



**Committee for the Evaluation of Public Health and Health System
Management**

**The Max Stern Yezreel Valley College
The Department of Health Systems Management
Evaluation Report**

September 2017

Contents

Chapter 1:	Background.....	3
Chapter 2:	Committee Procedures.....	5
Chapter 3:	Evaluation of the Department of Health Systems Management, YVC	6
Chapter 4:	Summary of Recommendations.....	18

Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Letter of Appointment	
	Appendix 2 - Schedule of the visit	

Chapter 1: Background

Following the decision of the Council of Higher Education (CHE) to evaluate study programs in the field of Public Health and Health System Management. The Minister of Education, who serves ex officio as Chairperson of the CHE, appointed a Committee consisting of:

- [Prof. Gerald Kominski](#)- Professor of Health Policy and Management and Director of the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, UCLA, USA; Committee Chair.
- [Prof. Joan R. Bloom](#)- Professor of the Graduate Division, Program in Health Policy and Management, School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley, USA.
- [Prof. Joseph N.S. Eisenberg](#)- John G. Searle endowed Chair and Professor of Epidemiology in the School of Public Health, University of Michigan, USA.
- [Prof. Jack Zwanziger](#)- Professor of Health Policy and Administration, University of Illinois at Chicago, USA.
- [Prof. Joseph S. Pliskin](#)¹- Professor Emeritus, Department of Industrial Engineering and Management, and Department of Health Systems Management, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel.

Ms. Daniella Sandler and Ms. Inbal Haskell-Gordon served as the Coordinators 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 Public Health and Health Management, 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

¹ Prof. Pliskin did not take part in the evaluation, visit, discussion and writing of the BGU report due to Conflict of Interest.

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

evaluated field of study.

The entire process was conducted in accordance with the CHE's Guidelines for Self-Evaluation (of September 2015).

Chapter 2: Committee Procedures

The Committee held its first meeting on May 7th, 2017, during which it discussed fundamental issues concerning higher education in Israel, the quality assessment activity, as well as Electrical and Communication System Engineering Study programs in Israel.

In May 2017, the Committee held its visits of evaluation to seven institutions: Tel-Aviv University, Ariel University, Ben-Gurion University, University of Haifa, Academic College of Emek Yizreel, Bar-Ilan University and Hebrew University. During the visits, the Committee met with various stakeholders at the institutions, including management, faculty, staff, and students.

This report addresses The Department of Health Systems Management at Yizreel Valley College. The Committee's visit to the University took place on May 15, 2017.

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

The Committee thanks the management of the Yizreel Valley College and the department of Health system management for their self-evaluation report and for their hospitality towards the committee during its visit at the institution.

Chapter 3: Evaluation of the Department of Health System

Management at Yizreel Valley College

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

In 1994, the CHE authorized the Yezreel Valley College (YVC) to grant Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degrees. The College has one campus, located in the Yezreel Valley, in the area of several low-income development towns. In the past, due to geographic and socio-cultural factors, residents of these towns were not exposed to options for higher education. Members of this community now attend higher education in ever-increasing numbers, mainly thanks to the unique level of care and the scholarships provided to them by the College. In light of the needs of these population groups, studies at the YVC focus on practical fields. The YVC also develops and supports research projects that help identify the needs of local population groups, and seeks to enhance the post-graduation employment prospects of students.

YVC's main educational program is the B.A. in Health Systems Management (HSM); one of 14 B.A. degrees offered by the College. An M.A. in HSM was approved in 2014, although the Committee found insufficient information in the self-evaluation report to evaluate this new program. The Department of HSM was established in the 2000–2001 academic year. It was authorized by CHE to offer two BA programs – a two-and-a-half-year program for health professionals, and a three-year program for general students without prior health professional training. Although the Committee understands the rationale for these separate programs, the Committee found that the mix of students with and without prior health experience caused friction in some

classes. We concluded that this is a predictable problem that can be resolved, and we addressed this issue in our recommendations.

The Committee was extremely impressed by the mission of YVC and the Department, and the commitment made to bring students' skills up to acceptable standards prior to entering the B.A. programs.

