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

General Report

July 2011

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Chapter 1 - Background

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[1] Prof. Bardach did not participate in the second round of visits due to personal reasons.

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 **General State of Public Policy and Administration Studies in Israel.**

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

Chapter 3: Evaluation of the Public Policy and Administration Programs in Israel

Our review of Israel's graduate public policy programs focuses on their effectiveness in producing skilled, knowledgeable, dedicated professionals. Why this unusual – for academic reviews – focus? We believe that the primary purpose of public policy programs in Israel is to help Israeli governments and NGO's perform better. They do this by:

1. Educating citizens with a serious and critical understanding of the operations of government, the choices those operations embody, and the results they create;
2. Educating analysts who can reason carefully about the choice of policies in the public interest;
3. Producing professional administrators who can efficiently and effectively carry out the work of government;
4. Producing leaders and managers who can reform and direct agencies, and implement large policy changes
5. Producing high-quality academic research and policy analysis

The first item above is essentially liberal arts education, an appropriate goal of undergraduate instruction; the next three are professional education. Research that makes governments and NGO's function better can be produced in many places other than public policy programs at universities (such as think tanks), although of course universities might have a comparative advantage in disinterestness. Therefore, an important part of the justification for the existence of graduate-level public policy programs is their effectiveness in delivering professional education: on their ability to produce people who can help government and NGO's perform better. While we evaluate research quality at each institution as well, for these reasons

our report focuses primarily on the effectiveness of Israel's public policy programs in producing students who can fulfill one or more of the roles outlined above.[3] –

Many of the problems we see are common to all or most of the master's/PhD programs we observed. Therefore, a large part of our report, and our general recommendations, will be included in this General Report, although we will have some specific comments and recommendations on the individual institutions as well.

Reorienting the Public Policy Curriculum Toward Professional Education

As noted, we start with the point of departure that public policy education, at the master's level (as opposed to the undergraduate or the PhD level) is primarily professional education. By this we mean that it should seek to give students skills to do a better job in various roles associated with improving the performance of the public sector. **Our basic view is that Israeli public affairs programs need to do a better job preparing people with these skills.**

We distinguish between liberal arts and professional education. A liberal arts program emphasizes understanding and explanation, while a professional program emphasizes prescription and intervention. We illustrate the difference with examples. In the area of water policy, an explanatory question is, "Why does Israel have the water policies it does?" A prescriptive question is, "What water policies should Israel have?" In the area of performance measurement for public management, an explanatory question is, "Why is it difficult to measure performance in an environmental protection agency?" A prescriptive question is, "How should environmental protection agencies measure their performance?"

[3] We discuss our assessment methodologies for evaluating both teaching/curriculum and research in an Appendix to this chapter.

Our general conclusion is that all the master's programs we observed have much more of a liberal arts flavor than they should. These programs are too oriented towards explanation and understanding, not enough towards prescription and intervention. We strongly believe the balance of these programs (except for a liberal-arts oriented undergraduate program) needs dramatically to change. Most fundamentally, **public policy programs at the master's level need dramatically to shift their emphasis away from a liberal-arts approach limited to explanation and understanding to a professional one with significant elements of prescription and action.**

We can, broadly speaking, imagine three kinds of programs in public affairs that prepare students for one or more professional or social roles. But as the roles are not interchangeable, neither are the programs. We characterize these three different kinds of programs as (1) liberal arts, (2) public administration, and (3) public policy. We believe programs should make a strategic choice about which of these kinds of programs they would like most to resemble.[4]

(1) *The liberal arts option*: A program might try to create knowledgeable citizens who understand how policies are made and implemented, and have some feel for normative and analytic criteria against which to judge them. We call this "liberal arts" option because of its consonance with the view of higher education as primarily about preparation for life and for citizenship rather than for the workplace. Such a program would attempt to provide for its students an appreciation of the ways in which governmental and political actions arise and how

[4] Since various words are used differently by scholars coming out of different disciplinary or intellectual traditions, we wish briefly to note how we are using various key terms. By "public policy studies" we refer to a prescriptive approach that mixes policy analysis, politics, and management. By "policy analysis" we mean use of various tools, mostly from microeconomic theory and statistics/quantitative reasoning, to draw conclusions about appropriate policies for government to follow. By "policy studies" or "policy sciences" we mean a largely explanatory approach,

they affect the world, from the viewpoint of a citizen or political participant interested in forwarding the public interest. This approach is closely aligned with a tradition in political science that we call "policy studies." The intended results of a liberal arts program would be personal as well as social; just as knowledge of literary classics, history, or one of the natural sciences intends to change the self-concept of the student by giving him or her the power to understand aspects of reality and his or her place within it, knowledge of public affairs ought to help create an empowered, and therefore more self-confident, citizen. A person so educated might or might not go on to employment in or around government -- perhaps after getting further education -- but in either case the student would become a more intelligent newspaper reader and a more discriminating critic of governmental actions, capable of explaining with some nuance how it is that they come about and of judging them according to standards of efficacy, efficiency, and equity.

