



**Committee for the Evaluation of Psychology and Behavioral Science  
Study- Programs**

**General Report**

**September 2009**

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## **Chapter 1 - Background**

At its meeting on October 31, 2006 the Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to evaluate study programs in the field of Psychology and Behavioral Science during the academic year 2006-2007.

Following the decision of the CHE, the Minister of Education, who serves ex officio as the Chair of the CHE, appointed a committee for the evaluation of the academic quality of Psychology and Behavioral Science studies on April 29, 2008. On October 7 the committee was expanded and it currently comprises the following members<sup>1</sup>:

- **Prof. Susan Andersen, Department of Psychology, New York University, U.S.A - Committee Chair**
- **Prof. Victor Azarya, The Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Hebrew University (emeritus), Israel**
- **Prof. Yinon Cohen, Department of Sociology, Columbia University, U.S.A and Departments of Sociology & Anthropology and Labor Studies, Tel Aviv University, Israel**
- **Prof. Susan Goldin-Meadow, Department of Psychology, University of Chicago, U.S.A**
- **Prof. Avishai Henik, Department of Psychology, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel**
- **Prof. Morris Moscovitch, Department of Psychology, University of Toronto, Canada**
- **Prof. Steven J. Sherman, Department of Psychology, Indiana University, U.S.A**
- **Prof. Varda Shoham, Department of Psychology, University of Arizona, U.S.A**
- **Prof. Seymour Spilerman, Department of Sociology, Columbia University, U.S.A**
- **Prof. Sidney Strauss - Chief Scientist at the Israeli Ministry of Education (previously- Department of Psychology and School of Education, Tel Aviv University), Israel**
- **Prof. Barbara Tversky, Department of Psychology, Stanford University, U.S.A**

**Ms. Alisa Elon - Coordinator of the Committee on behalf of the CHE.**

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the fact that there were 12 departments undergoing evaluation, committee members divided the visits amongst themselves.

During May – June 2008 Committee members conducted full-day visits to five of the twelve institutions whose Psychology and Behavioral Science study programs the committee was requested to examine. The committee visited the remaining seven institutions during December 2008.

Within the framework of its activity, the Committee was requested to submit the following documents to the CHE:

1. A final report for each of the institutions that would include an evaluation of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences study programs, the Committee's findings, and recommendations.
2.
  - 2.1 A general report regarding the status of the evaluated field of study in Israeli institutions of higher education.
  - 2.2 Recommendations for standards in the evaluated field of study.

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

***This report deals with the committee's general impression of the fields of Psychology and Behavioral Science within the system of higher education in Israel.***

The committee members wish to thank the management of the institutions and the Psychology and Behavioral Science departments for their self-evaluation reports and for their hospitality towards the committee during its visits.

## **A. Executive Summary**

The science of psychology is thriving in universities in Israel. Its faculties include internationally known researchers, recognized for innovative and solid contributions; often more influential than those of western countries four to six times the size. Psychology programs are sought after, enroll the finest students, and enjoy the respect of their colleagues within the universities. Graduates of the programs have contributed not only to psychology, but to general science, industry, government, and the arts—in the country and abroad. On the whole, departments are forward-looking and enjoy high morale. This excellence is all the more impressive given the bare-bones economic support, support that is increasingly under threat. While commending the many achievements by university-based psychology departments, our report points to specific areas where the sustainability of academic excellence is at serious risk due to increasing shortages of resources. In the body of the report, we identify areas at such risk and make specific recommendations for remedying slippage in excellence.

Behavioral science programs in the colleges serve different ends from psychology programs, and are on the whole successful in meeting them. The programs are less selective, aiming to serve a broader population that may not obtain entrance to university psychology programs and providing a broader background that includes sociology and anthropology as well as psychology. Although there is considerable variability in the quality of the behavioral science programs across the colleges, all enjoy faculty dedicated to their missions. The committee identifies several areas in need of improvement in behavioral science programs and makes recommendations for achieving a higher level of academic training in Israeli colleges.

### **Universities**

Psychology is a laboratory science, with concomitant needs for equipment, laboratories, and human resources, including laboratory based undergraduate courses and time-intensive graduate supervision, yet it is defined and budgeted by the PBC (Planning and Budgeting Committee) as a social science. The committee recommends that psychology be regarded as a laboratory science like other Life Sciences and receive comparable resources. Research in psychology is increasingly brain-based, and most leading departments in North America have (or are building) in-house brain-imaging facilities. Israel is behind in these resources and should not be. Further, because undergraduate students are outstanding and ready to meet the field's challenges, their education must be enriched by smaller, more advanced classes and exercise/discussion (targilim) groups connected with each large class. Including such groups as a regular element of undergraduate education in psychological science would also help fund and offer teaching experience to PhD and MA students, a double boon. More hands-on research experience for undergraduates is needed in some departments. Most but not all university departments are strong, yet some core areas need strengthening to be at par with international advances, notably some aspects of cognitive, developmental, and social psychology (e.g., prejudice, cross-cultural studies). Importantly, graduate training needs to be more efficient; central to that is to increase graduate student funding to international standards. Graduate education is variable across psychology departments – in programs, curricula, degree of graduate student support, and student: faculty ratio, a ratio that is quite often too high, notably in clinical programs. In some departments, the structure of graduate programs needs reorganization and simplification.

Given their responsibility to the general public, graduate programs that train clinical psychologists are of special concern. They pose unique challenges, and are in greatest need of restructuring. Clinical training must be informed by science. However, many programs focus training on older diagnostic and intervention methods that have not received scientific validation. At the same time, most do not provide sufficient training in diagnostic and intervention methods that are evidence based. The structure and many of the requirements of these programs are designed to conform to the regulations of the Council of Psychologists' Professional Committees (CPPC) of the Ministry of Health for licensing clinicians, and the CPPC regulations mandate courses in diagnostic methods and psychotherapies of questionable validity. The committee recommends an alternative program of study in clinical psychology that is based on the best scientific evidence available (see pp. 17-18). Although changing the regulations is outside the committee's purview, many of the regulations run counter to current best practices in clinical training. The committee recommends that the CHE facilitate discussions with the CPPC and leaders of CHE-approved clinical programs, with the goal of bringing requirements in accord with the best scientific evidence. Clinical training should also be an integrated whole. Even when university faculty advocate science-based training and many do, those practices may not be observed by adjunct faculty and in clinical internship and practicum settings. The report points to ways that training across settings can be better integrated with university graduate training, notably by the development of an in-house clinic at each institution. An in-house clinic would serve the community, train clinicians, and advance the clinical research that is essential to the development of theory and to the continuing improvement of practice.

## **Colleges**

As noted, college programs in the Behavioral Sciences share commendable devotion to their missions and considerable camaraderie among their faculty members. Yet they need balance and enrichment. The number of permanent faculty in the programs is small and often lopsided; perhaps as a consequence, there is considerable variability in the nature of the programs. Some do not have adequate faculty strength in the cores of the disciplines, that is, faculty trained in the central areas of psychology, sociology, and anthropology who can adequately represent the disciplines and teach the courses. Most lack courses integrating the approaches of the various disciplines so that their interdisciplinary goals are not met. Some do not use enough English textbooks and journal articles to enable students to read professional literature or enter graduate programs. All need to include hands-on research so that students understand how the knowledge they are acquiring was obtained. Most need to rely more on their own faculty and less on outside faculty who cannot share their commitment to and involvement in undergraduate education.

The very foundations of the colleges entail inherent tensions and conflicts. Their primary mission is to provide an undergraduate education to a broad population that may not gain admission to universities or may not be able to commute to do so, and to do this by providing more individual attention for effective learning. Given this, adequately preparing students for graduate programs, another goal of colleges, can be a challenge. Instituting honors programs for outstanding students likely to continue to graduate programs could allow colleges to meet both goals. Faculty research presents another tension. On the one hand, it is important to the professional advancement of the faculty, many of whom are well trained in research, as well as to an adequate undergraduate education in the behavioral sciences. Yet, research opportunities are limited in colleges. To help faculty sustain research, and to involve college

students in research, the committee recommends granting research leaves to research-active faculty and/or facilitating and supporting collaborations with graduate students and faculty in nearby universities. A third tension concerns graduate programs in the colleges. Some colleges aspire to expand their scope by offering MA and even PhD programs, even though this is at odds with the basic mission at colleges, which is undergraduate education. The committee recommends that new graduate programs not be developed in colleges except in rare and exceptional cases when sufficient resources and regular-faculty expertise are available.

