



Committee for the Evaluation of Sociology and Anthropology Study Programs

Max Stern Academic College of Emek Yezreel

**Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Evaluation Report**

August 2012

Contents

Chapter 1:	Background.....	3
Chapter 2:	Committee Procedures.....	4
Chapter 3:	Evaluation of Sociology and Anthropology Study Program at Emek Yezreel College.....	5

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Letter of Appointment

Appendix 2 - Schedule of the visit

Chapter 1- Background

At its meeting on July 14, 2009, the Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to evaluate study programs in the field of Sociology and Anthropology.

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. Seymour Spilerman – Department of Sociology, Columbia University, USA, Committee Chair
- Prof. Arne Kalleberg - Department of Sociology, University of North Carolina, USA
- Prof. Herbert Lewis - Department of Anthropology, University of Wisconsin, USA
- Prof. Leslie McCall - Department of Sociology, Northwestern University, USA*
- Prof. Yitzhak Samuel - Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Haifa, Israel
- Prof. Moshe Shokeid - Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Tel Aviv University, Israel
- Prof. Florencia Torche - Department of Sociology, NYU, USA†.

Ms. Yael Franks - Coordinator of the Committee on behalf of the CHE.

Within the framework of its activity, the Committee was requested to‡:

1. Examine the self-evaluation reports, submitted by the institutions that provide study programs in Civil Engineering, 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 2009).

* Prof. Leslie McCall did not take part in the evaluation of OUI, TAU, BIU and AUC

† Prof. Florencia Torche joined the committee at a later stage, after the first round of visits in January 2012, thus did not take part in the evaluation of BGU, HUJI, Academic College Emek Yezreel and University of Haifa

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

Chapter 2-Committee Procedures

The Committee held its first meetings on January 02, 2012 during which it discussed fundamental issues concerning higher education in Israel, the quality assessment activity, as well as Sociology and Anthropology Study programs.

In January 2012, the Committee held its first cycle of evaluation, and visited Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, University of Haifa, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and The Academic College of Emek Yezreel. In May 2012 the Committee conducted its second evaluation cycle, and visited The Open University, Tel Aviv University, Bar Ilan University and Ariel University Center of Samaria. During the visits, the Committee met with various stakeholders at the institutions, including management, faculty, staff, and students, and toured the visited departments.

This report deals with the Max Stern Academic College of Emek Yezreel.

The Committee's visit to Max Stern Academic College of Emek Yezreel took place on January 10th, 2012.

The schedule of the visit is attached as **Appendix 2**.

The Committee thanks the management of the Academic College of Emek Yezreel and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology for their self-evaluation report and for their hospitality towards the Committee during its visit at the institution.

Chapter 3: Evaluation of Sociology and Anthropology Studies Program at Max Stern Academic College of Emek Yezreel

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.

Background

Formerly an annex of the University of Haifa, the Max Stern Academic College of Emek Yezreel received accreditation from the Council of Higher Education in 1993 as an autonomous institution of higher education. The college's mission is to provide affordable access to higher education for residents of diverse backgrounds who live in Israel's northern periphery in the Yezreel Valley and Galilee regions. Students hail mainly but not exclusively from the low-income towns of Afula, Migdal ha-Emek, Nazareth, Natzeret-Elit, and nearby kibbutz and moshav communities. They are diverse in ethnicity, religion, immigrant status, and socio-economic background. The college maintains special programs in preparatory studies (pre-academic) for students whose high school preparation was inadequate along with adult education classes. Both students and staff are encouraged to interact socially, engage in enlightened and tolerant dialogue about core social issues in contemporary Israeli society, comprehend and contribute to the unique needs of surrounding communities, and acquire an appreciation of education and civic responsibility that can be passed on to families, friends, and future generations. The latter goal is a vital mission of the college given its enrollment of students who are often the first in their families to attend college.