Overall, the Committee found YVC to be a very strong program serving its local communities in a very effective manner. Our recommendations for further improvement of YVC's programs are discussed below.

2. Mission and Goals

Observations and findings:

YVC was established to provide affordable access to higher education for residents of diverse backgrounds who live in Israel's northern periphery. The Committee recognizes that this is an extremely important mission, and strongly recommends that the Department's Mission Statement and Goals also reflect this important overall mission of the University.

Recommendations:

Essential: The Department should revise its Mission and Goals to reflect the important role YVC plays in serving residents of diverse backgrounds in Israel's northern periphery.

3. Organizational Structure

Observations and findings:

The Department of Health Systems Management is located within the Faculty of Health and Welfare Sciences. We believe this is the correct organizational location for the Department.

Recommendations:

None.

4. Study Program and Teaching and Learning Outcomes

Observations and findings:

a. Study Program

In 2003, YVC was authorized by the CHE to launch two BA programs – a two and half year program dedicated to health professions and a three year program for the general public, not dedicated to health professions. Following a CHE request made in August 2012, the department merged the two programs into one. In the 2015-2016 academic year, the YVC established the "School of Health and Welfare Sciences" which includes four departments: Health Systems Management, Nursing, Social Work and Human Services. The new school covers a broad multidisciplinary field of knowledge, which enables each department to both develop specific and unique expertise in its field of study and research, and to interface with parallel (teaching assistants) emerging fields.

Currently, students are separated into Health Professional and General Public sections based on their prior health professional training. The degree-granting program takes place over six semesters covering three academic years for students in the General Public section. Students in the Health Professional section, i.e., those with prior training or degree in Nursing, Physiotherapy, or any other para-medical profession, may receive an exemption allowing them to complete the program in five semesters (2.5 academic years).

We noted some concern on the part of students related to the mix between students with prior or concurrent work experience with those without prior/concurrent

experience in the same class section. Perhaps, at least some of the sessions of the class sections could be divided albeit those without experience would benefit by receiving vicarious experience in courses with multiple sections. Therefore, there is an argument for separating the students by experience as well as for combining them.

In the current academic year (2016-2017), the distribution of students is: first year – 284, second year – 202 and third year – 204. In total, the Health Systems Management Department has 695 students studying towards a BA degree, 403 began their studies while following nursing training, and therefore received an exemption of 30 credit points.

b. Teaching and Learning Outcomes

With regard to teaching, there is clarity with regard to what is expected of the teachers and how evaluations are conducted. The measures include peer reviews, a student satisfaction survey, observations of teaching, which includes a focus on not only the lecture, but also the course syllabus and the teaching process. This system occurs for new lecturers during their first year, those being reviewed for promotion, at least, every three years, and for lecturers for whom there are repeated student complaints.

One concern is that the evaluation of the student's learning is mainly based on multiple-choice questions on exams. This is mainly a result of large class size and no teaching assistants.

The program's intended Learning Outcomes are “the foundations of theoretical knowledge and basic skills required for working in hospitals and community health

care organizations. The study program also provides practical tools, which are intended to help students learn how to cope with challenges and dilemmas related to the provision of care and services in the health system. The courses offered are defined by topic across the two and a half/three years of the program.

The Learning Outcomes are demonstrated by the application of skills, such as management, administration and the improvement of interpersonal communication characterized by cultural sensitivity, as well as through teamwork and project planning. We were particularly impressed by the Academic Puzzle exercise that pairs, Arab, and Jewish student to work together on class projects.

The Learning Outcomes for all courses are stated in the yearbook and course syllabi and they were designed to match the vision and objectives of the department. However, it is unclear whether the learning outcomes precede the development of the courses or are defined by the course content.

Another strength is that they do have a Committee on Teaching whose role is to not only evaluate course content, but also to rule out or “edit out” overlaps in course content between courses albeit **some** overlap may be intentional to integrate the material between courses. This Committee meets several times per year and based on their work, “the Learning Outcomes for all courses are well defined in the yearbook and course syllabi and were designed to match the vision and objectives of the department.” Unfortunately, these were not shared in their self-assessment.