### **Both Universities and Colleges**

At all institutions, libraries need enhancement. A universal problem is access to books and journals, especially on-line access to journals and data bases. This is especially problematic at colleges. All institutions need to provide easy on-line access and campus-wide Wifi. Off-site online access is needed as well. Solving each problem may be more feasible (and less costly) if a cross-campus library consortium were formed. Another general recommendation the committee makes is the establishment of alumni organizations at each institution. Alumni organizations can help educational institutions in a number of ways and provide benefits to alumni as well. They can provide advice and support to one another, and can be a source of income to the institutions.

## **B. Studies of Psychology & Behavioral Science in Israel**

### **General Overview**

The committee was charged with examining programs leading to degrees in psychology and behavioral science at seven universities and five colleges. The seven universities are: Tel-Aviv University, the Hebrew University, Ben Gurion University, the University of Haifa, Bar Ilan University, the Open University and the Technion. The five colleges are: the College of Management, Netanya Academic College, Tel-Aviv Yaffo Academic College, the College of Judea and Samaria, and Ruppin Academic College.

The task assigned to the committee by the Council for Higher Education was the evaluation of each CHE-approved department of psychology and school of behavioral science in Israel. To this end, the committee first studied the self-evaluation reports prepared by the departments. We then visited each institution, had extensive discussions afterward about our observations, and prepared individual reports for each institution, ultimately producing 12 such reports. Here, we offer a general report on our observations and recommendations, beginning with the universities (largely Departments of Psychology, with one exception) and proceeding to the colleges (Schools of Behavioral Sciences). Although universities and colleges are different and face unique challenges (and the same can be said of psychology and the behavioral sciences), they also have much in common, making possible their evaluation by a single committee.

The committee recognizes that it is not our task to make recommendations about funding. At the same time, it is the committee's view that psychology and behavioral science in Israel are strong and that the existing strengths need to be solidified if they are to be sustained into the future. It is clear as well that weaknesses in both psychology and behavioral science must be addressed if these academic institutions are to thrive. We have thus made extensive and specific recommendations in the individual reports to the institutions, and we provide our overall view here.

This report reflects our general findings, conclusions, and recommendations, and although our central task involves academic standards, our recommendations necessarily have budgetary implications. Given streamlined budgets, it is evident that universities will need to make increased efforts, especially creative ones, to bolster their sources of input beyond those they receive from the government. At the same time, the Council needs to recognize, in the committee's view, that excellence in these undergraduate and graduate programs will depend on the very serious investment needed to ensure that the 'jewels' of higher education in Israel retain and enhance their international stature, as well as their invaluable service to the country. Our observations and recommendations follow. Two notable trends are cited here, followed by a deeper analysis of a broad range of issues.

In 1977, the Israeli parliament enacted the Psychology Law, which sets the standards and conditions for practicing psychology in Israel, among which are the requirements to obtain an MA degree in psychology and pass the national professional exams. The committee is concerned that the standards set by the Law and the need to prepare students for the national exam impose upon the Departments a curriculum founded mainly on anachronistic tests (like the Rorschach test), thus impeding innovation in study programs in the clinical field.

Psychology is a laboratory science, like the life sciences, and unlike the other social sciences. A recent pervasive movement has augmented that. During the 1990's, following worldwide trends, the related fields of neuroscience and physiological psychology developed in Israeli universities, connecting psychology and biology. As a result, new research directions integrate the two disciplines, so that psychology studies give more emphasis to research on the brain and nervous system in order to understand cognitive, personality, social, developmental, and clinical issues and conversely, natural science research considers a broad range of psychological variables in studying the brain, endocrine systems, disease, and the like.

### **Structure of the Study Programs**

#### **Undergraduate degrees:**

Most institutions offer a BA degree in Psychology/Behavioral Science without specialization in a particular field. The undergraduate degree extends over 6 semesters (three academic years) and requires approximately a total of 120 semester hours, depending on the institution. BA degrees can be on a track of double major (60 credits for each major) or single major (about 70 credits from psychology and 50 general electives).

#### **Postgraduate degrees:**

Master's degrees in Psychology/Behavioral Science extend over 4-6 semesters (two-three academic years). The institutions offer various specialization fields.

### **C. Universities: Departments of Psychology**

The universities in Israel have trained generations of remarkable students who have become excellent public servants, scientists, engineers, and humanists and have won the highest international prizes for achievements in basic science, technology, medicine, agriculture, and the humanities. Israel, a leader in many fields, psychology among them, has contributed far beyond its proportion in numbers. Moreover, University training has contributed to enormous economic progress within Israel. The existing system that created these outstanding contributions to Israel and to the world must therefore be protected and fostered.

Psychology is flourishing in Israel. Many Rectors and Deans at the universities referred to the Psychology Department and its faculty at their university as the best or among the very best in the university. Research by psychologists at Israel's universities is published in the best journals, and Israeli scientists are prominent in many areas, particularly cognition, neuroscience, and judgment and decision making. The international reputation of psychology, particularly in these areas, is impressive.

#### **1. Psychology: A laboratory science**

A challenge for sustaining excellence in psychology is that it is a laboratory science and needs resources comparable to other laboratory sciences, notably the life sciences. Yet

psychology departments in Israel are typically situated in social science faculties, and their allocation of funds, space, and other resources – from the Council and from their home institutions – are typically social science allocations, which are considerably below those in the Life and Physical Sciences. Other social sciences do not need comparable laboratory facilities, placing psychology in the position of needing to make special requests for differential treatment, and putting university administrators in the difficult position of having to give psychology departments differential treatment, all of which causes hardship, in terms of both resources and time, to the discipline. While some university administrators make the special provisions needed, others do not. In other countries (e.g., the U.S. and Canada), departments of psychology are increasingly being included among the natural sciences and, even if not, are given resources comparable to those of the Natural (Life) Sciences rather than the Social Sciences.

Regardless of where psychology is housed, the allocations needed are not equivalent to those of other social sciences, and the formula used to allocate resources must thus be re-adjusted to reflect this reality. To address this problem, in the committee's view, the CHE (and the PBC) should take the step of recognizing psychology as a laboratory science equivalent to other life sciences in terms of resource allocations, including student support, academic responsibilities, and space. Indeed, in terms of teaching load, while the CHE requires the same teaching load in the Life Sciences and the Social Sciences, the committee was nonetheless concerned with the number of faculty who complained of such a teaching load difference in practice. Hence, we believe institutions should work to ensure that the teaching load in psychology is in practice as low as it is in the Life Sciences at the institution--if teaching load differences have been informally arranged within the institution. For context, it is worth noting that in North American institutions, teaching loads in natural sciences are commonly lower than those in the social sciences because of the extra demands of laboratory science, and increasingly, psychology is treated as a natural science with concomitant decreases in teaching load. Hence, such a teaching load difference in Israel would place institutions abroad at a distinct advantage in the competition to recruit top Israeli faculty away from Israel. We also recommend that the use of exercise/discussion sections for undergraduates (*targilim*) be expanded in psychology to commensurate with their levels in the Life Sciences, as is appropriate to the laboratory science that psychology is. Making changes along the above lines would encourage and better enable universities to make funding for graduate students and faculty laboratory space in psychology departments equivalent to the funding levels and space allotments in the Life Sciences.

## **2. Psychology Faculty**

As noted, on balance, the faculties in psychology are exceptionally strong and productive, and are conducting cutting edge research. The committee nonetheless has the following concerns:

### **a. Composition of the Faculty**

Most of the psychology departments are impressive in terms of productivity and graduate training in research – especially given the extremely high demands on faculty time due to heavy teaching loads and large numbers of students supervised, both greater than in comparable institutions in Western universities. The accomplishments and contributions of psychology in Israel to such core areas as cognition, neuroscience, social psychology, developmental psychology, and clinical psychology have been significant and influential. At the same time, core areas of the discipline that

are among the most prominent internationally are currently not represented in Israel, in particular, experimental social psychology and developmental. The relative weakness of these two areas is especially surprising given Israel's history of innovation in the organization of society and child rearing in Israeli society. The committee's view is thus that these core areas need to be strengthened to sustain a vibrant academic culture and to achieve greater international prominence. Strengthening these areas will necessitate a systematic hiring plan.

Within the social psychology core, greater representation is needed in areas such as stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination; attitudes and persuasion (especially implicit measures of attitudes); group dynamics and intergroup interaction; and motivation and emotion. Addressing these matters of faculty composition would be a considerable service to the overall discipline of psychology at the universities, and to the education of graduate and undergraduate students. In fact, Israel is particularly strong in one branch of social psychology typically situated in cognitive psychology and in business (or public policy) schools—namely, judgment and decision making. This area is of considerable importance internationally and was pioneered by psychological scientists in Israel. However, internationally, social psychology is broader than this one area, including other important domains of research ranging from social perception and interpersonal relations to conflict resolution and multi-cultural issues, all domains that are of considerable relevance to the country. Experimental social psychology intersects with cognitive psychology in these areas as well (as it does in areas such as self-regulation) and has links with neuropsychology (in the growing area of social neuroscience). Faculty in these areas should thus fit easily into psychology departments, and effectively complement existing faculty interests.

