

College of Judea and Samaria

The Behavioral Sciences Department at the College of Judea and Samaria is to be commended for its efforts to comply with the recommendations of the committee and for its clear and frank report on those efforts. It is gratifying to see that the department has complied with most of the core recommendations on the undergraduate program, by making the program more rigorous, up-to-date, and coherent, though some issues remain that need attention.

1. Undergraduate Program

A. The courses in psychopathology must be updated to current standards, that is, they must be based on evidence-based theories, diagnoses, and treatments.

It appears that these courses have been updated as recommended.

B. The program in Educational Psychology needs to be enriched and updated (or disbanded). The core of a program in educational psychology within a behavioral sciences department should include rigorous advanced work in such topics as learning and memory, problem solving, thinking, transfer, cognitive development, social factors in learning, and learning disabilities and their brain and behavioral bases.

This program is under revision as a program in Education with a teaching certificate; as such, it should be separated entirely from Behavioral Sciences. The curriculum for the current education track of the major has been appropriately enriched.

C. Skills in reading and analyzing textbooks and articles in English need to be augmented. Proficiency in English is needed for professional life and for graduate studies. The curriculum committee should insure that current textbooks in English are adopted in many if not most of the basic required courses and that readings in English are incorporated into most advanced courses.

Providing skills in English has been augmented by adding English readings across the curriculum. In addition, there is now a special course based on critical analysis of journal articles in English.

D. The pool of mandatory courses in Sociology and Anthropology needs to be enlarged from the current courses, Family in an Age of Change and Religion and Society, to include courses in such core topics as Stratification, Ethnicity, Organizations and Communities, Political Sociology that are not currently offered and hence need to be developed.

The department has considerably enriched the course offerings in Sociology, including many of the recommended courses.

E. The courses in statistics and research methods need to be reexamined to make sure that they are comparable to similar training in the universities. In addition, the department should insure that every student has hands-on experience with research.

The statistics and research methods requirements have been upgraded, and students are

now required to take a research seminar.

F. At least one course integrating the various views in behavioral sciences should be added to the curriculum.

Courses integrating the behavioral sciences have not yet been added.

G. The department as a whole should carefully consider raising the levels of the courses to better prepare students for employment and graduate training and to make them more competitive for graduate school. Concurrently, the department should consider raising its entrance requirements.

The entrance requirements have been raised, as have the requirements to move from the first to second year of studies.

H. Related to the previous point, the department should consider instituting an honors program for especially promising students interested in research and graduate school, with special seminars and research experience. This would help to challenge the best students who are kept back by the college's mission to train students who are less well prepared for college.

An honors program has not been implemented.

I. The faculty seemed unaware of certain problems the students pointed to, for example, need for challenge in courses, need for better training in English and in statistics, library and computer facilities. Specifically, the faculty seemed to think that these were not problems, but the students thought otherwise. The committee recommends that the faculty regularly survey the students regarding these general educational issues to gain their perspective and to be responsive to it by making needed changes.

The department solicited student feedback through focus groups and a comprehensive survey and then deliberated on the results. As a consequence, there is now an orientation meeting for incoming students and an informational meeting about career options for second and third year students.

2. Infrastructure

A. Library. Efforts should be made to insure that students have access to the journals and other publications they need, both hard copies, and where available, especially e-copies. There are no sociology journals in the library, a serious deficiency. The College should consider a consortium with other colleges and/or universities to defray costs, as well as arrangements with nearby universities for student access to library materials.

The library seems to have added e-databases in psychology and sociology but it is not clear what resources are currently available. Current standards are to make library resources accessible to students all over campus and off-campus as well, though wifi and internet connections.

B. The students reported a lack of computers and printers and insufficient wireless

connections.

It is not clear whether there are more computers and printers available to students than previously. A new library is under construction. However, electronic access to archived materials both on campus and off is increasingly more important than physical structures, and it is not clear that significant improvements along these lines have been made.

3. Faculty

A. Many senior members of the faculty will soon retire, leaving a gap in leadership. These retirements provide an opportunity to develop a vision for the department and hire new faculty in emerging areas such as brain sciences and evidence-based clinical practice, as well as areas central to behavioral sciences in need of augmentation in the department. Courses in basic cognitive, social, and developmental psychology, for example, are needed. At the same time, the department may wish to phase out (or restructure) its weaker programs, such as educational psychology. The committee understands that the department wishes to focus on applications of behavioral science; however, expertise in the core is necessary for apt applications.

The Department has added new faculty, some of whom are in the core areas needed.

B. New Programs. As noted, the department has plans to open MA programs as well as new BA programs. Although the committee is supposed to evaluate only existing programs, it would like to stress that in order to open new programs, the department will need more faculty members who are appropriate to the tasks. In addition, the committee believes that the department should carefully consider the implications of creating a BA program in Psychology on the Behavioral Sciences Program. Such a program is likely to draw many students from the BSD as well as stretching the resources of the faculty.