(2) *The public administration option*: Public administration is the older tradition in public affairs education in the United States, derived from a political theory in which elected officials and their political appointees make policy, while administrators – civil servants – carry it out without reference to their own opinions about what serves the public interest. A trained public administrator knows how to carry out the basic functions of public agencies: to prepare and execute a budget; to draft and administer regulations; to hire and manage subordinates; to design production processes; to procure goods and services; and to audit public books. Such a person needs some understanding of organizational behavior, of government accounting, and of parts of the law, but his or her knowledge consists primarily of management technique, not of

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mostly growing out of political science, studying what policies actually emerge from government and why they emerge.

how to choose ends or to interact with the political system. Public administration may be thought of as the public-sector equivalent of traditional education in business administration.[5]

(3) *The public policy option*: Public policy is a newer tradition associated with the development of public policy schools in the U.S. starting in the late 1960's; it is the tradition with which the American members of this review panel are associated. Public policy education is designed to prepare students to participate in choosing and carrying out actions in the public interest. They may do so as civil servants, but also as holders of elected and appointed office, as outside advisers to government, as employees and leaders of non-governmental organizations, and as journalists and critics. An education in this tradition requires knowledge in three areas: policy analysis, political analysis, and management and leadership.[6]

o Policy analysis concerns the choice of policies in the public interest based on consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of alternative courses of action. Carrying out such an analysis involves predicting the outcomes associated with different choices and then comparing those sets of outcomes according to some evaluative rule. Policy analysis requires knowledge derived from economics, probability and statistics, and operations analysis.

o Political analysis could be thought of as political science in its pragmatic mood: instead of the question "Why did that happen?" it asks "What is to be done?" Taking the perspective of someone who wants to influence the policy process, political analysis considers the problems of advocacy and deliberation in an environment of decision-making institutions and political actors. Political analysis requires knowledge derived from political science and social psychology, with particular emphasis on skills such as negotiation and persuasion.

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[5] We note that in Germanic countries, by contrast, "public administration" generally refers to administrative law.
[6] We note that all these areas could benefit from a broader use of sociology, anthropology, history, law, and moral reasoning.

o Management and leadership goes beyond "administration" to consider how to create and maintain agencies capable of good performance in the present and learning for the future, how to implement new programs, and how to lead agencies through processes of reform and adaptation to new circumstances. Management and leadership draws mostly on organizational theory and behavior, including social psychology, and on operations analysis.

The categories above are ideal types. No actual program embodies any one of them exclusively. And to some extent excellent education of any of the three types will necessarily include elements of the others. A policy analyst needs to know something "technical" about procurement; someone helping to prepare an agency budget ought to be able to think at a liberal-arts level about the alternative uses of scarce resources; and no one can truly be said to be liberally educated about public affairs without having some of the professional's knowledge of what constitutes evidence for or against the value of a program. Thus, for either a public administration or a public policy option, a program should have some of both elements – public administration programs should have some microeconomics and quantitative reasoning, and public policy programs should have some management and politics – but the emphases are different. But the design of any actual program, within the constraints created by the limited time and attention that students will devote to their studies, means making choices: deciding, after consideration, to do this instead of that. We think either choice is acceptable, but programs should be conscious about which choice they are making.

The liberal arts option is an appropriate one for undergraduate education. In a different version, it is also appropriate for PhD programs designed to train scholars. It does not seem to us an appropriate objective for study at the master's level, which should,

in our view, be aimed at preparation for professional careers, either through a public administration or public policy approach.

Without a strong sense of shared purpose, academic programs tend to default toward simply teaching what their faculty is most interested in. In the field of public affairs education, that process is likely to have unsatisfactory results. Furthermore, focus is typically beneficial to organizations and individuals – "If everything is a priority, nothing is a priority." Focus is particularly necessary in the environment of very scarce resources that characterizes Israeli public policy programs, since programs can't do everything.

Why is the current liberal-arts orientation at the master's level a problem? We make a comparison with medical education: if, at the end of a medical education, a student understood the concepts of diagnosis and treatment, the history of diagnosis and treatment in medicine, and the potential pitfalls to which diagnosis and treatment are prone, but was unable to diagnose or treat a patient, we would not regard medical education as having been successful. But, to too great an extent in many of the programs we have examined, the graduate of these programs is like the hypothetical medical graduate who does not know how to diagnose or treat patients.

If the major goal of public-policy programs is to produce research, programs such as these are not a cost-effective way to do so. We note again an analogy to programs producing physicians. Is the only reason that Israel has programs offering medical degrees that it values the research the faculties there produce? We think not. Most biomedical research could have been done either in research universities, commercial companies, or dedicated research centers. If a country cared only about the production of biomedical research, it would not have university programs to train physicians. Such programs would be unnecessary if doctors were unnecessary. This does not mean that medical faculty should not be evaluated on their research contributions.

It does mean that medical faculties should be significantly judged by their ability to produce good doctors.

