



31 November, 2012

Responses to the Reports of the Committees for the Evaluation in Political Science and International Relations, and in Public Administration & Policy

Head of School Comments and Summary

I am pleased to deliver our responses to the reports of the two committees that evaluated Government and Political Theory and International Relations (GOV&IR), and Public Administration and Policy (PA&P) at the University of Haifa.

Speaking on behalf of all of our faculty members, students and administrative staff, I feel that the committees took upon themselves a challenging task and have produced very useful and important reports. We are encouraged by these reports and believe that they testify to the level and impact of our school in both the national and international arenas. All of the School's faculty members, heads of Divisions and I have examined in the most serious manner the committee's suggestions for improvements. The pages that follow in this response are our summary of the major lessons that each division has derived from the committee's reports. .

I would like to commence with a brief overview the principal points in our responses and the core insights that we intend to implement at the level of the School as a result of the committee's reports.

Public Administration & Policy

1. We are working to enrich our program with Policy sciences courses. For this purpose we have recruited, during the past two years, two new faculty members with expertise in policy sciences (Dr. Beeri and Dr. Cohen). We hope this will improve our standing in the policy sciences arena.
2. Masters Thesis: the committee recommends that "the program should aim significantly to reduce the proportion of students writing masters theses". In fact, four students successfully complete the research track each year with a thesis. The overall number of graduate students in the Division each year is 120, (in all MPA programs). Thus, the ratio of research/non-research students is around 3%, which is a very reasonable proportion.
3. In response to the committee's recommendation regarding inclusion of a course in Economics, we have added a course to our current program dealing with Political Economy. This course includes both Micro and Macro aspects of economy for policy studies. We hope to offer an additional course in economics as well, in the coming years.
4. In 2010 we began to offer a quantitative research methods course that includes topics such as quantitative statistical analysis for policy analysis, some aspects of cost-benefit analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis, and statistical decision analysis. This course coheres with the committee's recommendation for inclusion of a similar course in our program.
5. We encourage students from the regular program to take courses in other executive programs.

Government, Political theory and IR

1. In general, we see much value in all of the committee's comments and intend to apply them with a view toward both streamlining processes and fostering academic progress in our School.
2. We are working toward building closer cooperation among the divisions and have already merged the departmental seminars. Most of these will be joint seminars; i.e., cooperative ventures among the divisions.
3. Internships for undergraduate students are a good idea. In fact, we have conducted such a program in the Division of Public Administration & Policy for several years with considerable success. Many of our Masters students are employed on a full time basis outside the university, and for this reason, the program should target the younger students. This should allow them the opportunity to work in government agencies, local municipalities and in NGOs, learning and gaining experience while cultivating networks for potential future employment.
4. We are working toward finding ideal solutions for the conduct of our methods courses. I may appoint a joint methods committee to consider this. The demands of teaching methods change each year with enrollment in the regular and special programs so that the best format for teaching the methods courses should be considered anew each year.
5. Structured PhD Programs (p.11). The program underwent a very extensive reform in 2008. This has had a significant positive effect on both the quality of students and research projects that emerged from the program. We believe, however, that many of the recommendations made by the committee are, in fact already in place, and we will work in order to ensure their further implementation during the coming years.

Finally, please allow me once more to thank the members of both committees that took part in our evaluation process; (PA&P - Prof. Steve Kelman, Chair, Prof. Mark Kleiman, Prof. David Nachmias, Prof. Michael Rothschild, and, GOV&IR - Prof. Thomas Risse, Chair, Prof. Benjamin Jerry Cohen, Prof. Abraham Diskin, Prof. Galia Golan; Prof. Ellen Immergut; and Prof. Robert Lieber) and Ms. Marissa Gross, the Coordinator of the Committees on behalf of the CHE. The work of the teams was insightful and constructive, and we highly appreciate the attention and recommendation suggested to us. We will work hard to implement these, maintain our academic standing, and improve our programs academically, practically and pedagogically in the years to come.

