



## **Committee for the Evaluation of Social Work Study Programs**

### **Sapir College School of Social Work**

#### **Evaluation Report**

March 2016

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## **Chapter 1- Background**

The Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to evaluate study programs in the field of Social Work and Human Services during the academic year of 2015.

Following the decision of the CHE, Vice Chair of the Council of Higher Education on behalf of the Minister of Education, appointed a Committee consisting of:

- **Prof. Allan Borowski**- School of Social Work and Social Policy, La Trobe University ,Melbourne, Australia (Ageing; Retirement; Migration; Cohesion; Delinquency) Committee Chair
- **Prof. Michàlle Mor Barak** - School of Social Work & Marshall School of Business, University of Southern California, USA (social work and management)
- **Prof. Ram Cnaan** - School of Policy and Practice, University of Pennsylvania, USA (faith based social services, social policy)
- **Prof. David Biegel** - Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, Case Western Reserve University, USA (family as a unit, family welfare)
- **Prof. Zahava Solomon**- School of Social Work, Tel-Aviv University, Israel (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and secondary PTSD)
- **Prof. Sven Hesse**-School of Social work, Stockholm University, Sweden (poverty and children and their families in an international perspective as well as International social work)

***Ms. Alex Buslovich Bilik*** was the coordinator of the Committee on behalf of the CHE.

Within the framework of its activity, the Committee was requested to:<sup>1</sup>

1. Examine the self-evaluation reports, submitted by the institutions that provide study programs in Social Work and Human Services and to conduct on-site visits at those institutions.
2. Submit to the CHE an individual report on each of the evaluated academic units and study programs, including the Committee's findings and recommendations.
3. Submit to the CHE a general report regarding the examined field of study within the Israeli system of higher education including recommendations for standards in the evaluated field of study.

The entire process was conducted in accordance with the CHE's Guidelines for Self-Evaluation (of October 2014).

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<sup>1</sup> The Committee's letter of appointment is attached as **Appendix 1**.

## **Chapter 2-Committee Procedures**

The Committee held its first meetings on March 8<sup>th</sup> 2015, during which it discussed fundamental issues concerning higher education in Israel, the quality assessment activity, as well as Social Work and Human Services Study programs in Israel.

In March 2015, the Committee held its visits of evaluation, and visited The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Tel Hai Academic College, Haifa University, Ariel University, Emek Yizrael Academic College, Ashqelon Academic college, Tel Aviv University, Ben Gurion University, Sapir Academic College and Bar Ilan University. During the visits, the Committee met with various stakeholders at the institutions, including management, faculty, staff, and students.

This report deals with the School of Social Work at Sapir college. The Committee's visit to Sapir college took place on Wednesday March 18<sup>th</sup> ,2015.

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

The Committee thanks the management of Sapir college and the School of Social Work for their self-evaluation report and for their hospitality towards the committee during its visit at the institution.

## **Chapter 3: Evaluation of Study Program at Sapir College**

### **1. Executive Summary**

The School of Social Work at Sapir College offers a BSW degree. It received the right to grant this degree in 2007. This is the first time this degree (the focus of the Committee's review) has been evaluated by the Quality Assessment and Assurance Division of the Council for Higher Education.

The BSW seeks to prepare students for entry-level general social work practice. The BSW curriculum is broadly consistent with other social work programs in Israel and includes a field placement/practicum.

The faculty comprises 1 full professor, 6 senior lecturers and 10 lecturers.

The infrastructure is satisfactory for the delivery of the curriculum.

In concert with social work faculty in other colleges in Israel (and not least because promotion is dependent upon it), the faculty aspire to be much more research active but are constrained, on the one hand, by high teaching loads and, on the other, by insufficient internal resources to support and facilitate research.

The School is creative and ambitious and invests heavily (and impressively so!) in including students from disadvantaged backgrounds in its BSW program.

### **2. Organizational Structure**

Sapir College is located in Sderot in the Western Negev. The campus is three kilometers from the border with Gaza.

Sapir College was established in 1963 as an adult night school. In 1975 a number of departments were opened under the auspices of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. This enabled students to begin their studies at the Sapir campus (to study there during their first year and often their second year as well) and then move to Ben-Gurion University to complete their studies. Sapir College became independent in 1997 when it was authorized to grant its graduates a bachelor's degrees.