We think that the same holds for public policy. The research output of the faculty of public policy programs could be produced in think tanks, government laboratories, and traditional academic departments. We agree that faculty in research universities need to be active researchers. Nonetheless, if Israel were only interested in having public policy schools because it valued the research of that faculty members do, there are ways to produce this research that are more straightforward and cheaper than creating such programs. One could argue, if the research output of these programs were outstanding enough, that stellar research quality might mitigate the seriousness of the worries we express about problems these programs are having in delivering professional education. However, our conclusion in our reports on the individual institutions is that research quality, while acceptable, is not outstanding enough, certainly by international standards, to balance our worries about what students are learning.

We fear that, absent a professional approach, programs are simply providing students with a message that there are many obstacles to improvement or that "things are complicated." An outside-observer stance that merely seeks to explain can easily devolve into messages students receive that make them cynical. A failure to engage in rigorous prescription also paves the way for faculty to communicate a single political opinion in the classroom . Unfortunately, we saw some signs of both the problems of cynicism and single viewpoints at some of the programs we observed. We are disturbed at this, and regard it as one of the costs of a non-professional approach. We believe students should receive the message not just that the world is complicated, but also that there are tools to tame it.

In advocating a move towards professional programs, we wish to make clear what a professional orientation does <u>not</u> mean. We do not mean that these programs should merely impart practical "trade" knowledge, divorced from theory or research. Faculty should be producing strong research, though we also believe that one acceptable kind of intellectual

product is rigorous policy reports on a specific problem, of the sort unlikely to be publishable in distinguished scholarly journals. Furthermore, we believe that both research and theory are relevant to a prescriptive enterprise. So, just to take one example, there exists rigorous research on team behavior – for example, on what kinds of knowledge tend to be discussed or not discussed in teams, or about optimal team size – that has strong prescriptive relevance for improving team performance. Simple elements of probability theory help us interpret test results given rates of false positives and base rates for an underlying phenomenon. Second, and following from this, we do not believe that prescriptive conclusions are mere opinion. Indeed, we seek a rigorous professional education in the classroom that equips students to draw prescriptive conclusions, and we also want students to be exposed to examples of approaches – whether policy analytical, political, or managerial – that work well. Thus, the research and intellectual base of these programs should be moved in the direction of theories that help people improve the world, not just understand it; and in the direction of research that sheds light on how to improve practice.[7]

We note finally that we across one example of a course that reflected what in our view is best practice for a curricular approach in a professional public policy program, the which is a model with respect to using rigorous organizational behavior course at the University of Haifa, research results and theories to support a prescriptive approach to improved practice. We urge all the programs to examine lessons learned from this course for use in their curricula (not only in organizational behavior).

[7] Some might object that "prescription" violates scholarly norms of objectivity and even the standards of science. We note that some prescriptive criteria are quite uncontroversial, such as the value of achieving a given goal at the lowest cost or improving an organization's performance along some widely accepted dimension. Other prescriptive criteria that are more controversial are nonetheless debated by scholars in the discipline of philosophy. Medicine and engineering are both fields with scholarly bases that also undertake prescription.

The Research MA Thesis and the PhD Programs

In Israel, programs and departments that produce research MA theses garner both prestige and resources (though less than in the past) from the Malag. The supervision of research students is a criterion for promotion in some universities. These incentives cause programs to emphasize, or even require, preparation of a research master's thesis.

However, with the limited resources available (both in terms of faculty and of student time), Israeli public policy programs must, in our view, be sure to attend to their primary instructional priority – to do a good job providing professional education. The research master's thesis, in an environment where these programs need to do a better job of professional education, is a luxury these programs cannot currently afford.

Currently, demands of the research track are an important force driving these programs in what we are calling a "liberal arts" direction. In terms of the culture of these programs, the research MA takes faculty and student focus away from a professional education mission. It gives many students the impression that professional work is inferior to producing a research thesis -- that the "smart" students should devote their intellectual energies to preparing to do research rather than to becoming the very best professionals.

The desire to prepare students for a research master's thesis also distorts, in our view, the curriculum of these programs. Thus, for example, faculty teaching courses in public administration spend significant effort discussing the history of the field and various disciplinary controversies – many of which have little or no implications for practice, but that faculty perceive as necessary for writing a research MA thesis.

Furthermore, we believe that in many cases the curriculum in quantitative methods is too driven by the criterion of preparing students to write a research thesis. By contrast, we believe

that a case for a required course in research methods in a professional public policy program can only be made – in a world of scarce resources that forces tradeoffs among different skills one requires students to learn -- based on its ability to help professionals evaluate policy research reports, to think about standards of evidence and proof, and to gather and analyze information as part of evidence-based practice. The content of such a course would be different in many cases from a course whose aim was to prepare students to do academic research themselves. Indeed, especially if students are given only one quantitative reasoning course, one could make a strong case that it would be more valuable for students to receive instruction in quantitative reasoning for public policy (which would imply greater emphasis on probability theory and decision-making under uncertainty, neither of which would appear in a "research methods" course), rather than a course in research methods.

Finally, because the inability to do everything in a world of limited student and faculty resources applies to research training as well as professional education, we would add that current research training is insufficient to train good researchers, even at the master's level.

