary high number of students so that even the best and most well-meaning faculty cannot reach their goals of excellence in teaching and research. We reiterate, therefore, our strong recommendation that Political Science needs more regular and full-time faculty at each and every department so that Political Science in Israel can develop its full potential.

One issue of concern which we encountered during our visits relates to tenure and promotion procedures. In some cases, these procedures take an extraordinarily long time, often more than one academic year. We recommend that tenure and promotion processes should be streamlined in such a way that less than a year passes between the submission of promotion or tenure materials by the candidate and the final decision. In addition, promotion and tenure criteria must be spelled out as clearly and as transparently as possible so that junior faculty know exactly what is expected of them and where they stand. We also recommend to support junior faculty throughout the promotion procedures and systematic furthering of their professional advancement, e.g. through mentoring programs.

In this context, the committee was told at several departments that in practice numbers of articles were considered more important than quality, that books were discouraged and that interdisciplinary multi-authored works were not appreciated. The committee recommends, therefore, to orient promotion and tenure criteria toward general standards of scholarship in the social sciences (quality of publications; appreciation of books, particularly with major academic publishers; encouragement of interdisciplinary research).

Moreover, we were told that faculty at the newly instituted budgeted colleges are subject to the same MALAG criteria for promotion to associate or full professorship as faculty at research universities. Yet, it makes no sense to us to require faculty who teach 12 hours per week, to publish in top ranked journals or with major university presses in order to get promoted. Rather, MALAG and the colleges should explicitly recognize that “scholarship” can mean very different things, e.g. basic research as well as applied and policy-oriented research, publishing in top-ranked journals as well as writing textbooks or publications for larger audiences, organizing international exchanges as well as community outreach programs, etc. We recognize that MALAG and the budgeted colleges are in the process of changing their promotion criteria for faculty accordingly and recommend further progress in this direction.

Another concern with regard to faculty relates to issues of equal opportunity and gender awareness. Fortunately, the committee did not encounter any example of explicit gender discrimination. But it was quite striking to us that many departments have only a few women on the regular faculty and, if they do, mostly in junior positions. Therefore, departments should conduct their hiring processes in a non-discriminatory fashion providing genuinely equal opportunities. In some cases, affirmative action might be necessary.

It is equally important to address issues of implicit gender discrimination. To tackle these problems, we recommend,

- to institute adequate and sufficient childcare facilities,
- to give faculty credit for raising small children (e.g. fewer teaching hours; halting the tenure clock),
- and to introduce effective mentoring programs which are of particular importance for women facing structural barriers to professional advancement.

We also suggest that, wherever possible, women should be on all hiring, promotion, and scholarship committees even if this means that somebody from the outside has to be brought in. Last not least, many departments require as an (implicit) prerequisite for tenure-track positions that junior faculty have pursued either their PhD or postdoc-

toral study abroad. While we endorse the idea that Israeli faculty should spend some time outside the country at major research universities abroad, such a requirement might entail indirect gender discrimination. We, therefore, recommend that departments apply this condition in a flexible way and consider the particular candidate's personal circumstances in this regard.

Finally, a major issue of concern to the committee is the precarious situation of adjunct faculty in Israeli universities. They usually have a very high teaching load (16 hours/week on the basis of an eight month salary) and teach large and introductory lectures classes (see above). In many cases, adjunct faculty do not feel appreciated and they sometimes are not even given office space to meet with students. In sum, we feel that there is an academic proletariat in the making if the conditions of adjunct faculty are not improved.

We recommend, therefore, to reduce reliance on adjunct faculty. As argued above, the core curriculum at either BA or MA levels should be taught by regular faculty. It is not a viable and sustainable strategy to substitute for the lack of core faculty by adjuncts. Many adjunct faculty are very well qualified and have excellent publication records so that they should be considered for hiring as regular faculty. Moreover, working conditions of adjunct faculty should be improved in terms of teaching hours, salaries, and office space. Departments should also make an extra effort to integrate their adjuncts in the academic community if they wish to.

#### **4.4 Students**

We mentioned already that we met with enthusiastic, committed, as well as very articulate students at all levels which speaks for the quality of Israeli Political Science education. Since most of our recommendations on study programs have been made above, there is no need to repeat them here. However, we would like to raise three issues concerning students, namely diversity of student population, supervision and counseling services, and – once again – funding.

First, the committee feels that having a diverse student population, reflecting at least some of the diversity in Israeli society at large, is a distinct asset to a Political Science department. Therefore, the committee would like to encourage departments around the country to take the necessary steps to attract and maintain a diverse student body. In some cases, this might necessitate to introduce special minority programs and preparatory courses for, e.g., Arab and Ethiopian students.