The academic specialization of the college is exclusively in the social sciences. Its single faculty includes 13 departments which span the range of social science disciplines. In addition, the college contains more practice-oriented departments in Human Services, Health Systems Management, Nursing, Communications, Management Information Systems, and Criminology. There is also an eclectic Department of Multidisciplinary Studies, which covers such topics as Middle East Studies, Jewish People and World Cultures, and Law and Society, among others. It is evident from the impressive breadth of the curriculum that the college aspires to educate its students in the liberal arts and to prepare them for graduate studies (20% pursue advanced degrees), even as it fulfills its principal mandate to impart useful labor market skills. Finally, the college fosters relationships between its students and local public institutions and non-profit organizations through scholarships that support public service and offset tuition costs. In these and other respects, Emek Yezreel is an innovator in the provision of higher education to disadvantaged students enrolled in the college system.

Mission and Goals of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology

The mission of the college is reflected strongly in the goals of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. The chair and senior staff of the department embrace their role as educators of disadvantaged students in the periphery in need of marketable skills and individualized attention and encouragement. Thus, the department stresses its intent to "provide students with essential knowledge for entry level jobs in various spheres." The faculty also seeks to inspire the intellects of its students and to nurture a culture of social integration and informed analysis of social issues. Although many students enter the program with academic deficiencies and language difficulties, a significant number counter balance these with elevated levels of motivation. The department invests in services that will improve the performance of students over time; by graduation, the goal is to have transformed them into students of a higher academic caliber than when they entered. Although we do not know how representative the students we met are, several of them were shining symbols of the department's success in this respect, and the faculty is to be commended for this achievement.

At the same time, the student population is heterogeneous, with a nontrivial number beginning at the high end of the academic ability spectrum. One of the key challenges of the department, therefore, is to appeal to students at all levels of preparation, motivation, and interest, and to deliver both a practical and a general education. All this must be accomplished in the midst of declines in enrollment in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Emek Yezreel, and, we should note, in sociology departments throughout the country.

The chair and senior staff of the department have undertaken several steps to meet the enrollment challenge. In the past, there was a special track in organizational sociology, which was a robust source of students because of the marketable skills imparted. This track was discontinued under order from the Council of Higher Education when the new Department of Human Services was established at the college. A track in Applied Anthropology is a second program that had appeal--presumably because of offerings in medical anthropology--but was discontinued by the CHE. Our understanding is that the CHE wishes to discourage specialized tracks within a department at the BA level. The teaching staff, however, continues to have expertise in these areas and offers elective courses that appeal to students with an interest in organizational studies and applied anthropology. A new practicum in the third year and a fast track to the MA in Organizational Consulting are related innovations intended to bolster the attractiveness of the BA program and deter enrollment declines.

A final challenge facing the department concerns its balance of teaching and research. While the missions of the college and the department are formulated in terms of teaching excellence, the staff is under considerable pressure to conduct research and publish, despite heavy teaching responsibilities. Moreover, the department has a considerable number of students with academic deficiencies at entry, adding to the teaching and mentoring load. At the same time, the requirements for promotion in the faculty career

ladder stress the importance of research and publication. Thus, the department must determine some feasible arrangement for facilitating faculty research without compromising its impressive commitment to teaching.

The Study Program

The department offers a double track program that combines sociology and anthropology with a second major at the undergraduate level. Students can select the second major from among political science, psychology, education, multidisciplinary studies, economics and criminology. The students are required to complete 60 credit points in each department to be eligible for the BA degree.

The study program in sociology and anthropology consists of three kinds of courses: obligatory, basic studies, and electives. The introductory and theory courses (obligatory) provide undergraduate students with the necessary knowledge for a basic understanding of the two core disciplines in the department. The methodology offerings acquaint students with basic statistics and quantitative research methods, along with ethnographic and qualitative research approaches. Students are also required to take a course in scientific writing and in computer and information technology, which are basic tools for undertaking research and preparing analytic reports; both skills have utility in the labor market. The study program includes two research seminars, from which students are required to choose one, and a number of elective courses that cover a range of topics with special emphasis on organization studies.

