



ה' חשוון תשפ"ג
30 אוקטובר 2022

לכבוד
גב' ענת חיינה
רכזת באגף להערכת איכות והבטחתה
המועצה להשכלה גבוהה

שלום רב,

הנדון: דו"ח הוועדה הבינלאומית לתקשורת - תגובה להמלצות הוועדה

בהמשך לדוח הוועדה הבינלאומית לתקשורת מחודש יולי 2022, אנו מתכבדים להגיש את תגובתנו
להמלצות הוועדה.

בכבוד רב

פרופ' יצחק הרפז, נשיא

העתק:

ד"ר לירן גורדון, ממונה הערכת איכות והבטחתה
ד"ר ירון אריאל, ראש החוג לתקשורת
גב' טליה באום, ראש מנהל אקדמי

This is the first round we have participated in the self-evaluation process, although 26 generations of students have graduated at YVC prior to this evaluation. The self-evaluation process was a significant reflective process for us at all stages: writing of the report; meeting with the committee members, and reviewing and discussing the report. Also, it was significant for us because of the opportunity we had to meet dozens of faculty members, students, and graduates.

We wish to thank the committee members for their time and efforts in assessing our program, for the heartwarming compliments in person and in their written report, and primarily for their constructive comments and detailed suggestions on how to advance the program further.

In the rest of this letter, we respond to the committee's comments in the order of their appearance in the report and their level of importance (essential, important, desirable).

Committee Recommendation			Steps toward implementation (Including time table)
Essential	1.	Develop a strategic plan for the next five to ten years - think creatively about current resources, ways to attract students, build a more robust program, or even reinvent the program.	<p>After reviewing the recommendations, department committees decided to implement several recommendations immediately or within two years. Moreover, teams of two to three faculty and adjunct members will review parts of the report and present their suggestions at the teaching committee meetings during 2022-2023. Finally, in August 2023, we will meet with YVC management to discuss the necessary changes. A strategic plan for 5–10 years must be derived from the YVC strategic plan, its needs, and its limitations. So, we are committed to presenting a realistic and applicable plan to the YVC management, as its development depends on its response.</p> <p>According with the implementation of the college's policy on promoting digital learning and the reform of English studies by the CHE, students who began studying last year (2021-2022) will be the first to complete the revised curriculum (asynchronous and hybrid distance learning courses, theoretical English courses, and an internship requirement). Additionally, they will be the first ones to enroll in the mandatory courses outlined in our report (networks and information, digital marketing workshop) and the newly added advanced workshops (podcasting, public relations, TV magazines).</p>

Essential	2.	Work with other college units to increase credit hours, course offerings, research, and resources (for example, interdisciplinary research and teaching collaborations and joint appointments with other units).	<p>Five faculty members also teach in other YVC departments. In addition, most of the Fellow teachers (eligible for research budget) teach in other classes of YVC or other institutions in Israel. Therefore, employment and research collaborations outside the department already exist today.</p> <p>The department offers a program of 120 credits spread over three to four days a week for six semesters. Other YVC departments operate on different days, hours, and semesters which do not overlap with the schedule of our department. We will examine with YVC's administration, options for creating unique study tracks, only if they do not interfere with the existing tracks, for students who can and want to study on days and hours suitable for other departments.</p>
Essential	3.	Schedule regular meetings between the department head and college administrators to determine what needs to be done to get more resources for the unit.	<p>The department head and other faculty members hold routine meetings with all YVC administrators. We understand that this recommendation refers to special meetings whose products will serve as additional resources for the department. The organizational hierarchy at YVC does not include a parent unit above the department (in the form of a school or a faculty), so the department's needs are managed directly in close cooperation with YVC's management.</p>
Essential	4.	Develop a more active outreach program that (a) attracts potential students from varied backgrounds and (b) results in a more explicit linkage between program content and employability.	<p>Communication studies at YVC, like other Israeli communications departments, are wrongly perceived as a path to a journalism job with poor wages and few employment options. Instead, communication studies should be linked to innovative digital-social media and marketing environments with higher pay and employment opportunities. Last month, the department head and coordinator of applied studies met with the head of YVC's marketing unit to discuss how practical studies and two contemporary digital employment-oriented tracks, will stand out in the future college's marketing efforts.</p> <p>We think that minor adjustments to the curriculum do not increase students' enrolment in the program.</p> <p>Overall, YVC attracts many students from diverse backgrounds. Still, the Communication department is less diverse due to the perception of employment opportunities, especially among Arabs. Therefore, we have already held meetings with Arab graduates, thinking together about ways to encourage communication studies among their peers.</p>

