



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

**The University of Haifa Evaluation Report**

**July 2011**

Contents

**Chapter 1:** Background.....3

**Chapter 2:** Committee Procedures.....4

**Chapter 3:** Evaluation of the Public Administration and Policy Department at the  
University of Haifa.....5

**Appendices:** Appendix 1 – Letter of Appointment

Appendix 2 - Schedule of the visit

## **Chapter 1 - Background**

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

Following the decision of the CHE, the Minister of Education, who serves ex officio as a Chairperson of the CHE, appointed a Committee consisting of:

- **Prof. Steve Kelman- John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, USA – Committee Chair**
- **Prof. Eugene Bardach- Richard and Rhonda Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkley, USA<sup>1</sup>**
- **Prof. Mark Kleiman- School of Public Affairs, University of California, Los Angeles, USA**
- **Prof. David Nachmias- Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy, Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya, Israel**
- **Prof. Michael Rothschild- Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University, USA**

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

Within the framework of its activity, the Committee was requested to:<sup>2</sup>

1. Examine the self-evaluation reports, submitted by the institutions that provide study programs in mathematics, and to conduct on-site visits at those institutions.
2. Submit to the CHE an individual report on each of the evaluated academic units and study programs, including the Committee's findings and recommendations.
3. Submit to the CHE a general report regarding the examined field of study within the Israeli system of higher education including recommendations for standards in the evaluated field of study.

The entire process was conducted in accordance with the CHE's Guidelines for Self-Evaluation (of October 2008).

---

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Bardach did not participate in the second round of visits due to personal reasons.

<sup>2</sup> The Committee's letter of appointment is attached as **Appendix 1**.

## **Chapter 2 - Committee Procedures**

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

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

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

This report deals with the **MPA programs at the University of Haifa.**

The Committee's visit at the University of Haifa took place on March 14-15, 2011. The schedule of the visit, including the list of participants from the institution, is attached as **Appendix 2.**

The School of Political Sciences has provided the Committee in its Self Evaluation Report 2009 with an extremely thorough assessment of its programs.

### **Chapter 3: Evaluation of the Department of Public Administration and Policy at the University of Haifa**

*\* 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.*

The Division of Public Administration and Policy in the School of Political Sciences at the University of Haifa operates four programs granting the degree of Master of Public Administration and Policy (MPA) programs, which during the 2009-2010 school year enrolled 330 students: the “regular” MPA, and three “Executive” programs, with foci on “Public Administration and Policy,” “Public and Internal Auditing,” and “Local Government Administration.” Of the students who complete the “regular” program, between one-third and one-quarter also complete a research thesis. The “regular” program is Malag-supported; the three “Executive” programs are self-supporting through tuition. The “Executive” programs, combined, award about three times as many degrees as the “regular” program.

#### **Mission Statement**

The mission statement at Haifa is similar to those of the other Israeli masters programs, and in meetings with us, the program leadership strongly emphasized the research mission of the program, giving little spontaneous mention to professional education. There are some members of the faculty, and some courses, with a “policy studies” orientation.

However, the program at Haifa works better in practice than it does in theory. We have commented elsewhere that an excessive focus on research methods tends to distract

students from the pragmatic problems faced in public agencies. But Haifa maintains a research focus while persuading its students that they have a mission to “change the world,” and to do so reflectively. Students at Haifa expressed the belief that they could and should act systematically to make the world a better place, and some sensitivity to the complexities of doing so. They seemed to take what they had learned about the barriers to serving the public interest created by bureaucracy and politics as a challenge rather than as an excuse for cynicism or lack of effort.

Similarly, we have contrasted what we took to be a “policy sciences” focus on descriptive theories about public administration with a public policy professional approach. But the Haifa program, which as currently designed includes almost none of the “public policy” topics such as benefit-cost analysis and statistical decision theory, nonetheless manages to get its students as accurately pointed at seeking good outcomes from the viewpoint of the citizens as any Israeli program of which we are aware.

### **Faculty and Governance**

The faculty at Haifa displayed high morale, both as individuals and as a group. They clearly regard themselves as engaged in a group enterprise, and value the differences among themselves as aids to student learning. The governance process and structure is well-articulated and functions smoothly. Most of all, members of the faculty talk to one another about teaching.

## **Curriculum/Study Program**

The “regular” program consists of five required courses and six elective courses, fewer than the number of courses required in a number of the other programs we examined; instead, classes meet for a longer number of hours each week. The “Executive” programs all have fixed curricula, with students taking the same three courses, each rated at four credit-hours, on a single day. It is very unusual that students from the “regular” program cross-register into an executive education course.

In our General Report, we identify as a central problem the imbalance between the expectations placed on student effort by course syllabi and the actual effort the students expend. The programs at Haifa, and especially the “regular” program, have largely closed that gap, and have done so from both directions. Faculty at Haifa have a realistic view of how much time their students can and will spend on study; their reports of the time required to prepare adequately were broadly consistent with the reports of students on how many hours they actually spent.