Recommendations:

Essential: Faculty should be available to enable a more accurate assessment of the achievement of learning objectives (LO) for graduating students.

Desirable: Given concerns by students of the mixing of students with and without

experience, some attention should be given to the conditions under which the experience and inexperienced students should participate together in sections and under what conditions they should be in separate sections.

5. Human Resources / Faculty

Observations and findings:

The Department of Health Systems Management has 19 faculty members, occupying 10.5 slots. Five of them are full time. Only four of the 19 are tenured. They are in the process of recruiting three additional part-timers. They have 39 adjunct faculty. One of the full time faculty who chaired the department, recently resigned. Of the remaining 18, 15 are women. Of the adjunct faculty, nearly 70% are women. Even though the student composition in the department is 68% Arab, there are currently no Arab faculty members. They are in the process of recruiting a half time Arab faculty, the former CEO of the English Hospital in Nazareth. They wish to recruit more faculty from the Arab sector. They have one adjunct faculty from the sector and are eager to have more colleagues from the Arab sector.

The heavy teaching load of 12 weekly hours is prohibitive of research. Faculty at the rank of at least Senior Lecturer can get a course release of 25% for publishing papers and presenting papers at conferences. Lecturers can get a course release for submitting a research proposal to a granting agency. The Department and School do provide some research money in specific circumstances.

Most of the faculty live more than an hour commute which reduces the number of days they spend in the college. They enjoy teaching both Jews and Arabs and feel they are in an important mission of exemplary co-existence. The adjunct faculty expressed interest in teaching more courses.

Recommendations:**Essential:**

Recruit faculty from the Arab sector.

Reduce the ratio of students to faculty at closer to the level of the entire school.

Desirable:

Recruit more full-time faculty.

6. StudentsObservations and findings:

In total, the Health Systems Management Department has 607 students studying towards a BA degree, 223 of them began their studies while holding a degree in nursing. 68% are Arab 54% Muslim 12 % Christian 2 Druze 32% Jewish. Approx. 50% are healthcare professionals (primarily nurses) and 50% are “general”, of whom 25% go on to nursing. 75% of alumni work in hospitals.

Among the students admitted by the Department, there are many who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds; the YVC and the Department allocate extra resources to teaching efforts (more hours, more exercises), both in a preparatory year and during their stay in the program designed to elevate students to a level comparable with university graduates. There is extensive support services for students that need academic or personal support including programs designed to help students with learning disabilities, Arab students and immigrants. The committee applauds the important work in ensuring that those students with disadvantaged background have the appropriate support to succeed in the program. The resources required for these activities are essential. We also note that based on graduation rates this program has been successful.

In the current academic year, admission to the Health Systems Management

Department required compliance with a variety of criteria and had a structured approach to those did not quite meet these criteria. Candidates holding a diploma in one of the health professions (Nursing, Physiotherapy etc.) may be admitted based on a recognized certificate issued by the Ministry of Health. The program has been growing in the 2011-13 period from 199 to 265 in applications, 103 to 189 in enrollees and 286 to 445 in total program size. Admission requirements are somewhat below average but student records appear to have improved somewhat over the 2011-15 period. Growth of the program without the addition of more staff, risks sacrificing the quality of the program.

The YVC offers a specified special admission track for candidates classified as "worthy of promotion" under the criteria based on the rules put in place by the Association for the Advancement of Education. These criteria include residential area, the high school in which the applicant studied, family background including parents' education, number of family members, and more. The admission of students with special needs is in accordance with the spirit of the Department and the YVC. As specified below, these students receive support and guidance from the Center for Academic Accessibility, which assists them towards the achievement of success in their studies.

The requirement for advancing from the first year to the second year is an average grade of 70 in all mandatory courses. The requirements for advancing from the second year to the third year are completion of English studies up to the exemption level; completion of all mandatory first and second year courses. Graduation requirements: a student is entitled to receive their BA degree after having passed courses equivalent to 120 credit points.

Most dropout cases occur during the first year of studies (2010 is an exception). In

2009, the dropout rate was 3.1%, in 2010, it was about 9.5%, in 2011, it was 7.4%, in 2012, it was 18.4%, and finally, in 2013 it was 4.4%. Essentially everyone who completes the 1st year successfully graduates from the program.