Sapir College is perhaps Israel's largest college. It is comprised of 14 independent departments/schools that serve about 5,000 students studying towards a bachelor's degree. In two additional departments students begin their studies at Sapir College but complete them at Ben-Gurion University. Two departments/schools also offer Masters degrees in Film and Public Policy and Management to about 170 students. A further 330 students are enrolled in Sapir College's academic preparation/mechina program.

The Heads of Departments/Schools all report directly to the College president. This flat organizational structure facilitates ready communication with the senior management of the institution and ensures that the voice of the social work education enterprise at the College is easily heard.

### **3. Mission and Goals**

The mission of the School of Social Work aligns closely with the overall mission of Sapir College. The College seeks to serve the individual and community educational (and cultural) needs of the diverse and sparsely distributed residents of the Western Negev, some of which arise by virtue of the College's peripheral location while others stem from geo-political factors (proximity to the, at times, tense and volatile border with Gaza).

The School's sees its primary mission as preparing students for social work practice at entry level. The secondary one is the pursuit of knowledge through research and scholarship. The School is highly engaged in the region and has initiated a number of innovative programs and projects which also serve as contexts for the conduct of research.

The School, through its expansion efforts, is actively engaged in pursuing these missions.

### **4. Study Programs**

The School of Social Work currently offers a three-year, six-semester 120 credit points BSW degree program. Approximately 250 students are enrolled across the three years of the BSW program.

The BSW provides for a number of specializations/tracks including trauma, international social work, rehabilitation, and work and un/employment. The self-evaluation report acknowledges the need for a more focused investment in policy practice, a curriculum "deficiency" common to several social work programs in Israel. Indeed, this lacuna may be the source of concern expressed by students that the curriculum does not focus sufficiently on contemporary social (policy) issues in Israel.

During the site visit junior faculty indicated that more community work and policy practice practicum opportunities were required. They also indicated that practicum supervisors needed more training to ensure policy practice is brought to bear on all field placements.

Unique to the Sapir College BSW is the course/subject on international social work offered to a limited number of third year students and includes an overseas field placement.

Aside from the "regular" admission path, the School also provides for the admission of up to 10 percent of its annual student intake to graduates of Sapir College's pre-academic

programs and educationally disadvantaged members of “unique population groups”, namely, Bedouin and new immigrants from Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union.

The School plans to begin a two-year BA *hasava* / retraining program in 2015-16 and to also apply to the MALAG/HEC for approval to begin a MSW program.

There has been a steady fall in the number of applicants for the BSW degree program over the last five years (a decline of close to a 100).

### Commendations

The Committee was very impressed by both the College’s and School’s concrete efforts to provide tertiary education opportunities for students from socio-economically disadvantaged / marginalized backgrounds.

### Recommendations

#### Advisable changes:

It is recommended that the College and School carefully consider the rationale and, indeed, necessity for any proposed MSW degree program given the availability of MSW programs at many other Israeli universities and colleges. As part of this exercise, it is further recommended that the expected learning outcomes for any new program be carefully articulated and distinguished from those of the current BSW program.

Having considered the rationale and necessity for an MSW program and how it will differ from the BSW, it is additionally recommended that the School and College undertake a careful analysis of the anticipated demand for the proposed new program.

When a faculty vacancy arises, the School of Social Work should prioritize the recruitment of a faculty member with expertise in the area of social policy. In the interim concerted efforts need to be made to include substantive content on contemporary social policy issues and challenges facing Israel, perhaps in consultation with faculty from the College’s Public Policy and Management faculty.

More community work and policy practice practicum opportunities need to be provided.

Practicum supervisors should be provided with more training to ensure policy practice is brought to bear on all field placements.

## **5. Human Resources / Faculty**

The faculty comprises one associate professor (the former Head of School), 6 Senior Lecturers and 10 Lecturers and 15 adjunct faculty (10 “senior” adjunct faculty and five “junior” adjunct faculty). Thus, the faculty profile is “skewed” towards early career faculty in terms of academic rank.

Junior adjunct faculty, some of whom have taught for many years at the School, are well integrated into the School's staff group and are kept closely apprised of curriculum and other developments.

