



**Committee for the Evaluation of Social Work and Human
Services
Study Programs**

Bob Shapell School of Social Work

Tel Aviv University

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**¹ - 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:²

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).

¹ 1In accordance with CHE policy, Prof. Zahava Solomon did not participate in the evaluation in order to avoid the appearance of any conflict of interest.

² The Committee's letter of appointment is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Chapter 2-Committee Procedures

The Committee held its first meetings on March 8th 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 Tel Aviv University. The Committee's visit to Tel Aviv University took place on Wednesday March 16th, 2015.

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

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

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This report deals with the Bob Shapell School of Social Work at Tel Aviv University. The Committee's visit to the Bob Shapell School of Social Work took place on 16 March 2015.

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

The Committee thanks the management of Tel Aviv University and the Bob Shapell 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 Bob Shapell School of Social Work

This Report relates to the situation current at the time of the visit to the institution, and does not take account of any subsequent changes. The Report records the conclusions reached by the Evaluation Committee based on the documentation provided by the institution, information gained through interviews, discussion and observation as well as other information available to the Committee.

1. Executive Summary

The Bob Shapell School of Social Work at Tel Aviv University is the second oldest school of social work in Israel. It benefits from a long-standing prestige both nationally and internationally thanks to the research productivity of its faculty members and its strong educational programs. The School is housed in its own building, uniquely suited for its needs. It serves students from the central regions of the country and attracts quality students from all over the country.

The School of Social Work enjoys a semi-independent status in that it is part of the Faculty of Social Sciences but, in some areas reports, directly to university authorities. The CHE Committee commends the Rector's decision to maintain the School's semi-independent status in the future, particularly in light of upcoming strategic changes in the structure of some faculties and departments of the university. The School enjoys good relationships with the office of the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Rector's Office.

After a long period of financial decline due to budget cuts to higher education in Israel (referred to by the Dean and the Rector as "the lost decade"), the university seems to have stabilized financially and is charting its way upward. The School of Social Work was one of many "victims" of that era of austerity but has commendably persevered under very difficult conditions thanks to the extremely hard work and productivity of its faculty. The School is now in a period of finding its way to prominence in the university and among other schools of social work. It could benefit from a focused strategic plan that would underscore the School's strengths and address areas of deficiency, such as community and organizational/management social work practice.

The most significant and lasting result of the "lost decade" for the School is a relatively small faculty that needs to carry out the School's complex teaching, research and service mission. There is clearly a need to recruit more faculty members to allow the School to maintain and improve its academic stature both nationally and internationally.

Similar to other established schools of social work, the Bob Shapell School is also affected by the changing nature of higher education in Israel with the proliferation of schools of social work, primarily at the colleges. This changing reality affects the School's recruitment, admissions, and field placements and needs to be addressed by the School's strategic plan.

Given the School's size and the university's recovery process, the CHE Committee found the School performing well and our recommendations are designed to make it even stronger.

2. Organizational Structure

The Bob Shapell School of Social Work is located in the vibrant campus of Tel Aviv University in the heart of Israel's large, multicultural and cosmopolitan city of Tel Aviv. The university was established in 1956 and is a broad-based research institution with nine faculties housing 70 departments and over 29,000 students enrolled at all levels of academic degrees from BA through to PhD. The university has a strong reputation, both nationally and internationally, as a research and teaching institution. Its priorities, according to the Rector, Professor Aron Shai, include promoting the globalization of the university and developing new international programs, recruiting promising junior faculty, and increasing funding for research.

The School of Social Work opened its doors to students in 1969. The School is part of the Faculty of Social Sciences but in some areas it enjoys a more independent status and directly reports to university committees. The overall number of students enrolled at the school during the 2013-14 academic year (the year covered in the self-study report) was 555. Of this number, 256 were enrolled at the BA level, 182 at the MA without thesis track, 92 at the MA with thesis track, 16 at the PhD level and 9 in the PhD direct track.

The School, the Faculty of Social Sciences and the university as a whole are in the process of recovering from what the Rector and the Dean described as "the lost decade". The term refers to the massive budget cuts to higher education in Israel that affected all areas of the university. The result of the "lost decade" for the School (and the university as a whole) is a relatively small faculty that needs to carry out the School's complex teaching, research and service mission. There is clearly a need to recruit more faculty members to allow the School to maintain its academic stature both nationally and internationally.