There are several activities that are intended to facilitate the student's' entry into the labor market. First, the department operates a training program (practicum) for third year students. The Department contacts healthcare organizations so that they may offer our students training.

There is an unknown number of scholarships, which are both achievement and need based.

191 graduates took part in the 2014 alumni survey (a 75% response rate). Out of these, 158 (83%) were employed. Of these, 115 (73% of employed graduates) were employed at the time in the healthcare sector. 80 of those 115 graduates (70%) had already worked in the healthcare sector before studying. 33 of the respondents were unemployed at the time the survey was conducted, yet about half of them were still studying towards advanced degrees or as part of continuing education frameworks.

Recommendations:

Essential:

- To ensure the success of the innovative teaching methods both in ensuring student from disadvantaged backgrounds succeed and in providing important Jewish/Arab collaboration we recommend additional staff resources.
- We recommend that the department assess what the students need to be successful in the workforce post-graduation, reevaluate their learning objectives and subsequently their course curriculum. The evaluation methods

as spelled out by the faculty should provide the evidence that the outcomes have been achieved.

- The sole use of multiple-choice questions to assess outcomes is not desirable. Instead, it is suggested that teaching assistants, possibly recruited from the MA program, be used to grade exams with short answers or essay questions to more fully assess learning outcomes.

7. Research

Observations and findings:

The committee appreciated that the program has developed infrastructure to promote research; for example faculty members receive an annual budget (\$~4K) for research expenses and conference travel, and can apply for internal research grants (\$3.9K per year). Although these funds provide good seed money and opportunities for faculty to involve students in research, we feel that the amounts are insufficient to sustain a strong research program.

As a college, the committee noted that the teaching requirements at YVC are higher than at a university (12 vs. 8 hours) and the institutional incentives for research productivity (i.e., the financial model for payment based on publications) are not available. These are both structural disincentives for enhancing research activity at YVC. Nonetheless, some faculty have been successful in obtaining external research funding (\$525K over the past 3 years across 5 faculty) and others have been successful in publishing (1.9 per faculty per year over 3 years, across 16 faculty).

Recommendations:

Essential:

There are major structural impediments for creating a strong research environment at YVC. To remove this impediment, the committee recommends one of two

approaches. Either: 1) teaching loads are reduced and/or incentives for conducting research are put in place; or 2) the criteria for promotion (that requires substantial research productivity) are changed to reward excellence in teaching. The committee realizes that these recommendations are not in the control of YVC.

8. Infrastructure

Observations and findings:

The Committee found no issues with the infrastructure. The Department is housed in a new building, and we found no problems with office space limitations or with classroom availability.

Recommendations:

None.

9. Self-Evaluation Process and implementation of previous recommendations

Observations and findings:

Overall, the Committee found the self-evaluation process more than adequate. We did note that the Administrative leadership at all levels (University, Faculty, and Department) had changed since the self-evaluation report was submitted, but the leadership was generally fully familiar with the content of the self-evaluation report. The Committee also noted that the self-evaluation report represented a genuine effort to identify the program's strengths and weaknesses, which was helpful to the Committee in its review.

Regarding the site visit process, we would have liked to meet alumni from earlier years (e.g., 2003-2010) to see how they are progressing in their careers. The alumni we met were all very recent, and half were continuing students enrolled in the Master's degree program, so we could not fully evaluate how students who graduated

with a BA degree viewed the impact of their degree on their career.

Recommendations

Essential: In future quality assurance site visits, engage more alumni to participate in the self-evaluation process and in the site visit, not just recent graduates of the Department.