To enable students to specialize in specific areas that have practical applications, the department focuses its instruction in three main fields: organization studies (especially human resource management), digital culture, and kibbutz studies; the last in recognition of the location of the college in a region with many kibbutzim. Since the CHE does not permit the department to institute separate tracks in the BA curriculum, these concentrations do not receive formal recognition on the students' diplomas. For the purpose of making the specializations more attractive to employers, the Committee recommends that the department explore with the CHE the possibility of issuing certificates, apart from the BA diploma, that recognize a student's attainment in a specialty.

As a general assessment, the study program covers the core studies in sociology and anthropology adequately, though the level of instruction appears to be somewhat lower than in comparable study programs offered by universities in the country. This observation is based on our review of the syllabi of various courses, especially ones that are central to the two disciplines.

Faculty and Teaching

Teaching in the department is carried out by a combination of senior academic staff, senior external teachers, and junior external teachers. Members of the senior staff all have PhDs (most from Israeli universities) but members of the junior staff generally do not have a doctorate and typically are employed as teaching assistants. The senior academic staff and

senior external teachers (whose primary employment is usually at other institutions) appear well qualified for teaching at the college. The senior staff are fulltime, 100 percent appointments, but none can devote all of their time to the department. Only one member of the staff is committed as much as 84 percent time, while others are budgeted as little as 25 and 17 percent time—one or two courses within the department. Given the relatively small size of the sociology/anthropology program and its low enrollment, faculty members must devote much of their teaching time to other units of the college. With appointments split in this way, it is difficult for the academic staff to attend to departmental activities, interact regularly with students or with each other as a peer group. If enrollments were higher, the faculty could devote more effort to the sociology/anthropology curriculum and strengthen the department. But, as noted, the attractiveness of this program at the college, and its enrollment, largely depends on the availability of course offerings that are seen by students as enhancing their employment prospects.

In general, the course offerings are appropriate for a combined program of sociology and anthropology, but some of the courses defined as anthropology should be enhanced to better realize one of the proclaimed missions of the department, namely to explore the difficulties of newcomers' integration into Israeli society. Such material could be incorporated into courses on ethnographic and qualitative methods, Israeli society, the kibbutz, and tourism. Also, in light of the large enrollment of Arab-Israeli students at the college, it would be appropriate to add ethnographic materials that cover the variety of minority cultures in Israel.

A particular concern was raised with respect to the anthropology faculty in that only one member of the senior staff was trained in cultural anthropology/ ethnography. In light of the preceding comment on subject material, we think it is appropriate that the department give consideration to strengthening its faculty in this field once enrollments in the department permit an addition to the staff.

Students

Emek Yezreel College was established to enable access to higher education on an affordable basis by residents of the northern periphery with diverse backgrounds. Given this mission, the college has a very high acceptance rate, which peaked at 96% in 2008 and has since declined to 74%. The philosophy of the college is to give a chance to students whose attainments in high school were limited by their geographic location or because they come from low socioeconomic families. Many of the students live in development towns or come from Arab communities in which the quality of secondary schooling is weak. Therefore the admission standards are set lower than at the universities.

The senior academic staff has represented to the committee that there is not a close relationship at the college between the psychometric scores and academic attainment. The contention is that motivation and commitment to complete the degree count for more than the entry test scores. Further, as noted earlier, the college and the department allocate extra resources and faculty time to bring students to a level at which they can successfully

complete college assignments. Additionally, for those whose backgrounds are particularly weak, the college offers a year of preparatory work, the "mechina", to prepare the students for college study.

The department reports a steep decline in enrollment, from a peak of 105 entering students in 2007 to 48 in 2011, probably reflecting the increasing tendency of students to select a "practical" field, such as economics or education, and the elimination of the programs in organizational studies and applied anthropology, which were seen as having some linkages to work careers. Despite this decline, the acceptance rate into the department has been lowered, indicating to us a commitment to maintain a reasonable minimum quality of student preparation at the entry level, despite pressure on the program from declining enrollments. The committee agrees that admission standards must be maintained to protect the quality of the program while it recognizes the acute problem of supporting a rich array of course offerings in a very small department. To make sociology/anthropology study more attractive, we have suggested the possibility of introducing program certificates that would attest to the completion of coursework with a certain major, but recognize that this will require the approval of the CHE.