If the research master's thesis were eliminated, temporarily or permanently, an alternative might be a practical paper where students work, ideally for an actual public-sector "client," on an important public policy or public management problem (depending on the focus of the program), at the end of the sequence of required courses. This model already exists at some of the programs we observed, though not currently as a replacement for the research master's thesis.

Israeli Ph.D. programs have few required courses and no qualifying exam. Students enter, having found a supervisor, and begin work on the thesis. The supervisor helps or directs the student to a topic. Whatever its virtues might be in other Israeli university programs, this arrangement does not work for public policy. We met and talked to students at various stages of

work on their dissertation. Most were inadequately prepared and highly unlikely to produce a dissertation that makes a contribution to public policy or any other discipline. Poor preparation took many forms -- insufficient understanding of the tools and techniques they planned to or were using, unfamiliarity with the relevant literature, and even the simple failure (which we observed with distressing frequency) to pose a coherent research question. These students were motivated, intelligent, and dedicated. To set them to work on dissertations without the necessary tools and knowledge is both cruel and wasteful. Overall, just as with the research master's thesis, we here as well believe that the PhD programs in these institutions by and large are draining limited resources from professional education.

The public policy programs that have them value their PhD programs as ways to produce researchers who will do public policy research. There is a worry that, with fewer PhD students, there might be no source for future faculty in public policy programs. Faculty also believe that having PhD students helps in the production of their own research.

However, we seriously doubt that most of the current PhD programs lead to students doing much useful research or to their learning how to become researchers. We also note that most public-policy programs in the U.S. have small, or non-existent, PhD programs, yet faculty produce significant research. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of faculty at U.S. public policy programs has disciplinary degrees in economics, political science, philosophy, psychology, or history. Few have PhD's in public policy. We believe, as we note later in this chapter, that more and better Israeli public policy research should be encouraged directly, not through most of the current PhD programs.

We can think of two ways of producing more people capable of doing public policy research other than the current PhD programs. One is to encourage PhD students in social

science disciplines to choose policy-relevant topics, while also encouraging public policy faculty to advise those students. The other is to provide subsidies for Israelis who wish to do PhD's in public policy to study abroad.

RECOMMENDATIONS: CURRICULAR ORIENTATION TOWARDS PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

1. Our most-important recommendation is that these programs need to recognize that the primary goal of their teaching programs is to train professionals, and to adapt their curricula accordingly.
2. Curricular content needs to be changed to focus on conveying concepts that will improve professional practice.
3. Authority to offer a research master's should be contingent on development of a program with a clear professional orientation. Where this orientation is not currently present, the research master's should be suspended until such an orientation has been developed.
4. Within the next year, each public policy program with a PhD program should evaluate the performance of its program with respect, at a minimum, to the percentage of students who complete a dissertation within five years and whose dissertations lead to publication(s) in peer-reviewed journals, preferably international journals (or as books). Programs that are not reasonably successful by these criteria should be closed.

Teaching and Learning

A fundamental fact about these programs is that most of the students are employed, often in fulltime jobs, and are therefore unable to spend as much outside-the-classroom time on their

studies as students in world-class programs elsewhere. This fact should be strongly shaping the way the programs are designed, but does not seem to be, or at least not to a sufficient extent, At top-ranked institutions in the U.S., first-year students in a two-year master's program are expected to spend 40-60 hours per week on their studies, averaging 3-4 preparation hours outside the classroom per classroom hour. By comparison, the master's students at one program we reviewed reported spending less than two hours per week outside the classroom on all their courses, except at exam time.

Student time is in some ways the scarcest resource for these programs. Students reported that doing all of the assigned reading was simply infeasible, and described techniques they used to survive including one student doing the reading and providing notes to others) , reading only the abstract of an assigned paper, prioritizing which courses receive attention based on the demonstrated tolerance of the instructor for coming to class unprepared, and "crashing" with marathon study sessions (e.g. three sixteen-hour days just before exams).

Furthermore, to accommodate students who work fulltime, instruction in these programs often occurs on only one day a week. This has some advantages, in terms of creating a common student culture, but it also puts extraordinary demands on teaching technology to make it engaging enough reasonably to hold student attention for a long day of classes.

The programs we viewed have additional constraints that make this problem even harder. The departments are small. Some of the fulltime faculty hold outside jobs to supplement their modest salaries.

This fundamental fact about the students has major implications for the content of courses, and for teaching techniques:

(1) **There is a major mismatch in most of these programs between what the courses require in terms of student time to master the material on the one hand, and the actual ability of students to put in this time on the other.** Both at an individual instructor level and at the level of a department, there are strong psychological factors at work encouraging "overstuffing" courses.