In addition, several aspects of the Haifa approach appear to be successful in calling forth high levels of student effort. The emphasis on four-credit-hour courses means that Haifa students are able to concentrate their efforts on a manageable number of courses – typically three per semester. Small class size and the fact that in each program every member of an annual cohort of students takes most (in the regular program) or all (in the executive programs) of his or her courses with the same classmates creates social pressure on all students to prepare for class sessions. (There are some remedial math and economics courses that some, but not all students, must take, but these are taken, when required, over the summer before the first year begins, both allowing all students to take

their required courses together – and also generating additional revenue for the program.)

Finally, the demands embodied in the course syllabi are both reasonable in extent, compared to the time that students have to spend on study, and clear. That avoids a situation where students quickly recognize the impossibility of meeting the nominal demands put on them, and develop norms and even cooperative strategies of coping with excessive demands by skimping and sharing work.

The Haifa faculty also pays attention to pedagogy, and in particular to the need to make classroom time sufficiently engaging as to hold student attention over long class sessions and to the benefits of the class sufficiently apparent to reinforce spending substantial preparation time. Even courses that are nominally “frontal lectures” in fact often embody a variety of active-learning techniques, including case studies and role-playing exercises.

Class sizes tend to be small -- no more than forty students in a classroom. The management at Haifa has expended considerable thought and ingenuity in order to generate and allocate sufficient teaching resources to support those small class sizes, including employing many adjuncts to supplement the small core faculty and paying full-time faculty to accept course “overloads.” In effect, this means that faculty who might otherwise supplement their Haifa salaries by teaching part-time elsewhere instead “sell” those extra teaching hours to their home program, with benefits in terms of coherence and concentration. Haifa has also been either skilful or fortunate (or some combination) in finding faculty members who are both energetic and engaging teachers and high-productivity scholars.

The research methods course contains more topics – taught, therefore, at less depth – than we would advise, and the choice of topics includes some we might have chosen to omit and omits some we would have recommended for inclusion. As a general matter, we also tend to be skeptical about requiring a research methods course rather than one in quantitative reasoning for use in thinking about public policy. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and the messages the students reported to us as their “take-aways” from the course could hardly be improved on:

- There are many tools to analyze information; different tools match different situations;
- Responsible action demands attention to what you know (and skeptical interrogation of what you think you know);
- Claims of knowledge presented by others can be subjected to the same skeptical interrogation (e.g., correlation does not in itself demonstrate causation);
- It is often possible for an official systematically to collect information relevant to choice, and to collect it in a way that aids analysis.

Thus the research-methods course prepares students to develop evidence-based practices. Students seem to understand “research” in its most general sense, as activity designed to elicit usable knowledge about the world, rather in the narrow, technical sense of “projects resembling those of scholars and potentially publishable in journals.” One alumna, asked for an example of how she had made use of her research methods course, cited not the ability to read an academic paper but rather conducting a survey among a group of employees to understand, and thereby improve, the flow of work in her workplace.

The course on organizational behavior seems to be similarly inspirational, employing a variety of explanatory schemata and of instructional techniques and benefiting from an instructor of quite remarkable pedagogic gifts.<sup>3</sup>

The regular program now includes a client-centered practicum – a borrowing from the “executive” programs – as the capstone of the study program. We applaud the decision to have the students do real work for real clients, and the willingness of the faculty to invest the substantial effort required to supervise such projects.

All that said, some topics were noticeable by their absence: both microeconomic and probabilistic reasoning, and a course on the art and science of negotiation (though there was some material on negotiation in the organizational behavior course).

We acknowledge the virtue of the proverb “Don’t mess with success,” but still believe that the devotion of Haifa students and graduates to the public-service version of *tikkun olam* would benefit from knowledge of more explicit analytic technique.

We were unable to determine how much of the good design of the “regular” program results from recent thoughtfulness, how much from the thoughtfulness of previous years, and how much from fortunate happenstance. We suspect, though we are not sure, that some of the design features that have improved this program have resulted from the curricular and financial resources implications (including de facto cross-subsidization) of the large executive education programs, which may have become a tail that in the good sense of the idiom is wagging the dog. We were unable to determine how much of the good design results from recent thoughtfulness, how much from the thoughtfulness of previous years, and how much from fortunate happenstance.

---

<sup>3</sup> We discuss this course further in our General Report.

## **Students**

The School has a strong commitment to maintaining high rates of on-time completion of the degree, and its dropout rates are accordingly low. The expected time-to-completion is two years, except for those pursuing the research-thesis option, who are expected to take an additional year.