Currently, the university is going through a strategic planning process that will lead to some merged departments. This process, however, will not affect the semi-independent status of the School of Social Work, according to the Rector. The Committee highly commends this decision.

Situated in a research intensive university, faculty members at the Bob Shapell School experience a not uncommon tension between the pressures to produce research and their obligations to deliver high quality social work professional education. This tension is also evident in the recruitment of new faculty. The Dean

has noted the difficulty of finding entry-level faculty with sufficient social work practice experience and strong research trajectories.

Similar to other established schools of social work, the Bob Shapell School is also affected by the changing nature of higher education in Israel with the proliferation of schools of social work, primarily in the colleges. According to the Rector, the competition with other schools sometimes results in lower entrance scores of students in all the schools in the country though both the Rector and the Dean maintained that academic standards at the Bob Shapell School have not been compromised. The School is also experiencing competition from the other schools for field placements.

Commendations:

The School enjoys a semi-independent status within the University. The Committee commends the University and the Rector for the decision to maintain this status, particularly in light of other planned organizational changes within Tel Aviv University.

Recommendations:

There is clearly an urgent need to recruit more faculty members to allow the School to maintain its academic stature both nationally and internationally.

The tension between the research and educational missions of the School is problematic. Given the massive competition from the colleges (some of them are located within half an hour drive from the Tel Aviv campus), the School needs to assess what its strengths are. The School needs to formulate its unique identity and key priorities and move forward in a more focused and purposeful way in order to maintain (and preferably increase) both its “market share” and prestige.

3. Mission and Goals

The mission of the School is strong and balanced, covering professional training, research, education, and social justice. Yet, it is not quite aligned with the university’s mission, especially the priorities indicated in the Rector’s introduction to the self-study report. Specifically, Tel Aviv University places a very high priority on research while the School presents a more balanced mission (research, professional education, social justice). It seems that some of the tensions between the requirements of research and those of professional education and training that reverberate throughout the self-study report and that were evident during the Committee’s site visit are rooted in that misalignment. These tensions are also heightened by the limited financial resources available to the School and the need to sometimes make tough choices regarding the priorities for allocating its limited resources. It should be noted that these tensions are by no means unique to the Bob

Shapell School of Social Work and are often experienced by Schools of Social Work that are based in research-intensive universities.

4. Study Programs

The School offers study programs towards the BSW, MA and PhD degrees and also offers a program for career change ("Hassava"). The School emphasizes the "person-in-environment" model as its primary organizing principle at all levels of intervention.

The goals and objectives of the BSW program are broad-based and very appropriate for the mission of the program, namely, to train beginning-level, certified social workers with well-rounded skills in various methods of intervention and a strong social justice orientation. To that end, the School has implemented several commendable changes in the past few years. These changes include modifications to some of the introductory courses (e.g., sociology, anthropology) to better fit the knowledge base needed by social work practitioners, a course on policy practice, and more information about diversity, particularly the Arab community in Israel.

And yet, more needs to be done in several areas. First, the community practice area needs to be strengthened. Students noted the limited field placement opportunities for community practice and the lack of integration between the theory and practice of community work. The Committee was presented with an interesting community project carried out by one faculty member. Upon discussion, however, it became evident that this project, though important, was unique, short-term, and relevant to only a small number of students. Second, there is limited content on understanding and managing organizations. This is a particularly important area because the management of human service organizations is an important function of delivering the social justice mission of the profession. Third, students noted that, despite noticeable improvements in recent years, the foundation courses are often neither challenging enough and nor relevant enough for social work practice. Fourth, content on diversity is supposed to be infused throughout the curriculum. However, according to random reading of syllabi and student testimonials, this varies from course to course and from instructor to instructor. The Committee recommends a thorough review of syllabi and course content implementation regarding diversity content and that consideration be given to the introduction of dedicated courses that deal with the growing diversity of Israeli society and social work practice in diverse societies. And finally as far as the BSW is concerned, students have no (or very limited) opportunities to take courses outside the School. Being situated in the vibrant prestigious campus of Tel Aviv University, this seems like a wasted opportunity and the Committee recommends opening up some elective options outside the School to students.