#### Advisable Recommendations

In order to have a critical mass of senior faculty capable of offering (formalized) mentoring, the College should appoint two senior faculty members with both a well-established research track record *and* depth of professional experience as a social worker.

As other faculty positions become available, it is recommended that Sapir College look to its well-performing part-time and adjunct faculty members to fill vacancies.

### **6. Students**

The students reported that their studies were demanding, "serious" and that faculty had high expectations of them. Students reported highly satisfactory staff-student relationships and indicated that they received personalized attention and support when needed. They saw their instructors as positive role models.

In sum, the committee was impressed with the considerable satisfaction with and enthusiasm for the School on the part of its students.

### **7. Teaching and Learning Outcomes**

There are significant numbers of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and underrepresented groups enrolled in the BSW and, although the College has a Center for the Enhancement of Teaching, faculty members advised the Committee during the site visit that no specific training was provided for teaching students from such backgrounds.

While expected learning outcomes for the BSW program as a whole and the fieldwork practicum appear to be carefully specified, learning outcomes were not included in individual course syllabi. Such outcomes need to be articulated for each of the courses/subjects comprising the program.

#### Recommendations

##### Essential changes required:

The College, through its Center for the Enhancement of Teaching, should invest *much* more heavily in the training of faculty members in serving students from disadvantaged backgrounds. It is further recommended that the College also provide additional



resources to faculty members involved in teaching such students (e.g., lighter teaching loads, TAs, writing support, etc.).

Expected learning outcomes for *all* courses/subjects taught in the School of Social Work should be articulated.

## **8. Research**

In concert with social work faculty in other Israeli colleges, the faculty aspire to be much more research active but are constrained, on the one hand, by high teaching loads and, on the other, by insufficient internal financial and human resources to support and facilitate research. In many ways this is quite an invidious situation for college faculty in Israel in general as career path progression is dependent upon research and publication and, yet, the demands of teaching are such and other resources so constrained that the scope for doing so is very limited.

Further, while Sapir College (and other academic colleges in Israel) provide for some reduction in teaching loads by research-active faculty members, the high teaching loads often obviate the undertaking of the research which would afford the reduction in teaching loads in the first place.

The School of Social Work has a writing group that was re-instituted as a result of the self-study process and offers seed money to fund small scale faculty research projects. However, more supports are needed to encourage and reward faculty research.

The constraints to research productivity that are particular to the School of Social Work at Sapir College include the fact that (1) there is only one associate professor of social work available to provide direction and mentoring and (2) the absence of an organizational unit within the College charged with assisting faculty with the development and review of research grant applications.

There is some slippage between the research that is done and its appearance in peer-reviewed journals. While the Vice-President of Academic Affairs (i.e., Rector) conducts well-received writing group workshops to assist academic staff in the preparation for publication of papers flowing from their research, the School (indeed the entire College) would be well-advised to invest much more heavily in mentoring and, indeed, should introduce a *formal* mentoring program for early career academic staff (that is, Lecturers with a *teken* (a tenurable position), adjunct faculty who aspire to secure a *teken* as positions become available, and even perhaps Senior Lecturers who already have *kviut*/tenure).

Such a mentoring program presupposes the availability of senior academic staff to serve as mentors. In the case of the School of Social Work in particular, the planned expansion of its academic offerings will necessitate the appointment of additional senior academic staff (and additional administrative staff!). Sapir College should

seriously consider appointing at least two senior faculty members with a *demonstrable* track record in both research and mentoring (not simply supervising!) junior academic colleagues and, of course, professional practice experience as well.

Junior adjunct faculty, some of whom have taught for many years at the School, are well integrated into the School's staff group and are kept closely apprised of curriculum and other developments. Those proven and valued adjunct faculty who are interested in an academic career represent an excellent pool of future faculty as the programs of the School of Social Work expand. However, in order for them to be competitive, Sapir College will also have to invest in these faculty members as far as fostering their research productivity is concerned. Hence, the comment above about including them in a formal mentoring program. The Committee was impressed by the caliber and commitment of the junior faculty and its sense was that an investment in them by Sapir College would reap a rich future dividend for the School and College.