Along the same lines, there are few faculty in Israeli universities who specialize in typical human development, another vibrant area internationally. Programs in developmental psychology (in both cognitive and social-emotional development) help provide a solid basis of knowledge about human growth and development within a department and, in this sense, are essential to the field. In many departments in Israel, developmental psychologists are housed in educational psychology or child clinical psychology, and the particular research agendas that these psychologists follow are not at the cutting edge for basic research in this field. For example, some departments offer programs in child clinical psychology that focus on psychological difficulties and interventions with children. Intervention-oriented programs involving children are numerous and go by many names (child clinical psychology, educational clinical psychology, child neuropsychology, applied developmental psychology). However, students in these programs receive little exposure to typical development taught by top experts in the field. Without an understanding of the developmental trajectories that children typically follow, the methods by which developmental science is currently studied, and the theories that have recently been proposed to account for development, it is difficult, if not impossible, to appreciate what an atypical path might be-or to understand how to go about studying it and eventually developing interventions to change it. Thus, in addition to building a vibrant developmental faculty that could contribute to this burgeoning field by doing their own research and training students, hiring developmental psychologists would also provide instruction that is essential to adequately train clinical students. In the developmental area, the following sub-areas are much in need of representation: Social development; perceptual and motor development; cognitive development; a cognitive embodiment approach to development; dynamic systems approaches to development; and lifespan

development and aging. Non-clinical students (e.g., in cognition and in social psychology) would also benefit from an understanding of the phenomena, methods, and theories that comprise modern day developmental psychology.

### ***b. Research Relevant to Minorities in Israel***

It is notable, in the committee's view that research is lacking in areas that are deeply relevant to Israel's social and political situation. Cross-cultural psychology, stereotyping and prejudice, and negotiation and conflict resolution – fields typically part of social psychology– are largely absent in the country. Elsewhere internationally, research and scholarship in these fields is conducted in a manner that can contribute to psychological science as a whole. Israel is in an enviable position, poised to conduct important research on these issues that are directly relevant to Israeli society.

### ***c. Serving and Reaching Out to Minority Communities***

Given the rich ethnic mix of Israeli society, it is important to reach out to minority communities, in particular, Arab communities. Israeli Arabs are a significant portion of the society with special circumstances and needs. Efforts should be made on the part of both the CHE and all institutions (universities and colleges) to include and foster the education and training of Arab students. Some institutions are already doing this, but far more is needed, particularly since training enough psychologists to serve the diverse Arab population in the country is especially needed.

Likewise, more should be done by the CHE and by the institutions to reach out to and include members of the ultra-orthodox Jewish community. Some institutions are making strides in this regard, but the unique needs of this community warrant attention so that they may more readily benefit from higher education in Israel.

### ***d. Transparency in Faculty Promotion Procedures***

The procedures of promotion and tenure do not seem to be specified and transparent. That is, there was little in the way of a timetable (or estimated timetable) for being nominated for promotion, when each step of the process would be completed, when the relevant committees meet and make their decisions, and when faculty should expect to learn about their progress through each stage of the process after having submitted the required documents. Such procedures are routine in Western universities. Increasing the transparency of the promotion procedures and timetables would make the wait more orderly and less stressful for young faculty. In particular, the committee believes that all universities should implement third-year review procedures for junior faculty who are tenure-track to provide them with personalized feedback about their progress toward tenure and the next steps that will need to be achieved if tenure is to be awarded. In a similar vein, it would be helpful for departments to establish an optional mentoring system whereby tenured faculty serve as mentors to lecturers to provide them with more support and feedback along the way.

The committee was surprised to learn that it is not standard in all departments to keep updated CVs of all faculty on file. This should be standard practice for providing an overall picture of the department. Among other indices, updated vitas should include publications, extramural grants, and conference presentations, as well as the number of PhD and MA students, respectively, supervised in research.

### ***e. Formalizing Procedures for Faculty Hiring***

In general, the procedures for hiring new faculty are in many cases vague and ad hoc. In most North American institutions, when a position opens, a search committee is formed and the position is widely advertised. This is not always done in Israel. PhD's who wish to return to Israel often approach colleagues in the various departments, essentially lobbying for a position. This sometimes works and sometimes does not, and can lead to confusion and misunderstanding. This is especially problematic because the pool of talent is impressive, and some top candidates are missed because they are not drawn into the recruitment process or become discouraged along the way with the ad hoc procedures, thus taking positions offered to them abroad. The procedures for hiring new faculty need to be institutionalized with systematic, predictable procedures, including procedures for targeted opportunities. This recommendation holds for colleges as well as for universities.

More formalized procedures are needed if the effects of "brain drain" from Israel are to be forestalled or reversed. Indeed, the current procedures may dissuade departments from undertaking the kind of strategic planning to determine which faculty hires are most essential and pursuing these because targeted advertisement for such positions remains atypical in Israel (although it is the norm in North America).

### ***3. Home-Grown Students and Faculty***

A potential obstacle to enhancing the excellence of psychology in Israel and extending its reach is the tendency for universities to admit "home grown" students (students who received their BA at the same institution) into their MA programs, and hiring their own PhDs to join the faculty. Both tendencies are widely considered to create a narrow, less diversified ("in-bred") department and are thus commonly discouraged at top universities around the world. Restricting the range of interests and training that departments can offer in this way – and perhaps limiting potentially valuable research synergies – strikes the committee as unwise. It is advisable to begin to reverse this trend by building on existing strengths and extending them through shifts in graduate student admissions procedures and faculty hiring.

### ***4. BA in Psychology***

Overall, the BA programs in psychology at the various universities are comprehensive and well designed, reflecting the balance of coursework that is the standard internationally. Many courses use widely accepted textbooks in English and incorporate (English) journal articles into their readings. However, many departments need greater depth in the form of more advanced courses that would challenge students beyond the introductory classes. For the most part, classes are large and lack opportunities for discussion, writing, or in-class presentations. Students in the BA programs are excellent and motivated, and they deserve to be challenged, even by their introductory classes, more than they sometimes are; they certainly deserve a curriculum that builds on itself and becomes more advanced over time. In this vein, when classes use multiple choice exams that cannot test integration, scientific thought, or applications, it may lead students to feel less engaged and challenged. Moreover, given that psychology is a science, there are complex research concepts that inform the discipline that cannot, as noted, be effectively taught and learned without lab/exercise/discussion sections (*targilim*) – which are typical in the life sciences. They are no

less crucial in psychology, and yet they are rare to non-existent in most Israeli universities. Similarly, all students must participate directly in research in a hands-on way. The committee is concerned that this practice may not be implemented sufficiently systematically or thoroughly.

The committee's impression was also that universities may often tend to see their BA-level programs in psychology as a kind of sieve for sorting out who will get accepted to their MA programs. In this sense, the committee noted with some concern that the departments may not be as invested in or committed to providing all their undergraduates with an enriching and first-rate science-informed education in its own right as is preferable. The programs are well structured but investment and innovation are lacking, and students seem to sense this.

### ***a. Research Experience***

The BA programs need to provide more small-group practical experience with research, applied, and clinically relevant activities. Regarding research, it is the committee's view, as noted, that undergraduate education in psychology must include hands-on training in the science so that students will understand how the facts in the field are established and can critique the research reports they must read as undergraduates, graduate students, or professionals. It is critical that students learn by experience; this training routinely occurs, in Israel and elsewhere internationally, in the context of laboratory courses or apprenticeships (or other course) in which students participate in designing a study, collecting the data, analyzing and interpreting it, and writing it up. Although each university seems to have a course of this kind, not all students end up taking the course. The committee is concerned that there remains a lack of substantive research experience at the undergraduate level. The richest experience is gained when students are given the opportunity to apprentice in faculty and graduate student research. But this practice is relatively rare in most Israeli universities at the moment. The committee strongly believes that an expansion of the number of undergraduates working in faculty laboratories (under graduate student supervision) – within the limits of faculty and graduate student numbers– would be of great value in undergraduate education. Likewise, departments can do more to facilitate students gaining applied clinically relevant experience, either through peer counseling with other students or working in the community at women's shelters, daycare centers, schools, and the like. In many cases, internships applying social or cognitive psychology in industrial situations would be appropriate. Such programs can be a win-win situation, as they are competence- and confidence-builders for students, do not take enormous resources, and contribute to the society.

In short, the committee recommends that all undergraduates have some sort of hands-on research experience, either through a dedicated laboratory course or through apprenticeships in a faculty research laboratory, or both.