The BSW fieldwork education program appears to be well-organized with an emphasis on ensuring the integration of university-based instruction and field education. There is a concern that field teachers/supervisors are underpaid and

that the CHE does not sufficiently recognize the real cost of delivering this component of professional social work education in its budget allocations.

At the Masters level, the School has two tracks, namely, Masters with a thesis and a Masters without a thesis. In addition, the School has recently opened a program that fast tracks students without a BSW but with a BA in allied areas (e.g., sociology, psychology) that combines that career change program (“Hassava”) with the Masters degree. The program was not in operation during the self-study and therefore is not part of the current Committee on Higher Education review process. There are three specializations at the Masters Degree program. These are advanced intervention, clinical social work with children and youth, and clinical social work in stress and trauma. Masters level students noted that student enrolments in some of the courses are very large (e.g., treatment of abused children can have 60-80 students) and that this is particularly so for clinical training (e.g., some classes that should be 20 students have 40 instead). They also noted the lack or limited content on diversity, on intervention with adults, and on international/global social work. Students in the Masters with thesis track indicated that the research they are doing is interesting and that they receive good supervision but also noted that there were not enough course offerings for them to choose from.

The School has a strong “clinical” or “micro” orientation and faculty expertise represent strength in the areas of interventions with individuals, families and groups. They also have some strength, though more limited, in policy. This is particularly evident in the Masters without thesis program that has a strong emphasis on clinical work, an emphasis which is “out of alignment” with the mission statement for the program. This may be connected to the career trajectory students in those programs are interested in pursuing, namely, private practice, and the widely held perception that a social work degree is an “easier” path to those careers compared with training as clinical psychologists. This is not unique to the School of Social Work in Tel Aviv University. The Committee recommends that more emphasis be placed on teaching policy related to social welfare in order to strengthen the social work professional foundation in those programs.

The PhD program at the Bob Shapell School of Social Work has two tracks: a regular track and a direct track (in 2013-14 there were 25 and 14 students respectively in these programs). The stated mission of the PhD program is to produce researchers and scholars in social work who are able to generate and disseminate knowledge and become leaders and stewards of the profession. The program is quite well structured but is not doing enough to accomplish its stated scholarly mission. The Committee was concerned to discover that many students (though there were some notable exceptions) graduate with no peer-reviewed academic publications. The program has four required courses (a relatively small number compared to similar programs in other countries, though above the norm in Israel) and the program is mostly based on individually-mentored research toward a dissertation. The program offers seminars to help students make progress on their research and publications and the students find these seminars very helpful. Although the School

is preparing its students for an academic career, only a minority has interest in such a career and even a smaller number ends up securing academic positions. This is understandable, to some extent, because the number of vacancies in research-intensive schools in the country in any given year is extremely small, particularly relative to the number of PhDs graduating from all the schools of social work in Israel. This situation creates a mismatch between the program's stated mission and the likely outcomes for its graduates.

The direct PhD track is especially problematic because students enroll in the program with insufficient practice experience and there is a relatively high dropout rate from this program. The Head of the School, Professor Bilha Arad Davidson, noted that the School plans to abandon the direct track and, based on the information provided in the report and during the visit, the Committee completely supports this decision.

The other challenge for the graduates in the program is that they do not have enough publications (sometimes none at all) upon graduation. This is partially a result of lack of funding for doctoral education and the fact that many students are working full-time to provide for themselves and their families and simply do not have the time to write.

Because of union negotiations, the School cannot afford to hire its doctoral students to teach in the program and they often graduate with limited or no teaching experience thereby placing the PhD students who aspire to an academic career at a disadvantage in a very competitive academic job market place.

