



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

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Department of Business Administration

Department of Management

Evaluation Report

April 2007

Contents

Chapter 1:	Background.....	2-3
Chapter 2:	Committee Procedures.....	4
Chapter 3:	Evaluation of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev – the Department of Business Administration and the Department of Management.....	5-9

Appendices: Appendix 1 - Terms of Reference of the committee

Appendix 2 - The schedule of the visit

Chapter 1 - Background

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter 2 - Committee Procedures

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

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

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

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

This report deals with the **Department of Business Administration and the Department of Management, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.**

The committee's visit to Ben-Gurion University of the Negev took place on November 8, 2006. The schedule of the visit, including the list of participants representing the institution, is attached as **Appendix 2.**

The committee members thank the management of Ben-Gurion University, the Department of Business Administration and the Department of Management for their self-evaluation report and for their hospitality towards the committee during its visit to the institution.

Chapter 3: Evaluation of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev – the Department of Business Administration and the Department of Management

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

Background

Ben-Gurion University was established in 1970 and formally accredited by the Council of Higher Education in 1973. Currently, approximately 17,000 students (12,000 BA, 2,400 MA without thesis, 1,700 MA with thesis and 1,000 Ph.D. students) are served in a variety of programs. Studies take place mostly in Be'er Sheva and in additional campuses.

The BA in business and MBA programs (since 2003) are offered in the School of Management. The BA programs in business serve 401 students (with 181 in double track programs with either economics or behavioral sciences). Double-track options are currently being expanded at the expense of the single track that serves students with weaker credentials. The MBA program serves 980 students (19 on thesis track). As stated in the self-assessment, these numbers have come down a little due to rising entry requirements.

Organizational Structure and Mission

The School of Management encompasses the Department of Management, which offers the BA degree, and the Department of Business Administration, offering the MBA degree. The School of Management is one of the “faculties” of the university. Department heads report to the dean. Each department prepared its own self-evaluation report.

The larger Department of Business Administration emphasizes a joint teaching *and* research mission. The smaller BA-oriented Department of Management does not specify a mission, but clearly dedicates itself to teaching. However, in practice the faculty cooperates across programs. The School offers an interdisciplinary approach to management education. The ‘formal’ mission is the standard, but less than informative, excellence in teaching, support for first-class research and service to the university and society.

Teaching Programs

The BA is offered at four locations. It is a three year full-time program (20 hours per semester) of sensible design. Continuous evaluations take place, but the self assessment is less informative than it might be.

The description of the MBA program provides more detail. MBA teaching is concentrated on the main campus. Mechanisms are in place to continuously evaluate instructor performance. Innovative initiatives, e.g., the US \$300,000 trading portfolio and trading room, are in evidence as well.

The evaluation of the Committee only involved the main campus.

Faculty

The Department of Business Administration (MBA) has 16 senior and 12 junior permanent staff. The Department of Management (BA) has 7 senior and 9 junior members. Most faculty members have Ph.D. degrees from Israeli universities. Promotion criteria are vague. Budget cuts have resulted in understaffing. Dependence on adjunct faculty is an issue. However, the school indicates that 70% of their courses are taught by the permanent faculty (which is high in comparison to the other schools in Israel).

Students

MBA: Minimum GPA of 80, and 'appropriate' GMAT. The GMAT exam is waived for those with higher GPAs.

BA: Based on psychometric scores, 650 or better.

Research

The self-examination report indicates that faculty promotion depends on research performance, but also indicates that "most research [is] conducted with students." Some inducements, including grants and workshops, are present. The Committee has difficulty in assessing the commitment to research. With few exceptions, research seems too applied for publication in leading academic journals and is closely related to teaching.

Physical Infrastructure

The School is housed in a modern (vintage 2003) 6000 m² complex on the Be'er Sheva campus. This facility enjoys state-of-the-art technology, including computer labs, multimedia and trading room.

Self-Evaluation Process and the Reports

Since the evaluation process was conducted at the department level, both departments prepared a report: one covering the BA (Department of Management), and the other the MBA (Department of Business Administration).

The self-evaluation process was done in a serious manner with, in the case of the Department of Business Administration, department-wide contributions and feedback. The BA report is more mechanical, with exclusive focus on teaching. It basically describes extant quality evaluation processes.

