



**Committee for the Evaluation of Business Administration
Study-Programs**

Ruppin Academic Center

The Department of Business Administration

Evaluation Report

April 2007

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Chapter 1 - Background

At its meeting on March 8th, 2005 the Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to evaluate study programs in the fields of Business Administration during the academic year 2005-2006.

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:

- ***Professor Stuart I. Greenbaum*** - Former dean and Bank of America, Emeritus Professor of Managerial Leadership, U.S.A, Committee Chairperson.
- ***Professor Arnoud W.A. Boot*** - Faculty of Economics and Econometrics, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands.
- ***Professor Arie Goldman*** - KMART Chaired Professor in Marketing, The Jerusalem School of Business Administration, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
- ***Professor Dr. Peter Leeflang*** - Frank M. Bass Professor of Marketing, Department of Economics, University of Groningen, the Netherlands.
- ***Professor Thomas Z. Lys*** - Eric L. Kohler Chair in Accounting, Accounting Information and Management, Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, USA
- ***Professor Yair E. Orgler*** - Former Chairman of The Tel-Aviv Stock Exchange, and former Vice-Rector, Tel - Aviv University, Committee Deputy Chair.
- ***Professor David A. Walker*** - John A. Largay Professor, McDonough School of Business, Georgetown University, Washington DC, U.S.A.

Ms. Chen Hadad - Coordinator of the committee on behalf of the Council for Higher Education.

Within the framework of its activity, the committee was requested to¹:

1. Examine the self-evaluation reports, submitted by institutions that provide study programs in Business Administration, and to conduct on-site visits at those institutions.

¹The Document with Terms of Reference of the committee is attached as **Appendix 1**

2. Present the CHE with reports for the evaluated academic units and study programs - a separate report for each institution, including the committee's findings and recommendations.
3. Submit to the CHE a separate report regarding the examined field of study within the Israeli system of higher education.

The entire process was conducted in accordance with the CHE's Guidelines for Self-Evaluation (of October 2005) and on the basis of the Specific Questions for the Fields of Business Administration which were compiled by the committee.

Chapter 2 - Committee Procedures

The Committee held its first meeting on January 11, 2006, during which it discussed fundamental issues concerning Business Administration study programs in Israel and the quality assessment activity.

During the months of June-July 2006, the committee members received the self-evaluation reports and in September 2006 they began to hold discussions regarding these reports.

In November-December 2006, the committee members visited the institutions. During the visits, the committee met with officials of each institution as well as faculty and students.

In accordance with the committee's request, each institution publicized in advance the committee's visit and it invited academic staff members, administrative staff and students to meet with the committee in order to express their opinions concerning the Business Administration study programs.

This report deals with the **Ruppin Academic Center - the Department of Business Administration.**

The committee's visit to Ruppin Academic Center took place on December 14, 2006. The schedule of the visit, including the list of participants representing the institution, is attached as **Appendix 2.**

The committee members thank the management of Ruppin Academic Center and the Department of Business Administration for their self-evaluation report and for their hospitality towards the committee during its visit to the institution.

Chapter 3: Evaluation of Ruppin Academic Center - The Department of Business Administration

The evaluation is based on the information and the data provided in the self-evaluation report, the committee's visit to the institution and the general impressions of the committee.

Background

The Ruppin Academic Center is the successor of the Ruppin Institute founded in 1949 to train kibbutz members in the management of agrarian enterprises. In 1979 Ruppin became the first non-university institution in Israel to be accredited by the Council of High Education (CHE) to award academic degrees in business school disciplines.

In 2002, following an episode of financial distress, Ruppin was reorganized and became a college budgeted by the CHE. The Department of Business Administration is administratively in the School of Social Sciences & Management. Others are the School of Engineering and the School of Marine Science & Environment. Economics & Management, Economics & Accounting and Behavioral Sciences are other departments in the School of Social Sciences & Management.

The Department of Business Administration, evaluated herein, is the largest and the most prominent department at Ruppin. It enrolls 1,262 students (37% of total Ruppin student population) and offers day and evening programs.

Ruppin Academic Center is governed by a Board of Governors and an Executive Committee elected by the Board. There also is an Academic Council responsible for academic supervision of the Center. Ruppin is led by a President elected by the Board of Governors. Subordinate to the President are School Deans, heads of Academic Departments, an Appointments Committee and a Teaching Committee.

Programs

The Department of Business Administration offers a single undergraduate Business Administration program in two study tracks, daytime and evening. The program is aimed at four target populations:

- a. *Daytime study track (budgeted)* An academic program of 120 credits, taught five days a week for six semesters. It is intended for people in the vicinity of Ruppin who seek higher education in business administration.
- b. *The Horizon (Ofek) program (budgeted)* Established with the IDF and targeted at mid-level military field officers. The IDF allows participants to

study for two calendar years. Classes are in the daytime study track, except for the final (summer) semester, wherein classes are in the evening study track.