Given the small number of research focused institutions of higher education, most graduates will not be able to find positions in academia or in research institutions. They are more likely to end up in private practice (where the doctorate will add prestige to their practice), as consultants, or in advanced positions of leadership within the profession, such as agency managers. Yet, the focus of the program is on producing sophisticated research and publications that are in line with preparation for an academic career in a research-intensive university. The Committee commends the School on its focus on research and scholarly preparation but is concerned that the program is not a good fit for many of its current students who are either not interested in an academic career or unlikely to ever have one. There seems to be an implicit assumption that a solid preparation for a research and scholarly career would be useful for pursuing any type of advanced career in the profession, such as agency management, policy making, consulting and private practice. Based on experience that has accumulated in other countries in the world, it has become clear in recent years that solid academic careers require a very intense level of preparation in theory, research and statistics as well as gaining experience in research grant writing and publications. On the other hand, there needs to be an equally high level of preparation for advanced careers in clinical practice or leadership in the areas of agency management and policy making. Having a research/academic career-focused PhD program as preparation for all

possible advanced careers may no longer be sufficient. The Committee recommends that consideration be given to different tracks towards a doctorate that would provide differential preparation for those planning to have advanced academic careers on the one hand and those planning advanced professional careers on the other.

Commendations

The Committee was very impressed with the School's solid social work programs at the BA, MA and PhD levels. Based in a research-intensive university, the School has managed to create a good balance between teaching, research and practice. The School has several strengths, particularly in the areas of direct social work service ("micro") as well as in policy (including the implementation of the impressive concept of a clinic on policy practice). Although there are areas that need additional development, such as community practice, social work practice in a diverse society, and aging, the accomplishments of the School stand out, particularly in light of its relatively small full-time faculty.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the School strengthen its BSW offerings in community practice and seek to develop more field placements in this area. Additionally, the School's instruction in the area of diversity needs to be redesigned. The current approach of infusing all courses with content on diversity is being implemented unevenly in the different courses as reflected to some extent in the syllabi and in students' testimonials. Given the diversity of the student body and the diversity of Israeli society this is a very important area for improvement. The Committee suggests that the School, at the very least, examine implementing some quality control systems to review course content and delivery and, ideally, create dedicated and required courses on diversity.

At the Masters level, the School may want to reconsider its strong emphasis on clinical work and provide more balance with policy practice and community-related content. There is a concern (not unique to the Bob Shapell School) that the Master's degree might turn into a "psychology light" clinical degree.

At the PhD level, more required courses in research, statistics and theory would strengthen the scientific and scholarly base of the program. Further, structured time in the program needs to be devoted to writing publications and have thesis supervisors work directly with students on publications. Another challenge is the lack of teaching opportunities. The Committee is concerned with the lack of alignment between the goals of the program and the career goals and outcomes for a large number of its students and graduates. This is not unique to the Bob Shapell School and is shared by other PhD programs in Israel and abroad. In some schools

there are new programs that focus on a practice doctoral degree for advanced practitioners who do not intend to become researchers and scholars. The Committee recommends that the school examine those trends and potential applications that would be suited to the School specifically and to Israeli realities more broadly.

5. Human Resources / Faculty

The School has 17 full time academic positions with a promise of one additional position for the 2015-16 academic year. The Rector of the University determines the number of positions available to the School. The actual recruitment and selection is conducted by the Head of the School and the Faculty in accordance with university policies.

The School has a good balance between central governance at the University level (decisions made by the Rector), at the Faculty level (decisions made by the Dean) and at the School level (decisions made by the Head of the School). Internally, there is faculty members' participation in the decision-making process through the School Council. The School Council is the most important decision-making body in relation to policy and strategic matters, such as opening new programs or changes in the structure of study programs. The Council is comprised of all the School's tenured senior faculty members and representatives of the non-tenured senior faculty and of the junior teaching staff. A committee composed of the three main programs (BSW, MSW, and PhD), the Administrative Director, and the Head of the Student Secretariat serves in an advisory capacity and works alongside the Head of the School to manage and coordinate the School and its programs. Overall, the governance committees work well but faculty members indicated that, on average, the committee service workload in the Bob Shapell School of Social Work is excessive.

Faculty expressed satisfaction with their work and the School. They were also pleased to be based at Tel Aviv University, which they characterized as vibrant, cosmopolitan and open to diversity. Yet, many noted the heavy teaching workload and the struggle to produce research publications while managing the heavy teaching load.