If master's students have only a very few hours a week to spend on preparation, then there is a strong case for teaching far fewer concepts at greater depth in individual courses. This same insight, we believe, applies to the total amount of material students are required to learn in the curriculum as a whole (reducing the number of course points required for a degree and/or by keeping the number of hours required for the degree constant but dividing these hours into a smaller number of courses that meet a larger number of hours each week).[8]

We illustrate these issues with reference to coursework in quantitative reasoning (henceforth QR). All Israeli public policy programs require one or more courses in this area. QR includes statistics, data analysis, probabilistic reasoning, cost-benefit analysis and formal methods of qualitative analysis. There is a strong case for requiring a course or courses in QR. Almost all governmental decisions – the design of programs, the weighing of alternatives, or analysis of the effects of proposed or existing policies – require QR. To design programs or to choose among policies, one should know what these programs or policies cost and what they will do. Numbers never completely describe consequences, but few assessments are adequate unless some of the analysis uses numbers. Public servants need not be statisticians or econometricians, but they need to be intelligent consumers of analyses by others. (This is particularly important in

[8] Alternatively, one could extend the number of terms of study.

public policy, as few analyses are disinterested. Graduates of public policy programs are trained to look for biases, but to use this training effectively one must be able to do QR.)

We believe that the curriculum in QR in Israeli public policy programs can and should be much better. The courses of the various programs, as judged by their syllabi, are not likely to lead to competence in QR. Courses try to cover too much. Discussions with students and alumni -- and our sense of the kinds of projects and research that students do -- reinforce the impressions that the syllabi give: students have very insufficient familiarity with quantitative reasoning relevant to evaluating and choosing among policy options.

There is no professional consensus about what elements of QR public policy students must learn. However, it is hard to overemphasize the importance of not trying to do too much. Coverage is the enemy of understanding. It is natural to believe in a minimal list of things that students must know and to design syllabi so that all bases are covered in the time allotted. This is a recipe for failure. (This is no less true of courses influenced by political science than it is of a QR course. Condorcet's Paradox embodies a beautiful piece of reasoning, but is knowing about it really essential for a career in public service?)

While we all value the autonomy of the instructor in the classroom, the demands of instruction in public policy mean that simply allowing each instructor to teach whatever seems best under a given course title may be an inadequate managerial approach. Instructors need to be aware of the instructional needs of the program – what it is that the faculty collectively has decided that the students should learn – and of the constraint on student time, which means that a highly demanding course may in effect "borrow" student effort from other courses. This approach is expensive in faculty time, but the payoffs may be large.

(2) **Programs should consider other ways to increase inputs of student time into class preparation.** Some departments told us they used social and psychological approaches to expand the amount of student time devoted to study. A strongly felt faculty-student culture, which gives the students a clear reason to want to know what they are being taught, is reported to be successful. A strong culture can be reinforced by having all the students attend their required courses together on a single day, rather than allowing students to schedule themselves. (That approach also makes pedagogy more effective by presenting instructors with more homogeneous students.) Some programs are stronger than others in generating a sense of community among current and former students. Insofar as alumni networks can compete with IDF networks as sources of job referral, students will see the benefit of the program and value their reputation among their fellow students. Students reported putting more effort into courses that required them to hand in written assignments or prepare class presentations. Perhaps assigning exercises on a group basis would create social pressure for students to invest more effort so as not to let down their team-mates. Student effort might also be greater if the syllabi were more specific about what study activities were required for each week. Finally, providing financial support to obviate the need to hold a fulltime job, as Hebrew University does, seems to be effective in increasing student effort, though we recognize this is likely to be financially infeasible absent support from a donor.

(3) **Instruction generally takes place during one long day of classes, which leads us to believe that it cannot be effective unless great effort is paid to the problem of making teaching more engaging, by moving away from reliance only or mostly on frontal lectures towards greater use of various kinds of experiential learning.** We do not have an exact prescription for improving pedagogy, but we suggest that departments focus on the question,

perhaps one required course at a time. In terms of teaching effectiveness, active or "experiential" learning – such as field exercises, "decision-forcing" case studies in which students are put into the roles of officials with difficult decisions to make and required to choose, simulations, and time-limited group projects – are designed to engage students' emotions, as well as their intellects. All have high up-front costs in faculty time. But compared to frontal lecturing, they create a much higher level of student retention. In programs where such exercises exist, alumni report far more vivid recall of them than of classroom material.[9] The University of Haifa course in organizational behavior that we discussed earlier as a model for a professional curriculum also does an excellent job in its use of experiential teaching methods as part of its teaching technology.

(4) **An integrative group project has strong advantages both from a perspective of redirecting the curriculum in a professional direction and of providing a more-engaging teaching technology.** Many public policy schools in the U.S., but none in Israel, require that students take part in some kind of group-based integrative exercise. Formats vary but most involve one or more of the following: (1) students being given a scripted problem based on an important real policy issue; (2) students being asked to solve this problem or to play a particular role – using ideas and concepts that have been taught in class.; (3) solutions requiring integrating

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[9] A recent report from the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (Anand Desai, "Quantitative methods, economics, and or models" (J. of Policy Analysis and Management, Summer 2008) has thoughts about new approaches to teaching in quantitative methods. A partial list follows:

(1) Study a few topics deeply rather than many topics superficially;
(2) Use concrete examples that will appeal to students of public policy;
(3) Give students plenty of experience using techniques and concepts –- this means drills for mastery, "story" problems that show how concepts can be applied and hands on experience using computers to manipulate data;
(4) Provide opportunities for collaborative work – both informal study groups and formal group projects are often successful; and
(5) Check with students often to find out what they are learning and what is causing problems.

insights from different kinds of courses. The more-ambitious of such integrative exercises require cross-faculty involvement in designing and grading the exercise, as well as time set aside during which this exercise is all that students do. The resource costs of exercises such as these are, obviously, high. However, the benefits are also large. For many it is an important experience in learning how to actually apply concepts that had previously been seen only as vague abstractions. Memories of the exercise are an important part of school culture.