### Recommendations

#### Highly Advisable Recommendations

That Sapir College, in order to meet its expectations of its faculty for improved research productivity and faculty members' own aspirations in this regard, invest much more heavily in working towards a reduction in teaching workloads, research support (through *formal* mentoring, a College research authority or research administration unit, seed money for research projects, etc.) and, as *tekens*/slots open with program expansion, the employment of senior, demonstrably research-productive and professionally-experienced faculty with a *proven track record in mentoring* (not simply supervising) junior faculty.

## **9. Infrastructure**

Classrooms and library resources at Sapir College are adequate and appropriate for the delivery of the BSW curriculum. All have requisite audiovisual facilities. While the classrooms of various College buildings are utilized for the delivery of the curriculum, faculty members are primarily located in the same buildings in which classes are conducted. The School also has two learning laboratories that are equipped with filming and recording facilities.

Faculty do not have private offices in which to meet with students. Further, as the School has already embarked on expansion (the Bedouin pre-academic training program which commenced in 2014-15, the introduction of a Bachelor's social work *hasava*/retraining program in 2015-16) and hopes to expand further (the planned submission of a proposal to introduce a MSW degree program, etc.) will require infrastructure improvements,

### Advisable Recommendations

Faculty need to be provided with private offices in order to allow faculty to optimally perform their teaching, student advising and research roles.

Sapir College will need to make a commensurate investment in infrastructure in order to ensure that the quality of new program offerings is not compromised by insufficient facilities for faculty members and students. Indeed, the co-location of faculty offices (individual offices for faculty as well as office space for adjunct faculty), administrative personnel, classrooms and laboratories should be considered in future planning by the College.

## **10. Self-Evaluation Process**

A comprehensive self-evaluation process culminated in a detailed and systematic self-evaluation report. The process was led by a steering committee and assisted by academic and administrative staff of Sapir College. The site visit was attended by senior officers of the College and School of Social Work faculty members and students.

## **Chapter 4: Summary of Recommendations and Timetable**

### Essential changes required:

1. The College, through its Center for the Enhancement of Teaching, should invest *much* more heavily in the training of faculty members in serving students from disadvantaged backgrounds. It is further recommended that the College also provide additional resources to faculty members involved in teaching such students (e.g., lighter teaching loads, TAs, writing support, etc.).
2. Expected learning outcomes for *all* courses/subjects taught in the School of Social Work should be articulated.

### Highly Advisable Recommendations

3. That Sapir College, in order to meet its expectations of its faculty for improved research productivity and faculty members' own aspirations in this regard, invest much more heavily in working towards a reduction in teaching workloads, research support (through *formal* mentoring, a College research authority or research administration unit, seed money for research projects, etc.) and, as *tekens*/slots open with program expansion, the employment of senior, demonstrably research-productive and professionally-experienced faculty with a *proven track record in mentoring* (not simply supervising) junior faculty.

### Advisable changes:

4. It is recommended that the College and School carefully consider the rationale and, indeed, necessity for any proposed MSW degree program given the availability of MSW programs at many other Israeli universities and colleges. As part of this exercise, it is further recommended that the expected learning outcomes for any new program be carefully articulated and distinguished from those of the current BSW program.
5. Having considered the rationale and necessity for an MSW program and how it will differ from the BSW, it is additionally recommended that the School and College undertake a careful analysis of the anticipated demand for the proposed new program.
6. When a faculty vacancy arises, the School of Social Work should prioritize the recruitment of a faculty member with expertise in the area of social policy. In the interim concerted efforts need to be made to include substantive content on

contemporary social policy issues and challenges facing Israel, perhaps in consultation with faculty from the College's Public Policy and Management faculty.

7. More community work and policy practice practicum opportunities need to be provided.
8. Practicum supervisors should be provided with more training to ensure policy practice is brought to bear on all field placements.
9. In order to have a critical mass of senior faculty capable of offering (formalized) mentoring, the College should appoint two senior faculty members with both a well-established research track record *and* depth of professional experience as a social worker.
10. As other faculty positions become available, it is recommended that Sapir College look to its well-performing part-time and adjunct faculty members to fill vacancies.
11. Faculty need to be provided with private offices in order to allow faculty to optimally perform their teaching, student advising and research roles.
12. Sapir College will need to make a commensurate investment in infrastructure in order to ensure that the quality of new program offerings is not compromised by insufficient facilities for faculty members and students. Indeed, the co-location of faculty offices (individual offices for faculty as well as office space for adjunct faculty), administrative personnel, classrooms and laboratories should be considered in future planning by the College.