Non-tenured faculty expressed frustration with a number of obstacles related to promotion and tenure. First, they noted the unclear promotion guidelines and the metrics for quality vs. quantity of publications. Second, they noted that very little workload accommodation was made for incoming faculty (one course reduction and one less committee to serve on in the first year). Third, they noted the heavy load of administrative responsibilities. And fourth, they noted that the seed money allowance provided to junior faculty can only be used for laboratory equipment, which may be relevant in other fields of study but not in social work, but cannot be used for other expenses that could support the type of research they are doing, such as hiring research assistants. Faculty members noted that although there are

periodic meetings with the Head of the School and the Dean of the Faculty regarding progress to promotion, there is no *formal* mentorship process which was particularly relevant to junior faculty.

Commendations

The School benefits from a highly committed, engaged and productive faculty. It has strong faculty participation through the School Council in which faculty can express their opinions and participate in the decision making process.

Recommendations

The size of the full time faculty needs to grow in order to sustain the current scope of teaching and research and ease the workload burden on current faculty members, let alone any future growth.

There needs to be a formal mentorship process, particularly for junior faculty in the early stages of their careers. There is also a need for more transparency and better communication of promotion criteria.

6. Students

The ratio of applicants to admitted students has decreased in the five years of data reported in the self-study report – from 159 admissions per 441 applicants in 2009-10 to 123 admissions per 271 applicants. Given that this has been a steady and clear trend, it would be advisable to investigate this trend further and understand the reasons for it (e.g., competition with other schools) and the consequences (e.g., quality of applicants).

Overall, students at all levels of studies were satisfied with their respective programs. At the BSW level, students noted that some of the introductory courses were not challenging enough. This was also reflected in some of the materials in the self-study report and it seemed that the School was aware of this and has tried, with some success, to address the concern. At the Masters level, students in the thesis track noted that they did not have access to some of the electives that were open to their fellow students who were not undertaking a thesis. There were also concerns about content related to diversity, and Arab students in particular felt that there was not enough content relevant to practice within their communities. Yet, overall, students were enthusiastic about most of their instructors and noted their dedication and openness to feedback from students.

Recommendations

The School needs to investigate the decreased ratio of applicants to admitted students over the past five years as reported in the self-study (such as competition

with other schools) and find ways to address its consequences (primarily the decline in the quality of applicants).

The School needs to conduct a thorough review of first-year practice courses and enhance their intellectual rigor.

7. Teaching and Learning Outcomes

The main method for assessing teaching outcomes is the internet-based student surveys. These surveys are used to identify instructors who need to improve their teaching. Recognizing the limitation of these surveys as measures of satisfaction with, rather than quality of, teaching the School is holding different forums that provide opportunities for the Head of the School and the Heads of the different programs to receive direct feedback from students. The School also encourages faculty members to take advantage of various services offered by the University's Center for the Advancement for Teaching (which, until recently, was headed by a faculty member from the School, Prof Idit Weiss-Gal).

Learning outcomes are typically assessed by written assignments and, to some extent, by exams (mostly at the BSW). The mean grades for the program are quite high across all three degree levels, hovering around 89 at the BA level to 92 at the PhD level. These are relatively high and indicate grade inflation (though without data about the distribution of the scores it is difficult to determine to what extent). Grade inflation is not unique to the School but could indicate that either the assignments are not challenging enough or the grading is not rigorous enough. In either case, this is a source of concern because grades are the main measure used to determine the extent to which learning outcomes are obtained.

The Committee also noted that one of the two examiners of a Masters thesis is/may be the supervisor. The Committee regards this as an inappropriate practice.

Recommendations

Although the School is recognizing the limitations of the student survey as a measure of satisfaction rather than quality of teaching, it seems that it still serves as the main method for assessing teaching. The Committee recommends instituting alternative teaching evaluation methodologies such as class observation, alumni surveys (retrospectively evaluating content and delivery of courses based on what they now know they need) and qualitative assessment of instruction.

The Committee recommends examining the issue of potential grade inflation to ascertain the validity of the current course assignments and grading methods as measures of learning outcomes.

The Committee recommends that no faculty member involved in the supervision of a Master's thesis be an examiner of that thesis and, ideally, that at least one of the two examiners be from outside the School altogether.

8. Research

The Bob Shapell School of Social Work has increased its emphasis on research over the years as evidenced by the increased research productivity and publications of its faculty. The School's faculty have, since 2000, steadily increased the total research funds they generate and the trend indicates a consistent and impressive growth in funds from internal as well as external sources. Faculty also show increased publication productivity which is particularly impressive in light of their teaching and administrative responsibilities.