Second, we recommend increasing the supervision and advisory capacities for students of all levels at Political Science departments. This was a major complaint of students, particularly on the MA and PhD levels, that there was not enough counseling with regard to academic affairs in general and concerning career development in particular. We urge the departments to correct these shortcomings by, for example, designating special academic advisors for the BA, MA, and PhD levels. We also recommend that departments use their usually extensive alumni networks for career counseling purposes.

Third, as already pointed out, Political Science departments seriously lack funding for their MA and PhD students who usually have to work regular jobs to make a living. This is partly the result of misallocation of resources, for example, with regard to teaching as well as research assistantships. But the committee feels that this is also a systemic problem of Israeli academia as a whole. Both universities and MALAG must

allocate more resources to their junior researchers, particularly on the PhD level, in order to maintain the level of excellence in Political Science and to prevent a further brain drain.

#### **4.5 Research**

In general, the committee was quite impressed by the research and publications record of the faculty at Israeli Political Science Departments. While there is some variation with regard to publications in major research journals and with top academic publishers, Israeli Political Science as a whole is competitive as compared to major research universities in Europe and the United States. This is all the more impressive given that Israeli universities on average have much less resources available than, for example, many universities in the U.S.

Yet, the committee sees some room for improvement concerning publications as well as securing research grants. With regard to the former, we observe imbalances in some Political Science departments with regard to the publication record among the faculty. We recommend in this context that the publication record of faculty members at major research universities should enter into a merit-based allocation system for resources to individual faculty in order to provide incentives for publishing in top academic journals and with major academic presses.

With regard to research grants, the committee noticed that most Political Science departments have only started to actively seek outside funding for research. Many faculty do not seem to be aware of the funding opportunities available in Israel and abroad. This concerns in particular research funding from the European Union (Israel is considered part of the European Research Area), both in the context of the Framework Programs funded by the European Commission and of the European Research Council (ERC). It also concerns collaborative research grants provided by individual countries and their private as well public research foundations, e.g. in the U.S. or Germany. There also seem to be few collaborative research endeavors among Political Science departments in Israel including international research collaboration.

The committee has several recommendations in this regard. First, the Research Authorities of the universities must be more pro-active in familiarizing faculty with funding opportunities and in helping them with the sometimes cumbersome application processes. Second, Political Science departments and universities as a whole should develop incentive systems such as additional funding in case of successful applications, start-up grants to help faculty with the application process, and the like. Acquisition of research grants should also be an explicit part of the criteria for promotion and tenure, if that is not already the case.

Third, we encourage the formation of research groups and increased research collaboration among the faculty, which would also help in securing external funding. We recommend increasing research cooperation at all levels, within Political Science departments, in Israel as a whole, and internationally. In this context, the committee clearly sees the potential for at least one or two Israeli Centers of Research Excellence (I-CORE) with a focus on politics, governance, and international affairs in a globalized world and recommends that a request for proposals on one of these topics be created.

#### **4.6 Broader Organizational Structures**

Most Israeli universities have instituted Political Science Departments covering the whole range of the discipline including political theory, comparative politics, Israeli politics and government, as well as international relations. We see no reason to recommend changes here. However, a few universities keep separate Departments or Divisions of Political Science and of International Relations. To us, separating International Relations from Political Science as a whole does not make sense. Furthermore, growing bodies of research are found at the intersection of International Relations and Political Theory, International Relations and Comparative Politics, as well as International Relations and Public Administration/Organizational Behavior. In cases of separate International Relations and Political Science departments or divisions, we recommend, therefore, to consider merging into a single Department of Political Science. We also recommend much closer cooperation between Departments of Political Science and of Public Policy/Public Administration in those cases in which separate departments or divisions exist.

#### **4.7 Infrastructure**

The committee found the infrastructure with regard to classrooms, libraries, and information technology rather uneven in Israeli Political Science. Some universities have adopted state-of-the-art technology with regard to classrooms and offices and have adjusted their libraries to the standards of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the age of the internet. Other universities seem to be stuck at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In few cases, we encountered social science libraries that were clearly inadequate for a major Political Science Department. The committee strongly urges those universities that have neglected libraries, classrooms, office, and information technology to rectify the situation immediately. We make the respective recommendations in the individual reports.

#### **4.8 Quality assessment**

Some Schools and Departments appear to have well developed sets of internal mechanisms for quality assessments, including regular examination of courses and study content and teaching surveys. The Committee is impressed by the efforts institutions are making to maintain high standards in study programs, though it is not always clear what criteria of judgment are being used to evaluate course content or teacher performance. We encourage continued efforts to further develop and refine existing procedures. Those Departments which have not yet instituted internal mechanisms for quality assessments should do so, including regular teaching surveys, examination of courses and of study content.