Evaluation

- The overall impression is positive. While the School has a long way to go to fulfill its aspirations, the Committee was impressed by the dedication, sense of shared responsibility and positive attitude of all involved. The youth of the faculty adds to the energy of the enterprise.
- The greatest challenge is setting the right priorities. The leadership of the school, with the support of the faculty, wants to upgrade the research strength of the faculty and the credentials of incoming students. However, budgetary issues are constraining, requiring difficult choices.
- The Committee's impression is that teaching is taken seriously, and that genuine efforts are being made to improve the credentials of entering students. Improving the entering students requires accepting fewer. This is the School's plan with respect to the MBA program. It could easily be done for example by requiring a GMAT from all candidates, regardless of their BA GPA scores. The School's leadership indicated that shrinkage of the MBA student population can be offset with growth in the number of BA students where quality seems to be less of an issue.
- The Committee supports the direction the school is taking and is enthusiastic about the full time MBA Honors Program that has been created as a way to attract better students. The Committee was less clear on the BA program, and particularly whether the single-track program should be continued. From an educational perspective, a single track bachelors in business may be sub-optimal. Moreover, given the quality of students in this program, and the better students in the dual track, directing efforts to the latter might be desirable especially since more dual track programs are being added.

- A particular concern is the limited involvement of MBA students in the school. Most are fully employed and attend classes only twice a week. For Ben-Gurion, with its many students commuting long distances, this problem is particularly acute. It translates into reduced class attendance, fewer possibilities for networking and greater difficulty in doing group assignments. The school needs to find clever ways to overcome this disadvantage.
- The site visit confirmed the alleged importance of research. Yet research strength is limited. Moreover, with few exceptions researchers tend to work in peripheral areas, not in the mainstream of their disciplines. Renown of these researchers is thereby limited. This limits the credibility in interdisciplinary work as well. It is important to strengthen the mainstream research capabilities of faculty.
- The Committee strongly encourages the school to strengthen and formalize the tenure process. Using available international lists of journals (based on impact factors or other quality criteria) should be one of the key ingredients in this process. The School also should consider strengthening incentives for doing research. Teaching and administrative concessions should be considered as rewards for sustained high-quality research productivity.
- Improving the research capabilities will require substantial effort. Ph.D. students require more rigorous training. In general, the quality of the Ph.D. theses does not seem high. Consortial arrangements with other Israeli colleges and universities should be explored as a way to upgrade the Ph.D. program. The Committee strongly encourages the school to further formalize its Ph.D. program and to seek cooperation with other Israeli schools by jointly offering the Ph.D.
- Hiring new faculty is a priority as well. The Committee advocates an unabashedly opportunistic approach to hiring thought leaders and research exemplars with minimal regard to academic discipline or methodology. Results will depend on the judgment of those leading the recruitment effort as much as budget and labor market conditions. Inviting international visitors is a good policy to improve the quality of teaching, adding a global flavor, and enhancing collaborative research. Some of these visitors might be convinced to stay for longer periods.


- The Committee proposes further streamlining the curriculum. Fewer electives and smaller core course sections would simultaneously reduce prep time and coordination challenges, and could further improve the quality of classes and could free up time for more ambitious research.
- The Committee strongly encourages the school to continue its search for market niches in which it can excel such as the Third Sector in which it gained national acclaim. Also the presence of high-tech industry in the immediate vicinity of Ben-Gurion should be further exploited.
- A particular issue is the split in the two departments, dictated by the BA/MBA classification, rather than by disciplinary specialization of the faculty. Given the smaller size of the BA group, this organizational design could be advantageous: the School has a dedicated BA staff as safeguard against an exclusive MBA focus. On the other hand, it may create inefficiencies in teaching assignments and in research collaborations.
- The school has presented three alternative future organizational structures. Alternative C where all the business administration programs are part of the business school appears the most compelling.

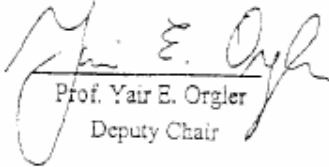
Final observations and summary of recommendations


The evaluation provided above clearly identifies comparative competitive advantages for Ben Gurion. Ben-Gurion should seek to position itself in a way that more fully exploits its uniqueness and locational strengths. Entrepreneurial programs, further exploiting links to the local high tech industry, should be part of the strategy. Academic research should be nurtured, and Ph.D. education should be linked to a national consortium (see previous section), but more applied research should be recognized as a legitimate complement.

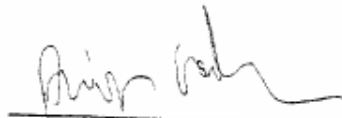
On the teaching side, the Committee has put forward several suggestions to further streamline and strengthen the educational experience and alleviate potential budget constraints. Overall, however, the Committee believes Ben Gurion is on the right track.


Signed by:

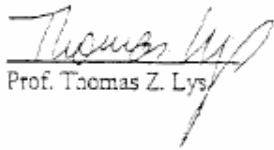

Prof. Stuart I. Greenbaum
Chairperson


Prof. Yair E. Orgler
Deputy Chair


Prof. Arnoud W.A. Boot


Prof. Arien Goldman


Prof. Peter Leeftang


Prof. Thomas Z. Lys


Prof. David Walker