### ***b. Exercise/discussion sections***

In recent years many mandatory courses that used to have exercise or discussion sections (*targilim*) have eliminated this crucial element. This is true for many mandatory courses that are attended by large groups of students (over 100 students per course). These exercise/discussion sections offered by teaching assistants give students the opportunity to ask questions or to do writing assignments and class presentations that can solidify the knowledge they have gained in the class. The

committee recommends that such discussion sections be added to courses attended by large number of students or at least to mandatory courses.

### ***c. Grade inflation***

Grade inflation is a serious problem at the undergraduate level throughout the country. The phenomenon is pervasive at all of Israel's universities (and colleges). The situation is problematic and there is a need to deal with it. Each institution (and each department) will need to take steps to deal with the problem, perhaps by developing an alternative grading system (e.g., normalizing grades or producing a class rank order in addition to grades). At the same time, steps to reduce the problem must be taken at the national level, by working to find agreement among all universities (and colleges) on a uniform way of introducing variance in grades. Grade inflation is undoubtedly a problem in other disciplines as well, and is a world-wide challenge, suggesting that broad measures are needed to address it.

## ***5. Graduate Programs at Universities***

Historically, the majority of graduate students complete the MA and do not continue further. Entrance to MA programs, based on BA grades, the mitam, and sometimes other criteria, such as recommendations, has been very competitive especially in clinical psychology. Acceptance to PhD programs has typically been after the MA degree, and the numbers in PhD programs have been far smaller. Today, there is more demand for the PhD, but the structure of most graduate programs reflects the past. That is, virtually all graduate programs are organized as MA programs, and most graduate admissions focus on the MA-only programs. The focus on MA programs can and often does drain faculty time and divert their attention from training PhD students to become Israel's next cohort of scientists and innovators.

On the whole, graduate education in Israel is excellent, but it can be agonizingly long. Indeed, many of the best students interested in obtaining a PhD go abroad and are encouraged to do so, primarily to get broader exposure to the field than they can get in Israel, but also to speed the process. Many students, however, cannot or do not go abroad for graduate study, and their situation should be improved and made more comparable to international standards in structure and in student support.

It is time to rethink the model of graduate education in Israel, both for the training of researchers, where a PhD and highly sophisticated research training is a necessity, and for the training of clinical psychologists seeking to enter full-time private practice, where an MA is currently sufficient. In many places, it is essential to reconfigure the MA-only education of clinical psychologists in Israel with more systematic research training and experience and to institute a more efficient progression to the PhD for those clinical students aspiring both to licensure and to PhD-level training.

To these ends, PhD programs in Israel need and deserve far more financial support. This is crucial if the country is to succeed in attracting and/or keeping the best and the brightest in the competition with other departments internationally. Concomitantly, it is essential to reduce the time to PhD. There are numerous mechanisms by which increases can be achieved but one essential component is increased funding for PhD students.

Yet another barrier to efficient progress toward the PhD for clinical students is the multitude of required courses that are out of step with current standards in clinical psychology internationally – namely, with scientifically grounded clinical training. In many places, the present system leaves students without adequate training in contemporary diagnosis and treatment, as well as lengthening the time to PhD.

Progress to the PhD is also slowed among clinical students by the existing requirement to complete the MA before applying to internship and, for a number of institutions, to do so before applying to a PhD program. Some institutions have direct-PhD programs which can and often do decrease the time to PhD. Several universities aim to emphasize direct-PhD graduate programs. The committee endorses this move for those universities pursuing it, provided that they continue to allow students to obtain the MA degree along the way, as needed.

In some institutions, yet another factor interfering with efficient progress to the PhD is the large number of graduate students supervised by each faculty member. The heavy advisement loads can also limit the excellence in graduate training simply because each faculty member's time is spread too thinly across students.

#### ***a. Faculty/Student Ratio***

The teaching load is heavy (at the undergraduate and graduate level) for faculty in Israel compared to other top institutions internationally. At the same time, in many institutions, faculty are being asked to admit more graduate students per faculty member than can be supervised adequately, compromising the quality of research and mentoring. The committee therefore encourages programs to revisit their student-faculty ratios and to formulate an ideal maximum number of PhD and MA students each faculty member can supervise in research – in order to ensure and enhance high-quality training of each student supervised. At institutions where the committee found the student-faculty ratio to be too high, we made specific recommendations for reducing the number of graduate students each faculty member supervises in research. Addressing student-faculty ratio would greatly enhance the quality of graduate training and lowering it where this is needed would facilitate making training in psychology more comparable to training in the Life Sciences.

This said, the single most problematic barrier for progress toward the PhD and for graduate program quality is the lack of adequate graduate student funding. The current practice requires students to work jobs that interfere with their training and concentrated study. Extending the time to professional status by having students take non-professional jobs is poor use of societal resources.

#### ***b. Funding for Ph.D. students***

The committee believes that excellence in graduate education is crucial for scientific advancement and training of active and productive young scientists in psychology. Research productivity of doctoral students (and, indirectly, of faculty) depends on available time. When doctoral students have little or no support, their time to degree becomes untenably long and their engagement in their studies and research diminishes. Many, if not most, top universities around the world, and certainly those in North America, support doctoral students with stipends to eliminate the need to work one or more jobs, not uncommon in Israel. Some graduate support is in the form of

RAships or TAs; the latter has the added benefit of increasing badly needed resources for undergraduate discussion sections. Offering graduate students such positions would vastly increase the quality and productivity of graduate training in Israel. Support for doctoral students is crucial. The committee's view is that the CHE and the institutions must find ways to make more funds available for PhD students.

### ***c. Emphasis on Admissions Focused on the PhD***

As noted, some universities appear to be moving toward greater emphasis on the PhD, including direct admission to the PhD. This practice, if fully implemented, would bring the structure of training to North American standards in these universities. For clinical students especially, this would allow courses, mentored research, and practicum training to be spread over fewer years. The committee offers its strong support to the institutions moving to emphasize direct-to-PhD admissions for clinical as well as pure research degrees, as long as students are able to obtain the MA degree along the way. The committee's view is also that individual institutions should be able to decide whether or not to continue admitting students to MA graduate programs.

### ***d. Emphasis on Admissions Focused on the PhD for Clinical Programs***

For clinical students, a direct-PhD program could have an additional important advantage. Currently, students finish an MA, and then apply for an internship, a process that can add a year or more. Internships are typically four years half-time. Enrolling in a PhD program would allow students to apply for internships upon completing their MA theses. It would also allow students to begin their more advanced PhD courses and dissertation research while waiting for, then doing their clinical internships. This would not only save time but would better integrate course work, research, and internship, transforming the graduate experience into the interrelated whole that it should be.

### ***e. Graduate Training in Clinical Psychology***

By "clinical" we refer to MA and PhD programs that train students to apply psychological principles to assessment and intervention in patient populations, and that teach courses that enable students to obtain clinical licenses. Minimally, this includes adult-clinical, child-clinical, clinical rehabilitation, and medical psychology; and maximally, it may be relevant as well to applied developmental and occupational psychology. At the best places internationally, clinical psychology and training in the field is grounded in clinical science – that is, in evidence-based clinical assessment and intervention. Although most of the clinical programs in Israel explicitly endorse evidence-based practice, they vary considerably in how well this is implemented. In the committee's view, all universities and colleges with programs in clinical psychology need to base their programs on the best available scientific evidence.

Some programs heavily favor psychodynamic approaches in coursework and/or practica at the expense of training in the cognitive-behavioral and family-systems methods validated by research. In the committee's view, these programs should reverse their emphases to be in accordance with international scientific standards. Minimally, students in clinical programs should be required to train to proficiency in at least two evidence-based approaches, including empirically-supported treatments

such as cognitive and cognitive-behavioral therapies. The same principle should apply to the area of clinical assessment. Psychodiagnostic assessment methods that have not been supported by validation studies should be eliminated from the departments' academic curriculum unless or until such validity can be established via scientific methods. The committee details a program of courses and clinical supervision in our recommendations that instantiates the goals of training students in assessments and therapeutic techniques that are informed by scientific evidence. The coursework changes the committee recommends are critical to excellence in programs in terms of facilitating evidence-based training. Some programs in Israel are more evidence-based than others, examples that are of interest, while nearly across the board improvements are needed and important.

At the same time, there are several barriers to fully implementing evidence-based training in clinical psychology. One is the nature of the internship training sites. They are frequently outside the educational institutions, and many of them rely on treatment and assessment methods of questionable validity. A similar approach is often taken by adjunct or outside faculty who frequently teach clinical courses in universities and colleges. A more complex barrier is the requirements of the Council of Psychologists' Professional Committees (CPPC, or the *va'a'da miktso'it*) that controls licensure requirements.