One outcome of this gradual increase is that the School is more in sync with the university and, according to the Dean and the Head of School, its stature within the university has improved. Yet, the pressure to conduct research, bring in funding and produce publications in high ranking journals is putting enormous pressure on faculty members whose teaching responsibilities have remained almost unchanged. It also presents a dilemma that is typical of many schools of social work that are based in research-intensive universities, namely, how to create a balance between producing high quality research and scholarly work while at the same time providing a first rate professional education. There is an evident need to recruit additional faculty who can bring to the School both professional experience and a strong research trajectory.

Faculty research and publications demonstrate a very wide array of interests and expertise but, given the small size of the faculty, this breadth is limiting in terms of building critical mass of expertise that would allow faculty to influence the field.

Recommendations

In its future recruitment efforts, the School would be well advised to consider creating select areas of expertise that would be unique to the School by focusing on enhancing certain areas of strength that build upon the School's extant expertise.

9. Infrastructure

The Bob Shapell School of Social Work is housed in a building that was specifically designed for the school in 1987 with a newer wing that was added in 2001. The building is exceptionally well suited for its purposes. It utilizes a welcoming open-spaced architecture to create a sense of community. The central space, classrooms

and faculty offices are all open, airy and full of light. The building houses all the School's faculty and administrative offices as well as laboratory and classrooms.

Commendations

Overall, the School's building and facilities appear to be adequate for its needs and the architecture is well-suited for generating and supporting a sense of an academic community.

10. Self-Evaluation Process

The School has engaged in a serious self-assessment process that produced a well-balanced report that provides a reflective assessment of both the strengths and weaknesses of the School in each of the major dimensions of the report. In many sections this includes an indication of some ways to address the weaknesses identified in the self-evaluation process, or an explanation of how these could be addressed by other entities (e.g., the university or the Faculty).

Chapter 4: Summary of Recommendations and Timetable

Essential Changes:

The School should engage in a strategic planning process to assess its key priorities and needs. The tension between the research and educational missions of the School is problematic. Given the massive competition from the colleges (and some of them within half an hour drive of the Tel Aviv campus), the School need to assess what its strengths are. The School needs to formulate its identity and key priorities and move forward in a more focused and purposeful way in order to maintain and increase its prestige.

A review of first-year practice courses to enhance their intellectual rigor is required. Most students view these courses, which are the foundation of the profession, as too easy and intellectually unchallenging.

The Committee is concerned with the huge number of thesis writing MA students (N = 92) relative to the small number of faculty members available to supervise them (N = 16, but some are not engaged in supervising MA students). Although a few faculty members get a course release to supervise a group of MA students, we still would like to see the number of students writing theses decreased substantially and some formal thesis supervision training and structured ongoing support offered to those faculty members who do not engage in supervision.

The Committee recommends that no faculty member involved in the supervision of a Master's thesis be an examiner of that thesis and, ideally, that at least one of the two examiners be from outside the School altogether.

Advisable Changes:

There is clearly a need to recruit more faculty members who identify with the social work profession to allow the School to maintain its academic stature both nationally and internationally.

Based on the number of applicants, the high attrition, and time needed to socialize young students to the PhD. program, we recommend that the School follow its plan (as stated by the Head of the School) and abandon the direct track to the PhD program.

Both the community practice area and the organizational/management area need to be strengthened. The School does not have experts in these two important aspects of social work. Future faculty development plans must include the recruitment of community practice and organizational experts as well as a deliberate plan to integrate these important social work professional practice areas into the School's curriculum.

The Committee recommends a thorough review of syllabi and course content implementation for diversity content as well as the introduction of dedicated courses that will deal with the growing diversity in Israeli society and social work practice in diverse societies.

We recommend the development of writing seminars for the PhD students. This should be a required annual course with clear assignments leading to the submission of papers to peer-reviewed journals.

Desirable Changes:

Students should have opportunities for taking classes in other department or faculties within the university and should be encouraged to do so.

The number of School committees for such a small school is unrealistic, resulting in a heavy burden on faculty members, particularly junior faculty. The Committee recommends a review of the existing committees with a view to eliminating or merging as many committees as possible.