Sincerely,



Prof. Eran Vigoda-Gadot
Chair, School of Political Sciences

Responses to the reports of the Committees for the Evaluation in Political Science and International Relations

Division of International Relations

1. Limiting MA thesis papers to 60 pages. I already do this and we think it is a positive step. I don't know who is allowing 150 page MA theses.
2. Courses in English. For the past two years, we taught several elective classes in English. The response was good although the classes were also open to overseas students. There is no reason not offer such classes immediately. The IR division also decided to require each student to take a class in English but the implementation has been put off due to lack of personnel.
3. Cooperation between PS and IR. We should be paying closer attention to the classes that each division can offer students in the other. Appropriate classes should appear on the course lists for each division. So, for example, Dr Sheffer's classes appear on the IR course lists.
4. Alumni networks for mentoring, internships and job opportunities. We make efforts to develop an alumni network and asked the support of the university system as well.
5. Internal Assessment. We have recently asked faculty members in IR to make sure that their student evaluation summaries are on file with the secretary. we are also assessing the average grades that teachers give in their classes.
6. Personnel. There is growing crisis resulting from the lack of personnel that the Malag committee could only touch upon because their data were two years old. This is reaching critical proportions. We do not have sufficient faculty to staff a full summer semester, provide sufficient courses for all the new MA programs in and out of the division (Mabal, Overseas school and new English language programs) and teach BA courses. In past years, each IR faculty member taught 1 MA course and, in rare cases, a second course if this was a mandatory course. This provided a sufficient number of courses for our regular MA program (about 10 course over the two semesters). With the proliferation of programs and a summer semester the number is rising to 2 or 3 MA courses per regular faculty member leaving few to teach at the BA level.
7. A joint MA/PhD program is vitally important. In fact, this program is already in place and only need to be expanded. The direct PhD program is limited to students with a GPA over 90. No reason to change that. We might consider just abandoning the thesis track entirely and only encourage those students with the highest GPA to consider a research track in the framework of the direct PhD program.

Responses to the reports of the Committees for the Evaluation in Political Science and International Relations

Division of Government and Political theory

We are grateful to the Committee for its efforts and its comprehensive and thorough look at our Division's work processes. The Committee's insights, comments and recommendations were welcomed by our staff members, who carefully studied the report. We are thinking and discussing ways with which we can promote the issues mentioned in the report and implement consequential changes.

1) The main recommendation of the report is the merging of the Divisions of Government and Political Theory, and International Relations. While there is no concrete intention of formally merging these two divisions, we are acting to promote join-work between the two divisions. Individual cooperation between the members of the two divisions has always existed (as noted in the report) but we will strongly encourage more cooperation in research and teaching. A reform of the divisions' seminars has already been implemented: students and faculty of the two divisions convene twice a year for joint events, and we are planning more of similar activities. Many of the faculty members supervise graduate students together with members of the other division. In addition, it happens that faculty of the two divisions discuss together individual promotions. It has to be clear, however, that the separation between the two divisions has never been felt as a problem or a constraint by the faculty or –to the best of my knowledge- by the students. The separation between divisions or departments of Government and International Relations is not as unusual as stated in the report, and it does not seem that the School staff or students ever suffered from the current situation.

2) The faculty staff of Government and Political Theory will make all efforts to increase the quantity of office hours and make sure that students who need guidance will find available faculty to help them.

3) We will continue implementing our PhD reform and give all our care to our PhD students. The general PhD committee of the School (namely, of the 3 divisions) has requested the creation of new forums (in each division) in which PhD students will present their dissertations after completing them. We hope that the experience of

presenting one's original work and addressing questions and criticism about it will help our students and motivate them to attend conferences and give talks abroad. As for MA theses, a maximum of 60 pages for a thesis is already the respected norm.

4) We are giving all our support to our new faculty members and we will increase our efforts in that direction. The young faculty work closely with senior mentors who explain them where and how to publish and who follow their progress. The heads of divisions meet regularly with non-tenured faculty.

5) It is indicated on page 9 of the Haifa report that "The important introductory courses are taught mainly by adjuncts. The committee feels strongly that introductory courses ought to be taught by regular faculty so as to expose students to their professors and their views of the fields early on." Contrary to that opinion, introductory courses *are* taught by regular faculty.

6) It is indicated on page 10 that "the School has only one full-time full professor (one more half-time and one more on contract) is not a satisfactory situation for such a large School." This is not accurate. The School has 5 full-time full professors (4 of them in the Divisions of Government and political theory and 1 in Public Administration & Policy).

7) The committee mentions that "The head of the specialized MA program (National Defense) is actually from the "expert" rather than academic track". This impression is wrong, as the head of the program, Prof. Ben-Dor, is full professor on the regular academic track. We would appreciate correcting this mistake on the final report.

Again we thank the committee for the important insight and strategic perspective with which it provided us. There are many important issues raised by the committee and we have already begun discussing the ways to deal with them.