As recommended, a new BA program in psychology has not been added. The department did not report on MA programs. There had been a concern that the department did not have the resources, either in number of faculty or expertise of faculty, to support two BA programs as well as post-baccalaureate programs.

C. Promotion Policies.

The faculty met to formulate a policy on promotions that not includes yearly meetings with each faculty member and the department chair. According to their report, five faculty members have been promoted in the past four years, four of them to the presumably tenured level of Senior Lecturer.

4. Alumni Survey. *The committee recommends that the department conduct a survey of alumni. The survey can ask former students about their further education, their employment, how they found their jobs, how their BA education contributed to their further education and their jobs, strengths and weaknesses of the BA program, and more. This will be useful for planning purposes and for keeping the department up to date with needed improvements and changes.*

5. Alumni Association. *The committee also suggests that the department establish*

ongoing contacts with alumni to build an alumni culture, which can be valuable to the institution and to the department. If the department were to establish a newsletter for alumni and to organize communities of graduates, perhaps by current employment or geographic region, this would keep students involved with the college. Alumni groups often offer financial support to their alma maters as well, and support them in other ways too, making it in the college's best interest to have ongoing alumni contacts that can foster this.

The department presented details of the numerous ways that the college maintains contact with alumni, including surveys of evaluation and a website for employment. However, these activities appear to be college-wide rather than based in the department.

Other psychology or behavioral science departments have instituted their own newsletters and alumni events, with positive outcomes. The newsletters have reported on department activities as well as highlighting faculty and graduates. The departments have solicited alumni to advise students over the internet and visits to the department and formed networks where students and alumni can connect. Some departments have involved alumni directly in department activities. The departments report that these interactions have benefits for the departments, for the students, and for the alumni.

Remarks regarding Sociology and Anthropology:

My notes focus on the institution's response to the evaluation's committee's comments and suggestions regarding courses in Sociology and Anthropology.

Sociology and Anthropology constitute a rather minor component in the study program that is primarily geared toward Psychology. The evaluation committee noted that the program includes basic introductory courses in Anthropology and Sociology as well as a course on Israeli Society. There are also two mandatory courses; one on Family in an Age of Change and another on Religion and Society. The committee recommended that the latter two courses be part of a cluster that should include several additional courses that cover core topics (such as stratification, ethnicity, organization and political sociology) from which students will be required to select 2 courses. The courses in the cluster should also be included in the list of electives.

The response of the institution indicates that **“Electives in Political Sociology and in Organizational Sociology are now available to students in the Department;”** that **“The subjects of stratification and ethnicity are now included in the course focusing on Israel's society;”** and that **“[s]eparate courses in sociology are offered to the students of the Behavioral Sciences Department to allow higher level course requirements in English in comparison to those required of students from other departments.”**

Evidently, the institution chose not to create the cluster of courses as recommended. In the 2012 study program the courses on Family in an Age of Change and on Religion and Society are listed as mandatory the courses in Political Sociology and in Organizational Sociology do not appear in the study program presented as part of the institutions materials. No syllabi were provided for these courses in the file containing syllabi of new courses. To the extent that the two new courses are listed elsewhere as electives to students of the program in Behavioral Sciences the institution did not offer an explanation for its decision to list certain

core courses in sociology (i.e., family or religion) as mandatory while others are electives. This is especially puzzling when we consider the relevance of a course on organizational sociology to students who are interested in organizational psychology.

As to the statement that subjects of stratification and ethnicity are now included in the course on Israeli Society, as a revised syllabus for the course was not provided it is difficult to evaluate this decision. In general, however, one cannot expect to provide reasonable foundations in a core area of a discipline by alluding to the concept in a general course such as Israeli Society. Clearly when teaching a course on Israeli society one would refer to issues of stratification and inequality, ethnic composition and relations, family, religion, etc.; but such use of concepts as means of understanding Israeli society is no substitute for an in-depth course that fully introduces the core area, the various theories, and mile-stone studies (not only on Israel).

The evaluation committee noted the fact that the program in Behavioral Sciences is not truly interdisciplinary in that there are few if any courses that attempt to integrate the different perspectives each discipline provides and recommended that the institution develop at least one course that integrated various disciplinary views. In response to the recommendation the institution states that **“[a]n interdisciplinary course in the Philosophy of Science, stressing similarities and differences of the Behavioral Sciences and the other disciplines, was planned. However, due to practical difficulties this course has not yet been implemented.”**

A course in the philosophy of science would be a valuable addition to the study program but rather than providing a means of examining certain phenomena from different disciplinary perspectives of social sciences (e.g., sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, etc.) it introduces a different discipline (philosophy) with its own concepts and perspective. As this recommendation has not yet been implemented we urge the institution to reconsider and develop an appropriate interdisciplinary course (instead or in addition to that of philosophy of science).