At the level of program design, Haifa fosters a culture of high out-of-classroom effort in its “regular” program by *not* allowing students consistently to concentrate all of their coursework on a single day of the week in order to accommodate full-time jobs. As a result, full-time employment during the school year is the exception rather than the norm among “regular” Haifa MPA students. Fewer hours on the job directly translate into more hours in the library.

The students with whom we spoke did not merely intend to acquire a degree that would justify a higher salary while continuing to do the same job. They were, in the best sense of the word, ambitious: a number of alumni told us of important career changes as a result of their Haifa education.

Even the research master’s thesis, which we regard as the bane of policy education in Israel, at Haifa has been tamed and turned to useful purposes; relatively few students pursue it, and those who do seem to be well chosen and well-directed, preparing themselves for doctoral work, and their research preparation does not seem to distract them or others from the practical demands of public service.

The PhD students with whom we spoke were all pursuing well-designed projects, and using appropriate methods to study interesting questions. All could discuss them at a sophisticated level, were aware of the methodological choices they were making, and able to respond with nuance to suggestions for alternative approaches. We were

especially pleased to hear one PhD student describe being encouraged by his advisers to include evaluative material of the kind perfectly appropriate to policy education but sometimes discouraged in discipline-centered social science departments.

## **Research**

The Self-Evaluation Report did not separate their Division of Public Administration and Policy from the School of Political Science more generally for some important categories of performance, among which was faculty research. However, we looked at the CV's of the five faculty members of the division. We concluded that two of the five were quite active in publishing research, giving papers at conferences, serving on editorial boards, and the like, and the other three much less so.

The two relatively active faculty members generally published their work in only moderately ranked journals and publishing houses, though there are some publications in top-ranked public administration journals. They frequently worked with co-authors, presumably extending their scholar influence thereby to students and colleagues. They have also written reports for a number of Israel government agencies.

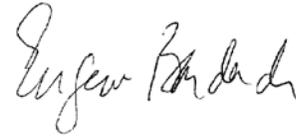
## Recommendations

1. We do not apply our recommendation about the MA research thesis in the General Report to Haifa, because we believe that this program is generally in good shape as a professional education program. Nonetheless, we are concerned that an excessive percentage of MA students are currently writing research theses, perhaps encouraged by faculty to believe that if they are "smart," they should write a research thesis. Excessive focus on a master's research thesis creates the same danger at Haifa as elsewhere. The program should make sure it is not sending signals to students pressing them to write master's research theses; for most students, we believe, it is more productive to spend their limited time available learning the material in the program rather than writing a research thesis. We believe the program should aim significantly to reduce the proportion of students writing master's theses.
2. Both the research master's thesis (as a relatively rarely-used option) and the doctoral program should be maintained.
3. Instruction in microeconomics should be reconfigured into a course on Microeconomic Reasoning for Public Policy.
4. Either as part of the research-methods course or in a separate course, students should be exposed, even if at a fairly non-technical level, to some of the quantitative techniques of policy analysis: the calculation of benefits and costs, cost-effectiveness analysis, statistical decision analysis, and probabilistic reasoning (as distinct from statistical methods) including Bayes's rule for updating prior beliefs in light of new information.
5. More cross-registration by "regular" program students in executive education courses should be encouraged.

**Signed By:**



Prof. Steve Kelman, Chair



Prof. Eugene Bardach



Prof. Mark Kleiman



Prof. David Nachmias



Prof. Michael Rothschild

## Appendix 1: Letter of Appointment



שר החינוך

Minister of Education

وزير التربية والتعليم

October 12, 2010

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

Dear Professor Kelman,

The State of Israel undertook an ambitious project when the Israeli Council for Higher Education (CHE) established a quality assessment and assurance system for Israeli higher education. Its stated goals are: to enhance and ensure the quality of academic studies; to provide the public with information regarding the quality of study programs in institutions of higher education throughout Israel; and to ensure the continued integration of the Israeli system of higher education in the international academic arena. Involvement of world-renowned academicians in this process is essential.

This most important initiative reaches out to scientists in the international arena in a national effort to meet the critical challenges that confront the Israeli higher educational system today. The formulation of international evaluation committees represents an opportunity to express our common sense of concern and to assess the current and future status of education in the 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 endeavor.

It is with great pleasure that I hereby appoint you to serve as the chair of the Council for Higher Education's Committee for the Evaluation of Public Policy and Administration.

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

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

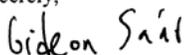
---

רח' שבטי ישראל 34 ירושלים מיקוד 91911 • טל' 02-5602330 • פקסמיליה 02-5602246  
34 Shivtei Israel St' 91911 Jerusalem. Tel. 02-5602330. Fax 02-5602246  
شارع شبطي يسرائيل 34 . اورشليم القدس 91911 . هاتف 02-5602330 فاكس 02-5602246  
כתובת אתר ממשל זמין: <http://gov.il>  
כתובת אתר המשרד: <http://www.education.gov.il>

In your capacity as the chair of the Evaluation Committee, you will be requested to function in accordance with the enclosed appendix.