Chapter 4: Summary of Recommendations

Essential Recommendations:

- The Department should revise its Mission and Goals to reflect the important role YVC plays in serving residents of diverse backgrounds in Israel's northern periphery.
- Faculty should be available to enable a more accurate assessment of the achievement of learning objectives (LO) for graduating students.
- Recruit faculty from the Arab sector.
- Reduce the ratio of students to faculty at closer to the level of the entire school.
- To ensure the success of the innovative teaching methods both in ensuring student from disadvantaged backgrounds succeed and in providing important Jewish/Arab collaboration we recommend additional staff resources.
- We recommend that the department assess what the students need to be successful in the workforce post-graduation, reevaluate their learning objectives and subsequently their course curriculum. The evaluation methods as spelled out by the faculty should provide the evidence that the outcomes have been achieved.
- The sole use of multiple-choice questions to assess outcomes is not desirable. Instead, it is suggested that teaching assistants, possibly recruited from the MA program, be used to grade exams with short answers or essay questions to more fully assess learning outcomes.
- There are major structural impediments for creating a strong research environment at YVC. To remove this impediment, the committee recommends one of two approaches. Either: 1) teaching loads are reduced and/or incentives for conducting research are put in place; or 2) the criteria for promotion (that requires substantial research productivity) are changed to

reward excellence in teaching. The committee realizes that these recommendations are not in the control of YVC.

- In future quality assurance site visits, engage more alumni to participate in the self-evaluation process and in the site visit, not just recent graduates of the Department.

Desirable Recommendations:

- Recruit more full-time faculty.
- Given concerns by students of the mixing of students with and without experience, some attention should be given to the conditions under which the experience and inexperienced students should participate together in sections and under what conditions they should be in separate sections.

Signed by:



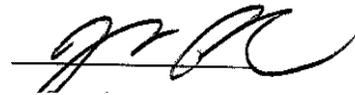
Prof. Gerald Kominski- CHAIR



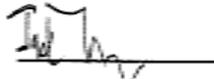
Prof. Joan R. Bloom



Prof. Joseph N.S Eisenberg



Prof. Joseph S. Pliskin



Prof. Jack Zwanziger

Appendix 1: Letter of Appointment

May 2017

Prof. Gerald F. Kominski, Ph.D
Department of Health Policy and Management
UCLA Fielding School of Public Health
USA

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 Chair of the Council for Higher Education's Committee for the Evaluation of the study programs in **Public Health and Health System Management**. In addition to yourself, the composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Joan Bloom, Prof. Joseph N.S. Eisenberg, Prof. Jack Zwanziger, and Prof. Joseph Pliskin.

Ms. Daniella Sandler 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 Chair of this most important committee.

Sincerely,

Prof. Ido Perlman
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. Daniella Sandler, Committee Coordinator

Appendix 2: Site Visit Schedule

Public Health - Schedule of site visit
Emek Yizreel Academic College

Monday 15/5/17

Time	Subject	Participants
9:30-10:15	Opening session with the heads of the institution	Prof. Itzhak Harpaz - President Prof. Aliza Senhar - Rector
10:15-11:00	Meeting with the academic and administrative heads of the department/ school	Prof. Yoav Lavee - Dean of School of Health and Welfare Sciences Dr. Sidona Shavit – Head of the department Dr. Michal Masihach
11:00-11:45	Meeting with senior academic staff*	Prof. Liora Ore Dr. Dafna Halperin Dr. Sarit Rashkovitch Dr. Amit Gur Dr. Aviad Tur- Dr. Ofra Halperin Dr. Nava Blum Dr. Asnat Dor
11:45-12:30	Meeting with adjunct lecturers	Dr. Shiran Bord, Dr. Galia Shemi, Dr. Oshrat Sassoni, Ms. Mayya Ronen, Ms. Hila Halamish, Ms. Arava Rotman, Mr. Yoav Gross
12:30-13:15	Lunch (in the same room)	

13:15 – 14:00	Tour of campus (classes, library, offices of faculty members, computer labs etc.)	
14:00-14:45	Meeting with BA students	
14:45 - 15:30	Meeting with Alumni*	
15:30-15:40	Break	
15:40 – 16:00	Closed Door Meeting	
16:00 – 16:30	Summation meeting	<p>Prof. Itzhak Harpaz - President</p> <p>Prof. Aliza Senha - Rector</p> <p>Prof. Yoav lavec - Dean of School of Health and Welfare Sciences</p> <p>Dr. Sidona Shavit - Head of the department</p> <p>Dr. Michal Masihach</p>

* 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.