A second possibility would be to move some of the courses taught in other departments by the faculty of Sociology and Anthropology into this department. However, we hesitate to make a strong recommendation on this matter because it involves organizational considerations that are better understood by the administrative staff of the college than by this committee. What is clear is that the college will have to take steps to increase enrollment in the department if it is to remain a viable academic unit. And this should be done without lowering the entry requirements.

The students and alumni to whom we spoke expressed considerable satisfaction with the program of study, and with the spirit of the College and their relations with the staff. While recognizing the limitations of the program due to its small size and consequent inability to offer many courses, several declared that their eyes have been opened to new horizons and their views broadened. At the same time, they emphasized a desire to have their studies connected to the world of work in some way that would enhance employment and career. Several students mentioned a research practicum, as a vehicle towards this end.

Research

The Senior Academic Staff carries out research in Israeli settings and several publish regularly, sometimes in middle-range international journals, often in local publications. This scholarly production is admirable, especially in view of the heavy teaching load and other institutional obligations of the faculty, often in multiple departments. The lack of a research infrastructure at the college is a serious problem for them since research and publication are a consideration for promotion in the faculty ranks. Moreover, the availability of research projects are important for the students, some of whom aspire to graduate study at a university. A research practicum, involving field work at a nearby industrial or agricultural firm, or at a hospital, would also meet the needs of the more job-

oriented students by providing a concrete linkage between studies and work activities. Such a course might enhance the appeal of the department and should be considered.

Recommendations and Suggestions

Our summary impression of the college is that it addresses an important need in northern Israel by providing access to higher education for capable, though less well-prepared students. With respect to the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, our concerns largely relate to the declining enrollment in this organizational unit. In the main, the goals of students at the college are oriented to acquiring skills that will be useful in the labor market after the BA degree, and the study of sociology and anthropology is not well linked to such a practical goal. But if the department is to remain a robust teaching academic unit, it must take into account the student preferences and shape its offerings accordingly, while recognizing that there is a core of theoretical and substantive knowledge that must be mastered by graduates of the program. Our recommendations largely reflect these concerns.

1. To increase enrollment in the department, the college should seek from the CHE permission to award certificates that recognize the mastery of a field within the BA program. The certificate might note that the recipient has successfully completed, perhaps, 16 units of study in a particular specialty, and the required coursework might draw from the second track in the student's program, as well as from sociology/anthropology. Thus, a certificate in organizational studies might include coursework from economics or from psychology, depending on the student's second track. We emphasize that the quality of the coursework should not--and need not--be compromised, nor do the course materials have to be made "practical-oriented". Rather, the recommendation relates to the packaging of the study program in a way that would make sociology/anthropology study more attractive to students and to prospective employers without sacrificing the rigor of the program. We leave it to the department to choose two or three certificate programs that make sense for its students, and which it can staff.
2. The college should permit courses in sociology and anthropology that are offered by other departments, such as Communications, Health Care Management, or Nursing, to be cross-listed with the offerings of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. The intent would be to make this department more appealing to prospective majors by increasing the range of courses available to its students.
3. To help link the coursework in sociology and anthropology with research undertakings and with the career beginnings of the more practical-oriented students, we recommend that the department establish a research practicum. This could take the form of a workshop that includes off-campus visits, observation, interviews, data analysis, and the submission of research reports. This should begin within two years.
4. The typical teaching load is a heavy one and permits little opportunity for research by the academic staff. Since the college is principally a teaching institution, we recommend

that teaching quality be the primary basis of evaluation for promotion. Alternatively, if research and publication are to be stressed, then financial resources and release-time arrangements should be provided to beginning, full-time faculty.