- c. *Evening study track – Executive BA (non-budgeted)* Similar to the daytime study track in content, but offered in the evening on Fridays and “intensive days,” over eight semesters including summer semesters.
- d. *Practical engineers studying for a business administration degree (non-budgeted)* Students in this program are eligible for exemptions from several courses according to the Nissim Commission’s recommendations, and CHE resolutions. Students attend evening classes and may complete their program of study within two and a half years.

Ruppín’s programs appeal to the target populations for several reasons:

1. The study programs enable many participants to obtain an academic education while fully employed.
2. The curriculum is attractive and the quality of teaching is high. Students receive individual attention and the staff is highly committed.
3. Many students and staff members live close to the Ruppín campus.

Mission/Goals

The department’s goals are to:

1. Provide academic education in business administration
2. Develop knowledge based, applied research
3. Contribute to the community’s well-being and to develop students’ social sensitivity and environmental awareness.

The self-evaluation report

The self-evaluation was done very professionally. It is forthright and honest.

Atmosphere

Those who visited Ruppín were impressed by the collegial atmosphere that probably has its roots in the kibbutz legacy. Students feel empowered as community members, and although there are many committees and the organizational structure is complex, things seem to run well.

Academic Education

1. According to students, the faculty provides high quality teaching. Students especially appreciate the atmosphere which is collaborative rather than competitive.
2. Faculty members seem genuinely committed to Ruppin and the Department. The Head of the BA Department is devoted, passionate and well organized. Ruppin educates some students who are not admitted at other colleges. Ethiopians, other recent immigrants, Arabs and students without matriculation and older students. Those with deficiencies, however, are required to attend remedial courses.
3. The School offers a number of unique workshops on leadership, decision-making and Israeli society.

There are, however, a number of weaknesses:

1. Admission requirements are lax.
2. There are too many short courses.
3. Attendance is inconsistent and student reading skills of academic material and proclivities towards reading are open to question.
4. English is the language of business and this seems to receive little recognition in the curriculum.
5. The classrooms are poorly equipment.
6. There are few differences between the Executive BA program and the Daytime track BA program. Both the executive and BA programs are single track and only with minor distinction between them.

Faculty and Knowledge Based on Academic Research

Full-time senior staff members teach 12 hours per week and juniors teach 16 hours. Teachers are selected for their teaching skills. Research at Ruppin is at an early stage of development. The scholarly gap with the universities and even with some of the other colleges is formidable. More research means that the teaching becomes more expensive, whereas low-cost teaching has been articulated as one of Ruppin's competitive advantages. Moreover, the recent focus on research promoted by the new President marks a major departure from the past focus on teaching .It is questionable whether many of the veteran faculty who hold permanent at Ruppin will be able to perform quality academic research.

The new President of Ruppin has taken several steps to promote research. One is the establishment of the Institute for Research on Immigration and Absorption. Also, the college encourages veteran teachers to complete their PHD .Ruppin also has hired a number of retired faculty members from universities who are expected to provide research leadership. Finally, the department was able to hire two research oriented PHDs.

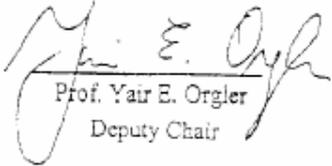
The committee suggests that Ruppin's strengthen its ties with neighbor universities such as Technion and Haifa University. We also suggest a focus on research in areas where Ruppin may enjoy an advantage such as entrepreneurship, environmental issues and values. Business case writing might also be encouraged as a form of applied research in that teaching materials rooted in Israeli experience are in short supply. Research in cooperation with the other Ruppin Schools is another option, as has been suggested in the self-evaluation report (p. 35)

Recommendations

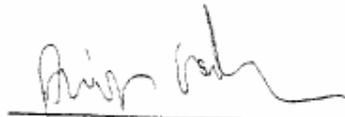
- The department intends to launch an MBA-program. This will require additional staff. The question is whether an MBA at Ruppin will have negative implications for the existing BA programs. Instead, Ruppin should focus on upgrading its existing B.A. programs with the addition of dual track options, especially Economics & Management.
- The committee does not favor dependence on retired university professors and senior staff members with positions at other schools. For example, the Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Management is also on the faculty at Ben-Gurion University.
- Ruppin plays an important role in the Sharon and Emek Hefer region. Arab students from the area should be encouraged to enter the BA-program.
- Attracting qualified new staff members will likely require a more attractive research climate. This will necessitate serious investment.
- Given the diminutive size of the Department of Business Administration, the committee recommends merging the Departments of BA with the Department of Economics & Management and Economics & Accounting. At this time finance and accounting faculty members spread across various departments. A merger strengthens the position of the school and will facilitate the coordination of education and research.

Signed by:

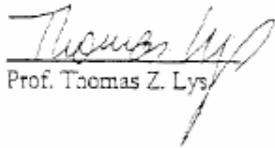

Prof. Stuart I. Greenbaum
Chairperson

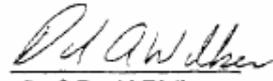

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