The committee is aware that some of its recommendations are at odds with requirements imposed on academic programs by CPPC. However, we assume that these are, in fact, regulations or rules devised as a way of implementing existing law, rather than being the existing statute, and are thus subject to re-evaluation and change. Moreover, given our charge – to evaluate program quality and enhance standing in terms of international standards of training – we have made the recommendations that we believe will best facilitate excellence in graduate training in clinical psychology—giving students contemporary knowledge of and engagement with evidence-based practice. Critically, these recommended practices will have positive public health consequences because interventions that have been shown to work for problematic disorders (for example, for post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD) will become more readily available to the public. Although our recommendations are at variance with the regulations imposed by the Council of Psychologists, they are in accord with many of the leaders of clinical programs in the country who feel the regulations prevent them from providing the best clinical training available. Thus, we strongly believe that making these changes will go a long way toward enhancing excellence and prompting modernization in clinical training in Israel. Our recommendations follow:

(i) Specifically, the committee recommends that curricula in clinical psychology provide students with a broad basis in evidence-based training in psychopathology, assessment, and intervention, reflecting the best scientific information available.

(ii) The committee recommends a curriculum that ensures that students are no longer required to train in assessment tools and intervention models of questionable validity, including, projective tests such as the Rorschach ink-blot test that add no incremental validity to more straight-forward assessment tools that are easy to administer. The literature that students read (based on their syllabi) should include the best science available, and their practicum

experiences should be integrated into the rest of their education in group discussions that allow the scientific literature to inform their clinical work, and their clinical work to enrich their clinical research.

(iii) More precisely, the committee recommends that the number of semester-long courses devoted to psychodiagnostic tests be reduced to 3 instead of the typical 4, and that these courses focus on assessment tools known to be valid. Although the committee cannot recommend teaching diagnostic instruments of questionable or no validity (e. g., projective tests), if a program insists on teaching them, this should be restricted to a single course where questions of validity are discussed.

(iv) The committee also recommends requiring no more than two one-semester courses on psychopathology, with no more than one of these courses covering historical and psychodynamic approaches to psychopathology. At least one course should focus on advances in the clinical science of psychopathology.

(v) Similarly, the committee recommends requiring no more than three one-semester courses in intervention, and these should be grounded in evidence-based treatments, with at least one on Cognitive-Behavioral Therapies (CBT).

(vi) Beyond this, the committee recommends that departments with clinical programs should consider developing, if they have not already begun to do so, an in-house training clinic that can serve the community. Such a clinic would, in addition, be used to train clinicians while also serving as a research facility that generates state of the science contributions to knowledge. Such clinics are likely to enhance the integration of classroom learning, clinical practice, and research that informs both.

(vii) Critical to instantiating these recommendations is the recruitment of like-minded adjunct faculty as clinical supervisors, that is, supervisors who are appropriately trained and whose interests and expertise are in empirically validated assessment and treatment.

(viii) It is of much importance, in the committee's view, that students in those clinical programs that make these changes are not in any way penalized for doing so by current governmental regulations in the form of internship and licensure requirements. Instantiating the recommendations of the committee will likely entail changing the guidelines formulated to interpret Israeli licensing law. The committee believes these guidelines are in need of change to conform to current scientific knowledge and practice. Thus, the committee recommends that the CHE initiate a discussion between the CPPC and the leaders of the graduate clinical programs with the aim of updating the regulations for licensure (see below).

(ix) A strategic plan should be developed in the first year for addressing each of the above recommendations, and this plan should be implemented in years two and three.

### ***f. Licensure in Clinical Psychology***

Although we recognize that it is outside of the purview of this review committee, the committee is concerned about the licensure rules in psychology developed in part by a Council of Psychologists appointed by the Ministry of Health. Some of these licensing rules are over 30 years old and based on approaches that in the interim have not received scientific support. Thus, the rules are in dire need of revision. The committee recommends that CHE initiate a dialogue with the Council of Psychologists and the leaders of the University-based clinical psychology graduate programs with the full support of the Ministry of Health, and with the clear goal of reaching resolutions that will ensure: (a) licensing rules that are in accord with clinical science; (b) due process in matching applicants to internship positions; and (c) an intellectual and practical continuity between the science-informed training we recommend, the CHE's requirements of clinical programs and the requirements of the Council of Psychologists. While proceeding with this, all those involved should bear in mind that the ultimate goal of training, accreditation, and licensure is to protect and enhance the public health. Until the licensing rules are changed in Israel, the public is bound to suffer from a limited availability of the most effective treatments, or worse, and students are bound to suffer from conflicting demands from academic faculty, who are exposed to international standards of science-informed training, and regulators whose own training may tend to be anchored in pre-scientific methods.

In addition to enhanced protection for the public, this will also allow for the absorption of clinical psychologists trained in Israel and abroad in evidence-based practice into the workforce in Israel, including at Israeli universities. This is the state of clinical science internationally. Under the current situation, highly-competent clinical scientists and scientist practitioners who were trained in the best North American universities encounter unreasonable difficulties in obtaining Israeli licensure to practice.

The committee also recommends that at least 50% of the slots on the Council of Psychologists be allocated to core faculty members in bona fide universities – so that they can participate in discussions to help define science-informed requirements for licensure for the sake of public health. The aim, minimally, is to make sure that the criteria are formulated in such a way that the clinical programs within the country can offer training that ensures that their students are licensable while also providing them with state-of-the-art clinical training based on international standards. Since change in the composition of the Council of Psychologists requires changes in the law, the committee recommends establishing an advisory committee whose role is to oversee the application of the above suggestions. This committee should be appointed by the CHE and the Ministry of Health, in consultation with academic department chairs at the universities.

## **6. Infrastructure**

Infrastructure needs to be aligned with research and educational needs and with changes in the field. This is important for research productivity and appropriate graduate and undergraduate education. The need for infrastructure is translated into, among other things, a need for laboratory and office space, technological resources, and library. In order to conduct advanced psychological science, there is a need to pay attention to these aspects of infrastructure.

### ***a. Space for Laboratory Facilities***

All institutions have space for laboratories and faculty offices. However, in most institutions space is far below what is required for faculty research. Moreover, there is very little room for expansion so that the current situation does not allow for recruiting new faculty, which limits future developments. In addition, in many cases, equipment is old and there seems to be not enough resources to replace old equipment.

Recent developments in brain imaging have influenced areas of psychology not traditionally reliant on major equipment (e.g., cognitive, social, and clinical). As a result, these areas have become more oriented toward neuroscience than before. Hence, access to neuroimaging technologies is badly needed. Outside Israel, there are quite a few psychology departments that have their own neuroimaging facilities. In contrast, in Israel, all MRI machines reside in hospitals, and access to neuroimaging facilities is thus limited.

This situation will take its toll on graduate and undergraduate training. Moreover, it will make faculty less attractive as collaborators in international teams and will compromise faculty's ability to compete for research funds outside of Israel.

### ***b. Space for Graduate Students***

The interaction of graduate students with each other and with faculty (and undergraduates) is important for their education. To this end, it is important that graduate students have office space on campus. However, in most institutions only a small proportion of graduate students have offices on campus, with many occupying laboratory space when it is not in use for experiments. Many graduate students work entirely from home. This situation is not favorable for their education and their research, and it needs to be changed dramatically.

### ***c. Library***

All universities should have up-to-date (i.e., very regularly updated) e-journals that are easy to access. Most universities in Israel do, but not all. If needed, a consortium of universities in Israel could be formed to make access of this sort more affordable through multi-site licensures or the like. This is absolutely essential to contemporary undergraduate and graduate education in psychology, and clearly it is critical for faculty and all active researchers in psychological science. Easy access to e-journals and data bases on campus must be provided if they are not, not only to faculty but to graduate students and undergraduates alike. Ideally, there should also be universal WiFi access on campus for all, and also easy access to online journals and data bases from home as well.

### ***d. Human Subjects Protection***

All research on human beings requires approval from an institutional review board. For research that poses no risks, such as most research in psychology, obtaining approval should be fast and routine. However, in most institutions in Israel, the process is slow and painful, in large part because approval is given by the same board that approves medical research, which does often pose risks. In North America, research in psychology is evaluated by a different panel from the one that evaluates

medical research. The committee recommends that all institutions in Israel take measures to expedite institutional approval of routine, risk-free research in psychology, preferably by separating the review process into two committees.

## **7. Alumni Surveys and Networks**

While universities are contemplating how best to secure local resources, even though there has not been a tradition of charitable giving to Universities in Israel – a norm that will have to be overcome over time – it is important that Israeli universities begin to develop an alumni culture. In the US, to take an example, alumni organizations play an important role in fostering a connection to the institution; and, by affiliating with its alumni association, a university (or college) can help foster the tradition of giving among students even while they are still students at the institution, such as with class gifts and a generally emerging social norm to participate. The internet makes it easier to carry this tradition through email newsletters, websites, magazines, etc. that allow students to keep in contact with one another, to get and give news, both personal and institutional, to network for jobs and the like, and in short, to maintain the social relations and good feeling of the class and loyalty to the institution over time. Universities and colleges, as well as departments and schools can do themselves a service by promoting alumni activities.