(5) **A course in negotiations would also simultaneously meet the goals of redirecting curriculum in a professional direction and of providing more-engaging teaching.** We are hesitant to recommend specific courses for the curriculum, especially recommendations to add a course (since we believe these programs in general are already trying to do too much). We make one exception, however. None of the programs we evaluated offers a full course in negotiations, though some programs assign one week of a required course to the topic. We believe there is a strong case for a full negotiations course, covering not only its theoretical aspects (including those derived from game theory and those derived from social psychology), but also the application of those theories to practice. "Practice" here includes not only the formal negotiations that go on among states, between employers and employees, and between buyers and sellers, but also the aspects of politics and management where a negotiation perspective can improve performance.

Such a course, appropriately taught, embodies the direction in which we want Israeli public policy programs to move. A course in negotiations teaches highly useful and practical skills. It is intellectually based on a body of rigorous research. And the way these courses are generally taught, at least in programs with which we are familiar, involves significant experiential learning and not just frontal lectures. Furthermore, these courses are generally

highly popular and very highly rated among students, increasing student time commitment to them.

(6) **Due to severe limits in available faculty resources, programs should consider ways to deliver teaching more cost-effectively.** Every organization faces a choice between "making" and "buying" what it needs. The programs we reviewed overwhelmingly "make" nearly their entire instructional programs, with very limited use of online resources, distance learning, and instruction in other departments ("cross-registration") or at other universities. That might usefully be reconsidered. Considerable course material – often lectures given by outstanding teachers -- is now readily available in video format and/or online. A group of students gathered with an instructor to watch the video of a lecture given by a distinguished scholar elsewhere, under rules that allow any student to stop the video and ask for explanation on a point that is unclear, might easily improve on the results of having the local instructor give his or her own lecture. Some forms of paced online learning have been shown to be effective, and even in some cases superior to classroom instruction.

Where a department has both executive students and students in budgeted programs, consideration should be given to resource savings that would come by combining them for some amount of classroom time. The blending would also have curricular advantages in terms of exposing younger students to the experience of their elders, and possibly creating links that might yield job placements; they also provide an opportunity to think about ways to move master's education in a more professional direction. Universities perceive legal barriers to such combined teaching; we suspect that those barriers could be surmounted with ingenuity and determination.

RECOMMENDATIONS: TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. Curricular content needs to be changed to teach fewer concepts more intensively.

2. Teaching practices and broader policies need to be changed in ways that elicit more student effort and engagement (such as through greater use of experiential learning and exercises/problem sets students prepare outside of class).

3. Programs should consider inclusion of an integrative group exercise giving students an opportunity to work on a concrete, difficult public policy problem that includes microeconomic, quantitative, political, and management dimensions.

4. All public policy programs should require a course on negotiations, emphasizing both its theoretical aspects and professional applications and taught with a significant experiential component.

5. To extend available teaching resources, programs should consider outsourcing some teaching activities, such as through greater cross-registration in other departments or various versions of on-line and distance learning.

Promoting Good Public Policy Research

Many Self-Evaluations noted a dearth of research in Israel that is relevant to public policy. The structure of universities and their reward systems make it difficult and unrewarding to do public policy research. Public policy research requires skills and knowledge that are not easily obtained in traditional disciplines.

We stated at the beginning of this General Report that Israel needs more and better public policy research. It behooves Israel to reward faculty who teach in public policy programs for doing such research. If there is insufficient research in public policy, then the Israeli government and NGOs should do something to encourage such research.

The most effective way to increase public policy research is to make it easier for current public policy faculty to do it. Having a promotion system that recognized serious policy analysis as research (which we discuss below) would help. So would providing resources to faculty who do not participate in PhD programs. In principle this is easy to do: simply set aside funds for which certain kinds of faculty can apply. Many U.S. universities have special funds to support the research of faculty who are in disciplines for which outside research support is not available. Savings from eliminating PhD programs and research master's activities should free up resources to support research by faculty.

Since public policy programs are professional schools, promotion criteria for faculty at the research-oriented programs (all the ones we evaluated except for Sapir) should be somewhat different than in most other social science faculties. Publication of traditional scholarly research in traditional research outlets should of course be an important factor in promotion; an acceptable minimum research quality and productivity output should serve as a constraint.