Signed by:




Prof. Seymour Spilerman,
Chair



Prof. Arne Kalleberg



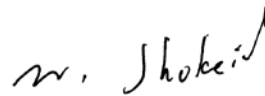
Prof. Herbert Lewis



Prof. Leslie McCall



Prof. Yitzhak Samuel



Prof. Moshe Shokeid

Appendix 1: Letter of Appointment



February, 2012

שר החינוך
Minister of Education
وزير التربية والتعليم

Prof. Seymour Spilerman
Department of Sociology
Columbia University
USA

Dear Professor Spilerman,

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 Chair of the Council for Higher Education's Committee for the Evaluation of Sociology - Anthropology Studies.

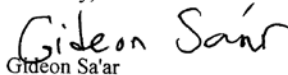
The composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Seymour Spilerman (Chair), Prof. Arne Kalleberg, Prof. Herbert Lewis, Prof. Leslie McCall, Prof. Yitzhak Samuel Prof. Moshe Shokeid and Prof. Florencia Torche.

Ms. Yael Franks will coordinate the Committee's activities.

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

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

Sincerely,



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

Enclosures: Appendix to the Appointment Letter of Evaluation Committees

cc: Ms. Michal Neumann, The Quality Assessment Division
Ms. Yael Franks, Committee Coordinator

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Appendix 2: Site Visit Schedule

**The Department of Sociology and Anthropology - Schedule of site visit –
Max Stern Academic College of Emek Yezreel**

Tuesday, January 10, 2012

Time	Subject	Participants
10:00-10:45	Opening session with the heads of the institution and the senior staff member appointed to deal with quality assessment	<u>Management</u> Prof. Aliza Senhar - President Mr. Yoram Raz-C.E.O Prof. Ariela Lowenstein – Head of the Dept. of Health Systems Management, Chair of Research Committee, Chair of committee for Advancement of Teaching, Chair of Appointments committee. <u>Academic Administration Office</u> Ms. Anat Rave- Academic secretary Ms. Shiri Dvir- Head of Section Learning Program
10:45-11:15	Meeting with the academic and administrative heads of the Department of Sociology & Anthropology	Dr. Moshe Sharabi- Head of the Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology Prof. Helena Desivilya- previous Head of the Dept. Dr. Shlomi Reznik Ronit Honovich- Administrative Secretary
11:15-12:00	Meeting with senior academic staff (representatives of relevant committees)*	Dr. Yoni Mizrachi Prof. Viktor Friedman Prof. Michal Palgi Dr. Shlomo Getz Dr. Moti Netzer Dr. Daniella Arieli
12:00-12:45	Meeting with Adjunct academic staff *	Dr. Efrat Barel Dr. Dorit Shouval Mr. Raz Cherbelis ,M.A

		Ms. Michal Shamir , M.A.* Ms. Orit Shamir Balderman, M.A.* * Ph.D. Candidate
12:45-13:30	Lunch (in the same room)	Closed-door meeting of the committee
13:30-14:15	Tour of facilities: classrooms, library, offices	Prof. Aliza Senhar Mr. Yoram Raz Dr. Moshe Sharabi
14:15-14:45	Meeting with BA students**	Up to 8 students
14:45-15:30	Meeting with Alumni**	Ms. Navarra Natalie Ms. Keren Lior Ms. Reut Azoulay
15:30-16:30	Closed-door working meeting of the committee	
16:30-17:15	Summation meeting with heads of department and institution	Prof. Aliza Senhar - President Prof. Ariela Lowenstein- Chair of Research Committee, Chair of committee for Advancement of Teaching, Chair of Appointments committee. Dr. Moshe Sharabi- Head of the Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology Prof. Helena Desivilya- previous Head of the Dept. Dr. Shlomi Reznik Ronit Honovich- Administrative Secretary

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

** The visit will be conducted in English with the exception of students who may speak in Hebrew and anyone else who feels unable to converse in English.