Minimally, institutions should start out with a survey of their graduates (if they have not already done so); with plans to repeat the survey fairly regularly especially among those for whom less time has passed since graduation. One purpose is to keep track of what students end up doing with their education. Another is to introduce a vehicle for establishing ongoing contacts with alumni, as indicated above.

This recommendation holds for colleges as well.

## **D. Colleges: Schools of Behavioral Science**

### **1. BA Programs in Behavioral Science**

Behavioral Science seems to be unique to Israel. Although there are interdisciplinary programs in the social sciences in North America, few, if any, combine only psychology and sociology/anthropology. The missions of these programs, to innovate in education and training in Israel, and to reach out to broad populations, are commendable, and some offer quite strong undergraduate programs. In the committee's view, the challenges faced by the colleges in offering BA-level education in behavioral science are significant, however, and although the BA programs in Behavioral Science vary considerably in character and quality, many of the challenges they face are shared.

There are tensions inherent in the very foundations of the missions of the colleges, a consequence of conflicting goals. One such tension involves the desire in the colleges to reach out to and educate students, who, for one reason or another, are, on average, less well-prepared than students accepted to the universities, even while aspiring to excellence in undergraduate education, including preparing students for graduate studies. A second tension stems from the emphasis on an intimate teaching environment with smaller classes and responsive faculty while at the same time employing many faculty who desire to do more research and feel that career advancement depends on that. The higher teaching loads for

college faculty, given their core duties, focus the faculty on teaching and reflect the fact that they are not expected to do research of the quantity and quality of research at universities. There is nonetheless pressure to do research, which comes from faculty themselves, who were trained in it and enjoy it, and the leadership of the colleges who often aspire to the prestige that research confers. In addition, academic promotion depends in large part on having a research record. The desire for the prestige offered by research, moreover, is often reflected in hiring aging faculty who have retired from university positions. In some cases, this works out well, but in many instances it is not ideal for building a coherent, well balanced department.

The desire for prestige, in conjunction with the desire to serve students, has led many colleges to decide to offer MA programs, with still more MA programs in the planning stages. However, many of the colleges, in the committee's view, do not have the resources to provide adequate MA training in psychology or in other behavioral science fields. Opening such programs may also pressure the college to take its own BA-level graduates, particularly when their graduates cannot compete with graduates of universities, who tend to have far higher entrance credentials and often receive more advanced undergraduate instruction. This "creeping universityism" at the colleges is also expressed in some cases in plans to open PhD programs. The committee believes that MA programs in colleges should be few and far between and only at colleges that clearly have commensurate resources in expertise and faculty (e.g., the equivalent of a full-fledged psychology department that also contains adequate faculty in the specialized area of the planned MA program). PhD programs are inappropriate in colleges.

#### ***a. Curriculum***

Although classes at colleges are smaller than at the universities, allowing more individual attention in colleges, as a whole, in many cases the undergraduate programs offered tend to include less exposure to the core of any given field, a shallower, lesser quality exposure, often with course materials that are less up-to-date and sometimes even inappropriate. The committee recommends that each undergraduate major in behavioral science should (a) provide students with a solid grounding in statistics and methodology (which typically is done); (b) require basic core courses in psychology (including introduction to psychology, cognition, social psychology, and developmental) as well as in sociology and anthropology, rather than a less rigorous or more haphazard selection of courses; and (c) require one or more advanced courses that systematically integrate the behavioral science fields for students by contrasting the perspectives and methods of each of the disciplines (comprising the behavioral science major) in examining the same set of social/behavioral issues.

In short, the committee's view is that gaining a deep understanding of the main two disciplines comprising behavioral science by pursuing the equivalent of a double major in psychology and sociology/anthropology can be a good model for a solid undergraduate program in behavioral science. This can be especially valuable if one or more required courses also explicitly integrate these disciplines – by systematically contrasting how the different disciplines approach the same problems. In our view, it is these kinds of interdisciplinary courses that make a Behavioral Sciences program distinct from simply a double major in psychology and sociology/anthropology. We thus believe that such courses should be offered in all behavioral science programs, regardless of the model the program pursues.

In addition, the existing behavioral science programs in Israel also fail to include some disciplines traditionally considered part of the behavioral sciences. For example, the major includes no exposure to political science, a core area of behavioral science. It particularly surprised the committee, given Israel's leadership in the area, that no behavioral science program observed included economics as part of the major. This is still more perplexing, given the growing interplay between psychology and economics in judgment and decision-making, behavioral economics, and neuroeconomics, and also the relevance of these fields to business. Many students at colleges have applied interests related to business, as an example, making this seem a natural alliance. The restriction of having no opportunity to gain some exposure to economics seems less than ideal. At a minimum, the committee recommends that an introductory course in economics should be offered and required in all behavioral science programs.

The committee appreciates that behavioral sciences, as taught at the colleges, is offered in a context that is expressly geared toward serving young people whose preparation for higher education may not be as strong as that of university students. To promote excellence in the behavioral sciences at colleges in this context, schools of behavioral sciences would benefit from formulating a more ambitious mission that expressly appeals to exceptionally highly qualified students as well. In addition to the curriculum improvements in the psychology element of the curriculum we recommend, these programs could upgrade their coursework in sociology and anthropology to make it more substantive while also expanding it to include economics. In this way, schools of behavioral sciences would have the potential to distinguish themselves in the country by highlighting the excellence and uniqueness of the interdisciplinary programs they offer. Making such changes could permit colleges to position themselves as institutions in Israel that uniquely offer this kind of integrated interdisciplinary curriculum.

### ***b. Faculty Composition***

Most behavioral science programs heavily emphasize psychology in their curriculum. Where there is such an emphasis, it makes no sense to have no (or virtually no) faculty in the core of the discipline of psychology. This is a problem at more than one college, and it compromises the ability of each relevant college to deliver a high quality program that meets its own goals. Hence, to the degree that there is an emphasis on psychology in a behavioral science program, either as an essential basis of behavioral science or as a specialization within behavioral science, and this is the case in virtually every college in the country, the committee believes there must be psychology faculty on the full-time staff to cover the teaching in this field. Alternatively, a choice could be made to dispense with courses in (and emphasis on) psychology, despite considerable student interest in the field at the colleges. If the emphasis is retained, the committee's view is that the psychologists hired, both full-time and part-time, should reflect core areas of the discipline of psychology (much as in universities), and should cover at least two core domains of the field, e.g., cognitive psychology and social psychology.

Similarly, in other cases, there was not enough strength in the regular faculty in sociology or anthropology to cover the curriculum requirements for sociology/anthropology. The committee recommends that the ratio of curriculum requirements in sociology/anthropology of the program should be reflected in the strength of regular faculty members from those disciplines.

More generally, there tends to be very heavy reliance in the colleges on adjunct teachers even for core courses (whether in psychology or sociology/anthropology), and the committee regards this as a disservice to students and to these fields. In particular, adjunct teachers are not evaluated by the same academic criteria as are regular faculty and their commitment to the institution is lower, in that they often must teach at a number of institutions to make ends meet. For these reasons, it is less likely that a course offered by an adjunct (rather than a regular faculty member) will be as high quality, as grounded in current evidence in the behavioral sciences, or as reflective of the mission of the department. The number of courses offered by adjunct teachers should thus be limited and should be largely on those topics for which a practical or professional (off-campus) expertise is needed.

Making such hires in colleges as needed may be challenging in some cases because of the very small size of the schools themselves. Nonetheless, the committee believes that hiring in psychology and/or sociology/anthropology to ensure that there is strength in those areas should be the goal in order for the school to achieve and sustain excellence.

### ***c. Course Materials: Reading in English***

Proficiency in reading behavioral science material in English is essential for professional work in a modern, globally focused job market and also for advanced study in graduate school. Many students at the colleges understand this and pointedly noted that they do not have enough exposure to behavioral science materials in English in their education and that they want and need more exposure. Their view is that the relative absence of this is an impediment both in obtaining graduate training and in some cases professional positions. Hence, all behavioral science programs should require that students take at least one substantive course that uses a recent, comprehensive textbook in English, as well as at least one advanced course in which some of the assigned journal articles are in English. To ensure that students are prepared to do so, colleges might consider requiring a higher level of English proficiency for admission or providing some not-for-credit English language courses which students who need them can take. Content courses should, of course, use the best available texts and articles, and often these will be in Hebrew (as is the case in many fields of sociology). The requirement should simply be that materials in English be required in at least two courses among the large number of courses students need for graduation, virtually all of which require texts or other written materials in Hebrew.