However, we believe that faculties should also consider as one criterion for promotion decisions the production of high-quality policy reports, produced either independently, or for a governmental or other client. These reports might use the techniques of policy analysis to recommend choice of a certain policy alternative in an area such as health, environmental, energy, or national security policy. They might use rigorous methods to evaluate existing programs. Or they might recommend ways to improve the management capacity of a public organization. Such reports would involve serious intellectual work, informed by disciplines relevant to policy formulation, adoption, and implementation, and reflect relevant empirical social science research as well. However, often they would not make a theoretical or empirical contribution allowing publication of the results in a highly ranked scholarly journal.

We note that it is not so easy to judge the quality of such reports – the easy routes of looking at journal quality and citation counts are not available – and also that our own institutions frequently do not do a good job evaluating such output (except in terms of impact on public policy or public debate, which is at least a first step). Promotion committees will actually need to read these reports, not just count number of published papers. We believe, nonetheless, that in a public policy program, this is worth the effort.

RECOMMENDATIONS: PROMOTING GOOD PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH

1. Funds should be set aside specifically for supporting public policy research.
2. Prescriptive and evaluative policy analyses by faculty should count as research products for purposes of promotion. This will require developing a peer-review process for such analyses.

Implementing Our Recommendations

We are aware that the approach we outline here could involve major changes in some of the programs we have evaluated. We are also aware that, especially in an environment of resource constraints, finding the time to retool curricula and faculty skills in the direction of these recommendations is not easy. We believe, however, that the improvements the approach we recommend would bring about, both in the quality of these programs and, with time, in the quality of the Israeli public sector, makes spending the time worthwhile. Time and personnel resources necessary to make these changes should be provided.

RECOMMENDATIONS: IMPLEMENTATION

1. For programs that undertake major changes in curricula and teaching methods, faculty involved in these changes be granted by the Malag appropriate credit towards meeting their

teaching hour requirements during a reasonable period of time to adopt and implement the changes. We recognize this will be at the cost of the temporary availability of some elective courses.

2. Any increases in resources made available to public policy programs should be given to those institutions willing to invest in changes to move their programs in a more professional direction. A portion of these new resources should temporarily be set aside for work to transition to improved programs.

APPENDIX: OUR ASSESSMENT METHODS

Teaching and Learning

Professional schools produce careers and research. They are effective only if students learn useful things while in the program. As such, the committee went to great lengths to assess teaching effectiveness. In the interest of transparency, we wish to discuss how we gathered evidence for our conclusions. Of course, in a short visit, the amount of information we could gather was limited. However, we made every effort to gather as much information as systematically as we could. We also believe we bring an outside perspective that can be helpful to any organization.

As is usually done, we examined the self evaluation reports, syllabi, attended classes and talked to faculty about teaching methods and philosophy. We worked especially hard to get useful information from our meetings with students. On all of our site visits we changed the

schedule as to spend as much time with students as we could. We took detailed notes at these meetings.

Most importantly we asked all groups of students similar questions. We focused on these questions: (1) Are you working full time? (Roughly 80% said yes.) (2) Do you plan to change your job after you get your degree? (Roughly 70% said no.) (3) Tell us about the major messages or concepts that you took away from your studies. (4) Tell us an idea or concept that you learned that proved useful in your work.

The answers to the last two questions were generally disappointing. The most common response to the third was something like, "I learned there are many reasons why governments make bad decisions." The reasons they cited varied. Some cited complexity, others the influence of politics on governmental decisions, others some variant of elite exploitation of the masses. Almost never did we hear that they had learned how to help governments make better decisions. Some students also resisted the notion that it was possible to have governments make better decisions.

The responses we got to the fourth question were also disappointing. Memorable concepts were generally very vague. Furthermore, when we asked students to talk to us about particular public policy problems, they seldom used basic analytic concepts, and when they did the analysis was seldom correct.

It is primarily on this body of evidence that we base our conclusion that these programs are not doing an adequate job of training professionals who will improve the performance of Israel's government.

Research

The task of assessing research output is relatively complex, and we have only moderate confidence in our (moderately positive) conclusions. In a mature field such as economics, the standard protocol is to count journal articles, and weight their significance by what we know of the field and such metrics as journal impact factors and citations In public policy, while this procedure can be followed to a certain extent, we need to go beyond it. We will discuss a number of issues and will explain our resolution of them in this section. They apply to all of the institutions under review. Application to specific institutions appears in the individual reports.

We have relied on the institutions' Self-Evaluations on faculty and student publications and grant funding, which all have supplied. These Self-Evaluations contain the title or topic of the research, and information as to publication. We comment below on elements missing from these Self-Evaluations – and legitimately so – which the committee has had to supply from its own, and no doubt only partially informed and biased, knowledge base. We have tried to maintain some consistency across institutions by looking at the evidence of research output from 2004 to 2009. In some cases, budget cuts have probably biased these measures significantly; and we point this out when we are aware of it.

(1) Contributing to the academic knowledge base in public policy: This has both qualitative and quantitative aspects. The quantitative aspect can be approached through counting (publications, for instance) and adjusting for faculty size. Although the qualitative dimension may be the more important, we have not been able to assess it, since doing so would have entailed our committee's actually reading all the relevant publications, which has not been possible for reasons of time. Our proxy for quality has been the prestige and general standing of

the outlet in which the publication has appeared, including, in the case of books, the publishing house.