**Signed by:**



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Prof. Allan Borowski



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Prof. Ram Can'an



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Prof. Michàlle Mor Barak



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Prof. David Biegel



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Prof. Zahava Solomon



or Sven Hessel, Stockholm University, Stockholm

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Prof. Sven Hessel

**Appendix 1: Letter of Appointment**

February 2015

Prof. Allan Borowski  
School of Social Work  
RMIT University  
Australia

Dear Professor,

The Israeli Council for Higher Education (CHE) strives to ensure the continuing excellence and quality of Israeli higher education through a systematic evaluation process. By engaging upon this mission, the CHE seeks: 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.

As part of this important endeavor we reach out to world renowned academicians to help us meet the challenges that confront the Israeli higher education by accepting our invitation to participate in our international evaluation committees. This process establishes a structure for an ongoing consultative process around the globe on common academic dilemmas and prospects.

I therefore deeply appreciate your willingness to join us in this crucial enterprise.

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 the study programs in **Social Work and Human services**. In addition to yourself, the composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Michàlle Mor Barak, Prof. Ram Cnaan, Prof. David Biegel, Prof. Zahava Solomon and Prof. Sven Hesse

Ms. Alex Buslovich-Bilik will be the coordinator of the Committee.

Details regarding the operation of the committee and its mandate are provided in the enclosed appendix.

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

Sincerely,

Prof. Hagit Messer-Yaron  
Vice Chair,  
The Council for Higher Education (CHE)

*Enclosures:* Appendix to the Appointment Letter of Evaluation Committees

**Social Work –Schedule of site visit**  
**Sapir College**

**Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Participants</b>
9:30-10:00	Opening session with the heads of the institution	<b>Prof. Omri Yadlin, Prof. Avi Besser, Ms. Orna Gigi, Prof. Orit Nutman Shwartz, Ms. Anat Wolf</b>
10:00-10:45	Meeting with the head of the department of Social Work	<b>Dr. Merav Moshe Grodofsky</b>
10:45-11:30	Meeting with senior academic staff <b><u>with tenure</u></b> (representatives of relevant committees)*	<b>Dr. Miriam Levinger, Dr. Shmulik Sheintoch, Dr. Einav Segev, Dr. Roy Tal, Dr. Irit Regev, Dr. Gabriela Spector Marzel, Dr. Alvin Lander, Dr. Rebecca Ranz, Dr. Michal Komem, Dr. Nuzha Allasad Alhuzail, Dr. Chana Katz, Dr. Aryeh Grumet, Dr. Daniel DeMalach</b>
11:30-12:15	Meeting with senior academic staff <b><u>without tenure</u></b> (representatives of relevant committees)*	<b>Mr. Ohad Green, Dr. Irit Koren, Ofer Shinar Halperin, Limor Gadot, Nava Ben David, Dr. Ragha Elnabilsy, Dr. Ilana Eliasi, Hester Fass</b>
12:15-13:00	Lunch (in the same room)	<b>Closed-door meeting of the committee</b>
13:00-13:45	Meeting with BA students** (up to 10 students)	<b>Shai Sweed, Sahar Dockerker, Shir Fliss, Ziv Shuval, Hadas Karlinski (3<sup>rd</sup> year students) Ma'ayan Gerber, Anat Zisman, Nahala El Abid, Merav Zvulun, Orr Bonnenfeld (2<sup>nd</sup> year students)</b>
13:45-14:30	Open slot	<b>Dr. Merav Moshe Grodofsky Dr. Nuzha Allasad Alhuzail Dr. Michal Komem Dr. Rebecca Ranz</b>
14:30-14:45	Closed-door meeting of the committee	



14:45-15:15	Summation meeting with heads of institution and head of the department	<b>Prof. Omri Yadlin, Prof. Avi Besser, Ms. Orna Gigi, Ms. Anat Wolf, Dr. Merav Moshe Grodofsky</b>
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\* The heads of the institution and academic unit or their representatives will not attend these meetings.

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