### ***d. Hands-on Research Experience***

It is essential to BA-level education in behavioral science, and certainly in psychology, that all students gain direct exposure to and experience with research on a hands-on basis. This is critical to understanding the enormous quantity of research that students will need to evaluate, absorb, and apply in their professional lives or in further graduate study. Much of the knowledge in the behavioral sciences is based on research, and the body of knowledge is constantly growing. In order to properly evaluate the research that is presented in classes and later in professional life, students need to have first-hand exposure to research. This can be done in many ways, but is best done through an organized laboratory course in which students learn how to ask questions that can be studied scientifically, and gain experience in designing a method for a study, conducting that study, analyzing the data, and

interpreting the findings in a written report. Students should also be encouraged to do research under the supervision of faculty in the faculty member's lab or on his/her project to learn more about the nuts and bolts of research. Research training is as necessary for excellence in training for BA students as for training graduate students, whether in psychology or in behavioral science.

Hence, although the committee is fully aware of and accepts the distinction between research-oriented institutions (universities) and teaching colleges in terms of their primary mission, BA-level education in behavioral science must include hands-on research experience and clear mechanisms for providing students with this experience. Hence, the committee strongly encourages the CHE to advise the behavioral science schools in colleges to improve the extent and rigor of research training among undergraduates, with the aim of increasing the excellence of the BA-level education in behavioral science. Clear mechanisms in each school need to be put into place to ensure such experience as part of students' BA-level training.

### ***e. Honors Program***

There is great variability among the undergraduates in the colleges. Some are as talented as university students and others are not well prepared for college level studies. A consequence is that the stronger students are sometimes not challenged sufficiently. The colleges might consider instituting small, highly selective honors programs for talented students, offering them one or two advanced seminars as well as supervised research written as a thesis.

## ***2. BA in Psychology***

Most colleges in Israel offer a BA in Behavioral Science rather than a BA in Psychology. There is one near exception to this at a college, which offers the equivalent of a double major between psychology and sociology/anthropology, although it is formally termed BA in Behavioral Science and is in a School of Behavioral Science. The committee believes that offering a solid BA-level education in psychology is more readily arranged in a rigorous, well-organized way than is BA-level education in Behavioral Science, which is more amorphous as a field. Hence, when a college has the motivation, the full-time faculty and the necessary course structure to do this and to do it with excellence, it should be permitted to offer a BA in psychology as a double major with another discipline (preferably of the student's choice).

This route, however, is not a viable option for most colleges. As noted, most colleges do not have sufficient faculty in core areas of psychology to mount a full-fledged psychology department that offers a BA in psychology. Many do not even have adequate psychology faculty to cover the emphasis in psychology that they already have in their behavioral science major. In these institutions, moving toward offering a psychology major should be discouraged. Indeed, offering a BA in psychology would inevitably weaken the behavioral science major, both by increasing the demands on psychology faculty and by drawing students away from the behavioral science major. Hence, it should be at the colleges only if and when colleges have the faculty and the course structure to offer a high quality program in psychology as needed for such a major, and if the decision is to allow students to double major in psychology and behavioral sciences, the college must have the behavioral science faculty and courses to do the latter with excellence as well.

### **3. MA in Psychology**

Some colleges are moving toward offering graduate programs in the discipline of psychology. The committee recommends that before such programs are created, it is important to develop solid undergraduate programs in psychology. This will turn the attention of such colleges toward building excellence in psychology (breadth and depth) for an undergraduate program in psychology before turning to psychology graduate programs.

To the extent that an MA program is formed in clinical psychology, it must also be evaluated in accordance with the same high standards applied to clinical programs in universities. The committee in fact applied these criteria to the one college that now has such a program (which is faring quite well). The committee would like to note, however, that it does not currently support the development of MA or PhD programs (in clinical or otherwise) in colleges. The committee's view is that colleges place high teaching demands on faculty, leaving little time to formulate and conduct high quality research and to be productive as is required among university faculty. When combined with inadequate research facilities and with student bodies that tend not to be research-oriented, the high teaching loads argue for the inappropriateness of the PhD in the colleges as a matter of quality control.

### **4. Hiring and Promotion**

To build a truly high-quality school within a college (or department within a university), it is critical that the senior and junior faculty (or the majority of them) have long-term, full-time commitments to the institution. For this reason, the committee is concerned that the tendency at colleges now is to hire retired faculty from universities who wish to teach part time. Although we understand that this is the fastest way to build a new institution, we recommend that, over time, each college develop and implement a plan to recruit and promote young faculty, and to encourage their input into critical decisions taken by the school and college. This would motivate young faculty to link their careers with the development of the institution and over time would increase its excellence. The committee is also concerned about the very heavy reliance on adjunct teachers, especially for teaching core courses, for the reasons noted above.

In addition, the hiring process in the colleges, whether for full-time or part-time faculty, often do not seem to be clear and standardized. In order to get the best possible faculty, procedures need to be in place for advertising and filling positions.

All colleges in Israel handle promotion from lecturer to senior lecturer internally, but promotion to associate and full professor needs to go through CHE. In part because of this practice, both junior and senior faculty often find that they are unclear about the timeline and criteria for promotion. The committee recognizes that some or all of this may arise at the level of the school or college, but greater clarity and transparency in CHE's criteria and procedures would be helpful. As indicated, for example, the CHE makes it clear that research is not a central component of faculty work-life at colleges, and yet when it comes to promotion, it is based on research, and faculty must show research productivity. At best, this seems to lead to confusion and some frustration. We therefore encourage the CHE to develop greater clarity in its guidelines and mechanisms, particularly with regard to research, and to ensure that the guidelines are disseminated, perhaps in collaboration with the colleges, and understood by faculty. The administration of each college and department should also increase the transparency of its own promotion guidelines, especially for those that are controlled internally.

## **5. Faculty**

As noted, teaching loads are relatively high in the colleges. At the same time, many faculty engage in research, and this has benefits for faculty, for the college, and for undergraduate education. Yet the possibilities for research are more limited in the colleges than in the universities. One model for getting research done is through collaborations with faculty and graduate students in the universities. This can be a win-win situation given that the graduate student load on university faculty is high, and co-supervision by qualified researchers from a college can thus benefit all. This arrangement also gives college faculty access to research facilities that are likely to be more advanced than those at colleges and usable by more research participants.

Faculty at some colleges are granted sabbaticals or supported research leaves. Increasing those opportunities would enable greater research productivity on the part of college faculty and, in the committee's view, would be valuable for undergraduate education as well as for faculty morale. Another way to give faculty research time would be through providing grant support of teaching release. Increasing the availability of supported leaves for new course preparation would also be valuable.

## **6. Infrastructure**

All colleges in Israel, if they are to offer students a 21<sup>st</sup> century education, must upgrade the information technology capacities in their libraries. In particular, they must offer faculty and students access to up-to-date e-journals, which means current subscriptions that are regularly updated for both journals and all psychology data bases. Internet connections also need to be simple to use and widely available on campus. This is the bare minimum. All faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates should also have access to e-journals from home, where many typically work and study. A cost-saving possibility that might make this more feasible could be for Israel's colleges to form a library consortium (perhaps in conjunction with universities) to purchase journal and data base subscriptions, based on multi-site licenses. The physical library can emphasize books as well unless these are on-line, which may make physical books in the library less necessary.

In addition, students and faculty alike need wireless connections on campus, and at a minimum, faculty need computer connections off-campus.

## **7. Alumni Associations**

See the committee's recommendation in Point 7 under Universities.

## E. Summary

Despite limited resources, higher education in psychology and in the behavioral sciences in Israel is thriving. The universities enjoy fine faculty, many with active laboratories whose innovative and up-to-date research is recognized internationally. The universities are also highly selective and attract outstanding students. On the whole, the undergraduate programs are of high quality, although the undergraduates in most places need more challenging and more advanced courses, more opportunities for individual expression, and instruction better grounded in science. Although the faculty in most departments are strong, some areas, notably social and developmental psychology need to be strengthened further; these are exciting areas of the field internationally in which Israel should excel. There is also inbreeding at every level academically and lack of clarity about job openings and recruitment procedures, both of which require attention.