We have not always known how to estimate prestige and general standing, however. We have had to use our own knowledge. In general, we have assumed that journal of general distribution, such as the *Journal of Politics*, have higher standing than more specialized journals, such as *The Economics of Peace and Security*. We have also tried to make inferences from the title or topic of the paper or book. A highly specialized topic gets less weight than one that is of more general coverage or interest – although we also give less weight to topics that are so general and abstract that it is hard to evaluate their contribution. This not a very satisfactory procedure, but it is the best we can do.

Of course, the fact of publication does not mean as much as the degree to which the publication is in fact used by other scholars and policymakers. For academic articles, one could look at references counted in the Social Science Citation Index, though this would give a very incomplete picture of the overall influence of scholars' contributions. In any case, we have not used citation counts.

(2) Non-academic outlets: We believe (and will discuss later in this General Report) that reports to governmental or non-governmental policy institutions of what might be called "applied research" ought to count as research provided they are of high quality, which we have conceded is hard to assess. Despite this difficulty, we do include these in our assessment. We attempt to estimate quality, to some very rough degree, by looking at the topic of the work (as incorporated into the title) and the client or audience for which it has been prepared. Given that one aim of public policy professional schools is to influence policy, we also need to give some attention to publications – usually in newspapers and magazines – intended to reach a broad civic audience.

A column in *Haaretz*, for instance, is not nearly as weighty as an article in the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, but it is not wholly irrelevant either.

(3) International versus Israeli outlets: These categories overlap considerably with "English" versus "Hebrew" as the language of publication. Our general assumption is that English-language (international) outlets have higher standing than Hebrew-language (national) outlets. However, we are aware that much good work could appear in Hebrew only, and that a review committee of non-Hebrew-language readers could well be unaware of works of real value. (Imagine assessing the world of Israeli letters before translators had gotten around to, say, S.Y.Agnon.) In addition, nearly all "applied" work intended for Israeli policy institutions would be published in Hebrew, not in English. And, as we argued above, we believe these ought to have some weight in a review process.

(4) Books versus articles: In some fields (though not others), and among some scholars, articles appearing in peer-reviewed journals count for much, while books are regarded as pre-scientific forms of publication and not highly regarded. In public policy, however, books can be of great interest, since they can paint on a broader canvas, and can synthesize materials hitherto dispersed or unfocused. Depending – greatly – on the publishing house, the peer review process for books can be as rigorous as that for journal articles.

One must also deal with the question of how to weight the contributions made by chapters appearing in edited volumes. These are not typically very rigorously peer-reviewed. Nevertheless, we believe these can sometimes be very good indeed. Our approach is, in general, to consider the scholarly reputation of the editor, the topic of the volume, and the publisher.

(5) Who is included? The institutions' Self-Evaluations generally distinguish among contributions made by different subgroups of individuals, e.g. senior permanent faculty, adjuncts,

students, etc. This means that the institutions could control the denominators in situations where reviewers looking at indices like output per FTE. This permits "gaming the system" to a degree, by including the more productive and excluding the less so. We do not know whether this is a significant source of bias or not. Using FTE as a denominator may be incorrect in any case. A more relevant denominator might be output per shekel spent on supporting the unit. In any case, we have not paid much attention to this issue.

(6) Evaluation standards: This is a question without an easy answer. None of the institutions reviewed comes up to the standards of a public policy school at a top-flight American university. But what is one to make of that? By definition, neither do most American universities. A more important question is whether they achieve what should be expected of high-performing Israeli universities, taking into account the time and money constraints found in most Israeli institutions.

This formulation just pushes the question back one level, to be sure. The financial drought imposed on Israeli higher education for almost the past decade by government spending policy is certainly significant. If research output has dropped during this period, is that the responsibility of the government or of individual departments or of individual faculty members? In our review we attempt to take a stance on this question that points towards constructive action rather than towards allocating blame. Generally, as we do with teaching, we hold out the research performance of the better U.S. schools of public policy as targets of aspiration but at the same time recognize that Israeli realities certainly impose essentially unknowable limits on how far they can proceed.

Signed By:

Prof. Steve Kelman, Chair

Prof. Eugene Bardach

Prof. Mark Kleiman

Prof. David Nachmias

Prof. Michael Rothschild

Appendix 1: Letter of Appointment

שר החינוך
Minister of Education
وزير التربية والتعليم

October 12, 2010

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

Dear Professor Kelman,

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

This most important initiative reaches out to scientists in the international arena in a national effort to meet the critical challenges that confront the Israeli higher educational system today. The formulation of international evaluation committees represents an opportunity to express our common sense of concern and to assess the current and future status of education in the 21st century and beyond. It also establishes a structure for an ongoing consultative process among scientists around the globe on common academic dilemmas and prospects.

I therefore deeply appreciate your willingness to join us in this crucial endeavor.

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

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

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

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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

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