I wish you much success in your role as a member of this most important committee.

Sincerely,



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

*Enclosures:* Appendix to the Appointment Letter of Evaluation Committees

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

**Schedule of Site Visit – The Division of Public Administration  
and Policy  
March 15-16, 2011**

**Tuesday, March 15, 2011:**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Room / Location</b>
09:30-10:15	Opening session with the heads of the institution and the senior staff member appointed to deal with quality assessment	<b>Prof. David Faraggi</b> , Rector <b>Prof. Batia Laufer</b> , Vice Rector <b>Prof. Avi Sagi-Schwartz</b> , Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences <b>Prof. Eran Vigoda-Gadot</b> , Head of the School of Political Sciences <b>Dr. Yair Zalmanovich</b> , Head of the Division of Public Administration and Policy <b>Ms. Ruchama Elad-Yarum</b> , Assistant to the Vice-Rector <b>Ms. Michal Daloya</b> , Office of the Rector	Terrace Bldg, Floor 4, Room 4026
10:15-10:45	Meeting with the academic head of Faculty of Social Sciences	<b>Prof. Avi Sagi-Schwartz</b> , Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences	Terrace Bldg, Floor 4, Room 4026
10:45-11:30	Meeting with the academic head of the School of Political Sciences	<b>Prof. Eran Vigoda-Gadot</b> , Head of the School of Political Sciences	Terrace Bldg, Floor 4, Room 4026

11:30-12:15	Meeting with the academic head of the department of Public Policy and Administration	<b>Dr. Yair Zalmanovich</b> , Head of the Division of Public Administration and Policy	Terrace Bldg, Floor 4, Room 4026
12:15-13:00	Lunch with students**		Main Bldg, Restaurants Plaza, Staff dining room
13:00-14:00	Observation	MLGA Class 1st year Dr. Arie Hecht - Economics & Budgetary aspects of local government Rabin Bldg, Room 5003 MLGA Class 2nd year Prof. Avraham Haim - Ecology and Environmental Quality Rabin Bldg, Room 5002	
14:00-15:15	Meeting with faculty and representatives of relevant committees (teaching/curriculum committee, admissions committee, appointment committee)*	<b>Prof. Aaron Cohen</b> - Chair of Graduate Studies committee (MA & PhD Studies) <b>Dr. Dana Vashdi</b> - Division's MA consultant, Teaching committee, Marketing and Advertising committee <b>Dr. Itai Beeri</b> <b>Prof. Aharon Kfir</b> - Emeritus	Terrace Bldg, Floor 4, Room 4026

15:15-16:00	Closed-door working meeting of the committee		Terrace Bldg, Floor 4, Room 4026
-------------	--	--	----------------------------------

**Wednesday, March 16, 2011:**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Room / Location</b>
9:00-9:45	Meeting with adjunct lecturers*	Executive Program: Attorney Ron Rugin, Dr. Lior Sohat Auditing Program: Dr. Hertzal Cohen, Dr. Meir Sivan, Accountant Yossef Yarom Local Government Program: Dr. Osnat Akirav, Dr. Rotem Gonen, Prof. Avraham Haim, Arie Hershkovitz, Judge Ron Shapira	Terrace Bldg, Floor 4, Room 4026
9:45-10:30	Meeting with masters students***		Terrace Bldg, Floor 4, Room 4026
10:30-11:15	Meeting with doctorate students***		Terrace Bldg, Floor 4, Room 4026
11:15-12:00	Meeting with Alumni***		Terrace Bldg, Floor 4, Room 4026
12:00-12:30	Tour of campus (classes, library, offices of faculty members, computer labs	<b>Dr. Andre Eshet</b> - School of Political Sciences coordinator with the Library. <b>Dr. Itai Beer</b> -	

	etc.)	representative of the Division	
12:30-13:30	Lunch and Closed-door working meeting of the committee		Terrace Bldg, Floor 4, Room 4026
13:30-14:15	Summation meeting with heads of the institution and of the department	<b>Prof. David Faraggi</b> , Rector <b>Prof. Batia Laufer</b> , Vice Rector <b>Prof. Avi Sagi-Schwartz</b> , Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences <b>Prof. Eran Vigoda-Gadot</b> , Head of the School of Political Sciences <b>Dr. Yair Zalmanovich</b> , Head of the Division of Public Administration and Policy <b>Ms. Ruchama Elad-Yarum</b> , Assistant to the Vice-Rector <b>Ms. Michal Daloya</b> , Office of the Rector	Terrace Bldg, Floor 4, Room 4026

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

\*\* Please make sure that these are different students than those who will meet with the committee on the second day.

\*\*\* 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.