The universities face two major challenges in maintaining excellence. First, psychology is a laboratory science, unlike the other social sciences, and needs space, allocations, equipment, teaching requirements, numbers of students, and the like comparable to laboratory sciences. Faculty members are burdened with too many students and too few facilities. Second, graduate training takes too long, especially in the clinical programs. Virtually all clinical programs spend too much time teaching courses on therapies and diagnostic tests that are, at best, of questionable scientific validity, and they offer too few courses (or practica) on newer forms of evidence-based therapy and assessment methods that have been supported scientifically and are the international standard. This situation is exacerbated by licensing requirements imposed by the Licensing Board, which seems (based on its decisions thus far) to be insufficiently knowledgeable about and receptive to evidence-based treatments. The outdated state of the clinical curricula is further exacerbated by reliance on outside teachers who are practitioners often lacking in experience in validated assessment procedures and therapies. Most core clinical faculty are aware of these problems and many are willing, even eager, to take steps to update and modernize the curricula. At the same time, they are – understandably – reluctant to make curricular changes that would compromise their graduates when they apply for internship and licensure. Thus, to resolve the problems we note in this report (as well as in the institutional reports), the regulatory bodies (established by the Ministries of Health and Education) will need to work together to remedy this problem in service of the ultimate goal of improving mental health services for the public at large.

With one exception, the colleges teach behavioral science, typically with psychology at the core, and sociology (and sometimes anthropology) included; economics and political science are not included in this definition of behavioral sciences. The faculty and curricula vary considerably. Some colleges lack regular faculty in the central, basic areas of psychology, while others, by contrast, have insufficient numbers of non-psychologists on their regular faculty. Many also make no attempt to systematically integrate the behavioral sciences. On the whole, the colleges aim to provide high quality teaching in an intimate atmosphere, and on the whole, they succeed. However, there are tensions in their stated goals. Most aspire to give an education and a chance to students not as well-prepared as those who go to universities; at the same time, they want to provide an education that will allow those students to go to graduate school. Similarly, faculty are expected to concentrate on teaching and thus have teaching loads that are higher than those at universities; at the same time, many faculty want to do research and the colleges value it. Some of the colleges have (or want to have) graduate programs, further straining their resources.

Graduates of Israeli universities in psychology have had extraordinary success and received many awards and prizes, including the Nobel Prize, and have reached the highest levels in other areas as far afield as government, the high-tech industries, and literature. There is a lively esprit de corps in both universities and colleges. Faculty and students alike enjoy what they are doing and they do it with pride and enthusiasm. This is not to say that the situation is perfect. Both undergraduate and graduate programs need enrichment and in some cases, restructuring, as well as infrastructure improvements. Universities and colleges alike are increasingly stressed by lack of resources, and this, too, threatens their successes. Israeli higher education must be fostered and must be given the resources it needs. The future of the state depends on it.

**Signed By:**



**Prof. Susan Andersen  
Committee Chair**



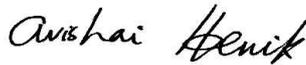
**Prof. Victor Azarya<sup>2</sup>**



**Prof. Yinon Cohen<sup>3</sup>**



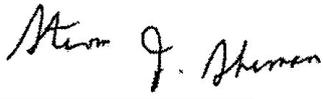
**Prof. Susan Goldin-  
Meadow**



**Prof. Avishai Henik**



**Prof. Morris Moscovitch**



**Prof. Steven J. Sherman**



**Prof. Varda Shoham**



**Prof. Seymour Spilerman**



**Prof. Sidney Strauss**



**Prof. Barbara Tversky**

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<sup>2, 3</sup> Prof. Victor Azarya and Prof. Yinon Cohen asked to note that their signatures do not refer to the Psychology departments since they did not evaluate that field and only participated in the evaluation of Behavioral Science programs.

# APPENDIX 1



18/11/2008  
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**Professor Susan M. Andersen**  
**Professor of Psychology**  
**Director, Doctoral Program in Social Psychology**  
**Department of Psychology**  
**New York University**  
**USA**

Dear Professor Andersen,

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, particularly as our nation reaches maturity in its 60<sup>th</sup> year.

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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Studies.

The composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Susan Andersen - Chair, Prof. Victor Azarya, Prof. Yinon Cohen, Prof. Susan Goldin-Meadow, Prof. Avishai Henik, Prof. Morris Moscovitch, Prof. Steven J. Sherman, Prof. Varda Shoham, Prof. Seymour Spilerman, Prof. Sidney Strauss and Prof. Barbara Tversky.

Ms. Alisa Elon will coordinate the Committee's activities.



In your capacity as a member 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,

**Professor YuK-Tamir**  
**Minister of Education**

**and Chairperson of 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 Unit  
Ms. Alisa Elon, Committee Coordinator

## **Appendix to the Letter of Appointment for Evaluation Committees (Study Programs)**

### **1. General**

On June 3, 2003 the Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to establish a system for quality assessment and assurance in Israeli higher education. Within this framework, study-programs are to be evaluated every six years and institutions every eight years. The quality assessment system came into effect in the academic year of 2004-2005.

The main objectives of the quality assessment activity are:

- To enhance the quality of higher education in Israel;
- To create an awareness within institutions of higher education in Israel of the importance of quality evaluation and to develop internal self-evaluation mechanisms on a regular basis;
- To provide the public with information regarding the quality of study programs in institutions of higher education throughout Israel;
- To ensure the continued integration of the Israeli system of higher education in the international academic arena.

**It is not the CHE's intention to rank the institutions of higher education according to the results of the quality assessment processes. The evaluation committee should refrain from formal comparisons.**

### **2. The Work of the Evaluation Committee**

- 2.1 The committee shall hold meetings, as needed, before visiting the institution, in order to evaluate the material received.
- 2.2 The committee shall visit the institution and the academic unit being evaluated – if possible - within 3-4 months of receiving the self-evaluation report. The purpose of the visit is to verify and update the information submitted in the self-evaluation report, clarify matters where necessary, inspect the educational environment and facilities first hand, etc. During the visit, the committee will meet with the heads of the institution, faculty members, students, the administrative staff, and any other persons it considers necessary.
- 2.3 In a meeting at the beginning of the visit, the committee will meet with the heads of the institution (president/rector, dean), the heads of the academic unit and the study-programs, in order to explain the purpose of the visit. At the end

of the visit, the committee will summarize its findings, and formulate its recommendations.

- 2.4 The duration of the visits (at least one full day) will be coordinated with the chairperson of the committee.
- 2.5 Following the visit, the committee will write its final report, including its recommendations, which will be delivered to the institution and the academic unit for their response.
- 2.6 In the event that a member of the committee is also a faculty member in an institution being evaluated, he will not take part in discussions regarding that institution.

### **3. The Individual Reports**

- 3.1 The final reports of the evaluation committee shall address every institution separately.
- 3.2 The final reports shall include recommendations on topics listed in the guidelines for self-evaluation, such as:
  - The goals and aims of the evaluated academic unit and study programs.
  - The study program.
  - The academic staff.
  - The students.
  - The organizational structure.
  - The broader organizational structure (school/faculty) in which the academic unit and study program operate.
  - The infrastructure (both physical and administrative) available to the study program.
  - Internal mechanisms for quality assessment.
  - Other topics to be decided upon by the evaluation committee.

### **4. The structure of the reports**

#### ***4.1 Part A – General background and an executive summary:***

- 4.1.1 General background concerning the evaluation process, the names of the members of the committee, a general description of the institution and the academic unit being assessed, and the committee's work.
- 4.1.2 An executive summary that will include a description of the strengths and weaknesses of the academic unit and program being evaluated.

#### ***4.2 Part B – In-depth description of subjects examined:***

- 4.2.1 This part will be composed according to the topics examined by the evaluation committee, and based on the self-evaluation report submitted by the institution.
- 4.2.2 For each topic examined the report will present a summary of the findings, the relevant information and analysis.

#### ***4.3 Part C –Recommendations:***

- 4.3.1 Comprehensive conclusions and recommendations regarding the evaluated academic unit and the study program according to the topics in part B.
- 4.3.2 Recommendations may be classified according to the following categories:
  - ***Congratulatory remarks and minimal changes recommended, if any.***

- ***Desirable changes recommended*** at the institution's convenience and follow-up in the next cycle of evaluations.
- ***Important/needed changes requested for ensuring appropriate academic quality*** within a reasonable time, in coordination with the institution (1-3 years)
- ***Essential and urgent changes required, on which continued authorization will be contingent*** (immediately or up to one year).
- ***A combination of any of the above.***

#### **4.4 Part D - Appendices:**

The appendices shall contain the committee's letter of appointment and the schedule of the on-site visit.

### **5. The General report**

In addition to the individual reports concerning each study program, the committee shall submit to the CHE the following documents:

- 5.1 A general report regarding the status of the evaluated field of study within the Israeli institutions of higher education.
- 5.2 Recommendations for standards in the evaluated field of study.

**We urge the committee to clearly list its specific recommendations for each one of the topics (both in the individual reports and in the general report) and to prioritize these recommendations, in order to ease the eventual monitoring of their implementation.**

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