Committee Recommendation			Steps toward implementation (Including timetable)
Important	5.	Conduct a thorough review of course offerings and content.	<p>This recommendation has already been partially implemented.</p> <p>In the self-evaluation report and special supplement for the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, we stated that we are restructuring several courses and workshops to enhance our two tracks (content management and marketing communication). This will enhance the integration of digital content over traditional communication, and employment orientation. For students who began their studies last year, minor and major changes to the program will be evaluated. Meanwhile, during the coming year a meeting will be held by the heads of the tracks with their theoretical and workshop lecturers, to boost the integration of the courses offered. In addition, a teaching committee meeting will be held in April 2023, to discuss these changes. This will allow us to plan necessary changes to the curriculum.</p>
Important	6.	Revisit and update syllabi texts: consider essential and required readings that includes a range of foundational and contemporary thought.	<p>This recommendation has already been partially implemented.</p> <p>Having received similar feedback during the in-person meeting with the committee, we examined all department syllabi. We noted that many papers and texts are based on books published by the Israeli Open University. Though these texts are suitable selections of readings, over-reliance on such sources limits the ability of the syllabus to be innovative and open. Therefore, we held a special meeting (in August 2022) in which the faculty members presented their syllabi for evaluation by their peers. As a result, all faculty members were asked to revise the syllabus topics and sources in the spirit of this meeting.</p>
Important	7.	Review and update workshop content to ensure it fits the digital and social media environments. Use student evaluations and feedback about workshops to assess whether they meet their goals.	<p>This recommendation has already been partially implemented.</p> <p>This year we offer new and updated workshops for all three years of studies. We decided to add one more workshop to the second year (instead of the third year) to strengthen each track and provide the students with better expertise. In addition, each track head will meet with representative students every December (first semester) and April (second semester) to receive feedback before the formal evaluation at the end of each semester.</p>

Important	8.	Ensure that instructors for practice-based courses have sufficient experience delivering sophisticated and advanced content.	<p>This recommendation has already been partially implemented.</p> <p>The committee visited the department while the coordinator of applied studies was replaced after 14 years. During the evaluation process, it became clear that the workshop offerings needed to be changed significantly. Therefore, we reconsidered it with the newly hired applied studies coordinator, while reviewing students' feedback and having face-to-face conversations with them.</p> <p>Consequently, a third of the workshop teachers have been already replaced, and advanced workshops were changed for the second and third years. In 2022–2023, we plan to meet with track heads and workshop teachers to improve and add new workshops.</p>
Important	9.	Senior faculty and adjuncts should collaborate to effectively combine the theoretical and practical subject matter and integrate digital content into the curriculum.	<p>This recommendation is being implemented, starting in 2022-23 academic year.</p> <p>This is the most important and innovating recommendation in the report since it revealed a gap overlooked by the department. As a result, we are currently making an effort to build a real and lasting relationship between senior faculty and adjuncts in order to advance the vision of a strong linkage between theory and practice.</p>
Important	10.	Establish a student-staff liaison committee to ensure students' voices and concerns are heard.	<p>The recommendation is being implemented starting in 2022-23 academic year.</p> <p>Three representative students will be selected under the responsibility of the student affairs advisors, for each school year. They will meet once a month with the head of the department, the department coordinator, and the coordinator of applied studies. The head of the department also meets regularly with the department's student union representative.</p>

Committee Recommendation			Steps toward implementation (Including timetable)
Desirable	11.	Allocate more resources to support the annual media festival, a signature event that could encourage student applications.	This recommendation has been implemented. In the meeting between the head of the department and YVC's president and CEO, it was clarified that the annual media festival is a tradition that YVC intends to continue to nurture and fund financially. As of 2022 festival, the role of the students in the department as producers of the festival was strongly emphasized. In addition, the department and the college are putting a greater effort into marketing of the festival.
Desirable	12.	Develop an internationalization strategy to increase the international profile.	YVC invests much effort in internationalization processes. The self-evaluation report noted the objective difficulties our faculty face in this regard. It should be noted that since the committee's visit, more international collaborations have been added.
Desirable	13.	Establish an official alumni network.	An alumni network will be built based on each year's closed Facebook groups. This is a reasonable decision considering the failure of past attempts to create such a network through mail, phone, or email to register in a formal alumni database. Also, many of the graduates who participated in the self-assessment process said that graduates who work in the communication industry should be invited to courses and workshops. We have taken this to our attention and will work to implement it
Desirable	14.	Use a wider range of assessment tasks to evaluate students' performance.	This recommendation has already been partially implemented. The courses and workshops of the school year 2022-23, include a variety of assignments (Final exam, midterm exam, report, case study video, podcast). In the next academic year (2023-2024), all courses with only standard assignments, such as writing papers or taking tests, will be added with a new type of assignment preferably, involving practical elements using the facilities of the communication center (e.g., new broadcast studio for recording podcasts, filming assignments in a new green screen room).