## **Chapter 5: Recommendations**

### **5.1 Congratulatory Remarks**

The committee is pleased to report that Political Science and International Relations in general are doing very well at Israeli universities. Compared to the size of the country, Israel is a major intellectual contributor to the international Political Science community. Israel boasts a total of 151 faculty members in Political Science and International Relations departments who engage in research in a variety of cutting-edge areas and publish in top peer-reviewed journals as well as through academic presses. The quantity and impact of their publications is impressive with a publication rate of over 1200 articles, book chapters and books in the past 5 years; two departments were even ranked among the top 100 departments worldwide. Faculty members contribute to the academic community through their participation on editorial/advisory boards and as peer reviewers of international and Israeli academic journals. Furthermore, they are involved in academic collaborations with both Israeli and international colleagues.

The committee was also very impressed by the enthusiasm of the political science faculty, especially the junior faculty, for their mission in excellent teaching and research, and by the spirit of collegiality in many of the Departments we visited. We found a similar enthusiasm among the students we talked to – on all levels and including the alumni.

The following recommendations are meant to help Political Science in general and International Relations in particular to further improve its standing in Israel and internationally and to reach its full potential.

### **5.2 Recommendations**

#### *General Recommendations*

With regard to the general situation of Political Science in Israel, the committee recommends

- that Israeli universities invest considerably more resources in Political Science and International Relations, particularly with a view of improving the deteriorating student-to-faculty at many departments which must be corrected almost across the board through hiring more regular faculty;
- that the communication and cooperation between the various Departments or Divisions of Political Science, Public Policy, and International Relations in Israel be improved and that research consortia as well as joint study programs be considered;
- that, in cases of separate International Relations and Political Science departments or divisions, merging into a single Department of Political Science be considered;
- that the standards of research and teaching achievements in budgeted colleges should not be viewed as inferior to those in a university and that colleges should take on a leadership role in defining how promotion and tenure standards should be set for colleges, whose mission is different from that of universities;
- that political science instructors see to it that their own political opinions are expressed as personal views so that students can take a critical perspective; that cur-



ricula and syllabi reflect the whole range of the field, particularly in mandatory courses; and that hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions be made strictly according to professional standards with regard to research, publications, and teaching, while the political convictions of faculty are irrelevant for these decisions;

- that those universities which have neglected libraries, classrooms, office, and information technology rectify the situation immediately;
- that those Departments which have not yet instituted internal mechanisms for quality assessments do so, including regular teaching surveys, examination of courses and of study content.

### *Study Programs and Students*

With regard to study programs in general, we recommend

- to strengthen the methods training – both quantitative and qualitative on all levels;
- to increase the number of courses (required and electives) in (international) political economy and in European studies including European integration;
- to introduce internships at the BA and MA levels as a regular part of the curriculum for which students are given credit;
- to teach more classes in English (particularly on the MA levels) in order to expose Israeli students to such courses, to help internationalizing the student body, and to increase the possibilities for international student exchanges;
- to bring more senior faculty to the classroom of large-scale, introductory courses in order to expose students to the knowledge, experience and skill of the best among the staff members;
- to introduce more seminars in the BA curricula which would enable discussions in the classroom and to reduce the number of large lecture classes for undergraduates;
- to take the necessary steps to attract and maintain a diverse student body and, in some cases, to introduce special minority programs and preparatory courses for, e.g., Arab and Ethiopian students.
- to increase the supervision and advisory capacities for students of all levels at Political Science departments by, for example, designating special academic advisors for the BA, MA, and PhD levels, and to use the usually extensive alumni networks for career counseling purposes.

With regard to *MA programs*, we recommend

- to streamline the number of professional MA programs and to make sure that departments have enough core faculty to teach these programs;
- to include a sufficient number of basic political science as well as methodology courses in the curricula of non-research MA programs;
- to make sure that research-oriented MA programs can be completed within a two-year period including an MA thesis of not more than 60 pages;

- as an alternative, to give up research-oriented MA programs altogether and to integrate them into structured PhD programs (Graduate Schools of Political Science) of about five years of combined MA/PhD studies.