Signed by:



Prof. Allan Borowski



Prof. Ram Can'an



Prof. Michàlle Mor Barak



Prof. David Biegel



or Sven Hessle, Stockholm University, Stockholm

Prof. Sven Hessle

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 Hessle

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

cc: Dr. Varda Ben-Shaul, Deputy Director-General for QA, CHE
Ms. Alex Buslovich-Bilik, committee coordinator

Social Work – Schedule of site visit - Tel Aviv University

Monday, March 16th, 2015

Room 120, Bob Shapell School of Social Work

Time	Subject	Participants
09:-09:0030	Opening session with the Heads of the Institution	Prof. Aron Shai (Rector) Prof. Dina Kovetz-Prialnik (Vice Rector) Prof. David Horn (Head, Academic Quality Assessment)
09:30-10:00	Meeting with the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences	Prof. Tammie Ronen Rosenbaum (Dean)
10:00-10:45	Meeting with the Head of the School of Social Work	Prof. Bilhah Davidson-Arad (Head of the School) Prof. Yael Benyamini (Self-evaluation coordinator)
10:45-11:45	Meeting with senior academic staff <u>with tenure</u>	Prof. Einat Peled (Chair, BSW program) Prof. Ronit Leichtentritt (Chair, MSW program) Prof. Karni Ginzburg (Chair, PhD program) Prof. Riki Savaya (former Head of the School) Dr. Liat Hamama (Chair, MSW admissions) Dr. Carmit Katz (Chair, BSW admissions) Dr. Eugene Tartakovsky
11:45-12:15	Meeting with senior academic staff <u>without tenure</u>	Dr. Hisham Abu-Raiya Dr. Lia Levin Dr. Guy Shilo
12:15-13:00	Lunch (in the same room)	Closed-door meeting of the committee
13:00-13:45	Meeting with BSW students	Mr. Ibrahim Taha (1 st yr) Ms. Atalia Regev (2 nd yr) Ms. Asia Rayyan (2 nd yr) Ms. Rona Frank (3 rd yr) Ms. Yael Kaufman (3 rd yr) Mr. Oshri Barel (3 rd yr) Ms. Anat Seri (3 rd yr)
13:45-14:45	Meeting with MSW students, teaching assistants and PhD students	Ms. Batel Nehemia (MSW 1 st yr, Intergrative track [formerly Advanced Intervention track], thesis, TA BSW 3 rd year concentration) Ms. Karen Kovac (MSW 2 nd yr, Children and Youth track, thesis) Ms. Merav Reppen (MSW 2 nd yr, Trauma track, TA 3 rd yr concentration) Ms. Shiri Hameir (recent graduate of the MSW Advanced Intervention track, TA BSW personality theories course) Ms. Hadas Zuqurt (BSW and MSW alumna, thesis, former TA 3 rd yr concentration, administrative coordinator of the self-evaluation process) Ms. Heidi Preis (PhD, 1 st year) Ms. Hanin Mordi (PhD, 3 rd year) Ms. Gili Tamir (PhD, 3 rd year) Ms. Yael Lavy (PhD, 5 th year) Ms. Meital Talia Schwarz-Tayri (PhD, direct track, final year) Ms. Noga Tsur (PhD, direct track, final year)
14:45-15:30	(Open slot) Professional training, field instruction and presentation of the Strong Communities Program	Prof. Einat Peled (Chair, BSW program) Mrs. Ilana Sacks (Chair, Field Instruction Program) Mrs. Batia Pinchasi (1 st year coordinator) Mrs. Sarit Shay (2 nd year coordinator) Dr. Nora Korin-Langer (3 rd year coordinator) Dr. Daniela Shabar-Shapira (Instructor, Social Work with Women concentration, Year 3)

		Dr. Carmit Katz (Coordinator, Strong Communities Program)
15:30-15:45	Closed-door meeting of the committee	
15:45-16:15	Summation meeting with Heads of Institution, Dean of the Social Sciences Faculty and Head of the School	Prof. Aron Shai (Rector) Prof. Dina Kovetz-Prialnik (Vice Rector) Prof. David Horn (Head, Academic Quality Assessment) Prof. Tammie Ronen Rosenbaum (Dean) Prof. Bilhah Davidson-Arad (Head of School)