The committee also recommends a reform of *PhD training* in Israeli political science:

- **Funding:** Both universities and the Israeli government must invest substantial resources in PhD training. This requires making available many more stipends for at least a three-year-period for PhD students. In addition, the scarce resources of Israeli universities and of the MALAG available for PhD students should be directed primarily to structured PhD programs or Graduate Schools (see below).
- **Quality rather than quantity:** Universities should limit the number of PhD students in political science admitted per year. One possibility to improve PhD training involves instituting Graduate Schools in Political Science or structured PhD programs accredited by the CHE. Only a few such Graduate Schools are sustainable in Israel as a whole. We recommend, therefore, that Political Science departments in Israel consider enhanced cooperation with regard to structured PhD programs or Graduate Schools, such as the creation of PhD consortia among several Political Science Departments across Israel.
- **Structured PhD Programs:** We suggest well-structured PhD programs or Graduate Schools of Political Science including research-track MA programs in the first two years, to encompass substantive survey courses in the subfields of political science, methods training (quantitative and qualitative), regular PhD workshops, supervision of PhD work by dissertation committees, and workshops with regard to academic writing, publication strategies, grant writing, as well as career planning.
- **Internationalizing the PhD Programs:** Departments and Graduate Schools in Political Science should make a stronger effort at internationalizing their programs and at fostering cooperation with leading Graduate Schools in Europe and the U.S.

### *Faculty and Research*

With regard to faculty and research, we reiterate that there is an urgent need to hire more faculty – both junior and senior – at most Israeli Political Science Departments in order to rectify the worsening student-to-faculty ratios. We also recommend to reduce reliance on adjunct faculty, since the core curriculum at either BA or MA levels should be taught by regular faculty. Many adjunct faculty are very well qualified and have excellent publication records so that they should be considered for hiring as regular faculty. Moreover, working conditions of adjunct faculty should be improved in terms of teaching hours, salaries, and office space.

In addition, we recommend

- that tenure and promotion processes be streamlined in such a way that less than a year passes between the submission of promotion or tenure materials by the candidate and the final decision;
- that promotion and tenure criteria be oriented toward general standards of scholarship in the social sciences (quality of publications; appreciation of books, particularly with major academic publishers; encouragement of interdisciplinary research) and that these criteria be spelled out as clearly and as transparently as possible.

sible so that junior faculty know exactly what is expected of them and where they stand;

- with regard to budgeted colleges, that MALAG and the colleges make further progress in explicitly recognizing that “scholarship” can mean different things, e.g. basic research as well as applied and policy-oriented research, publishing in top-ranked journals as well as writing textbooks or publications for larger audiences, organizing international exchanges as well as community outreach programs, etc.;
- that junior faculty be supported throughout the promotion procedures and by systematic furthering their professional advancement, e.g. through mentoring programs.

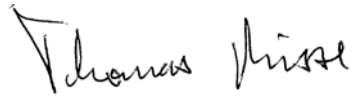
With regard to *gender awareness and equality*, the committee recommends

- that hiring processes be carried out in a non-discriminatory fashion providing genuinely equal opportunities (including affirmative action in some cases and where necessary);
- that, wherever possible, women be on all hiring, promotion, and scholarship committees;
- that departments exercise flexibility with regard to the (implicit) requirement for junior faculty to have pursued either their PhD or postdoctoral study abroad and that the particular candidate’s personal circumstances be considered in this regard;
- that effective mentoring programs be introduced which are of particular importance for women facing structural barriers to their professional achievements;
- that adequate and sufficient childcare facilities are instituted at the universities and that faculty be given credit for raising small children (e.g. fewer teaching hours; halting the tenure clock, and the like).

With regard to *research*, the committee recommends

- that the Research Authorities of the universities be more pro-active in familiarizing faculty with funding opportunities and in helping them with the sometimes cumbersome application processes;
- that Political Science departments and universities as a whole develop incentive systems such as additional funding in case of successful applications, start-up grants to help faculty with the application process, and the like;
- that the publication record of faculty members at major research universities enter into a merit-based allocation system for resources to individual faculty;
- that research cooperation and the formation of research groups be increased at all levels, within Political Science departments, in Israel as a whole, and internationally;
- that the competition for Israeli Centers of Research Excellence (I-CORE) include a request for proposals on a topic related to Political Science since there is clearly the potential for one or two such Centers in Israel with a focus on politics, governance, and international affairs in a globalized world.

**Signed by:**



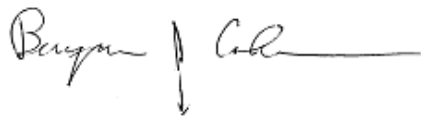
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Prof. Thomas Risse, Chair



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Prof. Gabriel Ben Dor



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Prof. Benjamin Jerry Cohen



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Prof. Abraham Diskin



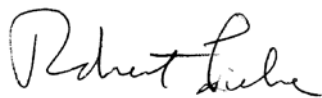
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Prof. Galia Golan



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Prof. Ellen Immergut



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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 21<sup>st</sup> 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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