COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION OF POLITICAL SCIENCE STUDIES

UNIVERSITY oF HAIFA

COMMITTEE FOR THE EVALUATION OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS STUDIES IN ISRAEL

June 2023

Section 1:   Background and Procedures

1.1   In the academic year 2022, the Council for Higher Education [CHE] put in place arrangements for the evaluation of study programs in the field of Political Science and International Relations in Israel.

1.2   To undertake the evaluation, the Vice Chair of the CHE appointed a Committee consisting of[1]:

- **Prof. Cheryl Schonhardt-Bailey** – *Chair*. Head of Department (2019-2022), Department of Government, LSE, UK, and Fellow of the British Academy.**Prof. Dr. Tanja A. Börzel** – Professor of political science and chair for European Integration at the Otto Suhr Institute for Political Science, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany.
- **Prof. Soo Yeon Kim** – Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore.
- **Prof. Joel Migdal** – Robert F. Philip Professor of International Studies, University of Washington, USA.
- **Prof. James Perry** – Professor of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University, USA.
- **Prof. Avner de Shalit** – Political philosopher and Max Kampelman Chair of Democracy and Human Rights, Hebrew University, Israel.
- **Prof. Nicholas Valentino** – Department of Political Science, and Research Professor in the Center for Political Studies, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, USA.

Anat Haina served as the Coordinator of the Committee on behalf of the CHE.

1.3   The evaluation process was conducted in accordance with the CHE's Guidelines for Self-Evaluation (January 2022). Within this framework the evaluation committee was required to:

- examine the self-evaluation reports submitted by the institutions that provide study programs in Political Science and International Relations;
- conduct on-site visits at those institutions participating in the evaluation process;
- submit to the CHE an individual report on each of the academic units and study programs participating in the evaluation;
- set out the committee's findings and recommendations for each study program;
- submit to the CHE a general report regarding the evaluated field of study within the Israeli system of higher education including recommendations for standards in the evaluated field of study;

1.4   The evaluation committee examined only the evidence provided by each participating institution — considering this alongside the distinctive mission set out by each institution in terms of its own aims and objectives. This material was further elaborated and explained in discussions with senior management, lecturers,

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[1] The committee's letter of appointment is attached as **Appendix 1**.

students, and alumni during the course of each one-day visit to each of the institutions.

1.5 In undertaking this work, the committee considered matters of quality assurance and quality enhancement — applying its collective knowledge of developments and good practices in the delivery of higher education in Political Science (mainly from European countries and the USA) to the evaluation of such provision in Israel.

Section 2: **Executive Summary**

The School of Political Sciences at the University of Haifa consists of three Divisions: The Division of International Relations, the Division of Government and Political Theory, and the Division of Public Administration and Policy. The three Divisions work smoothly together under the impressive leadership of the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Prof. Daphna Canetti, the School's Head, Prof. Dana Vashdi, and the three Heads of Divisions. The 30 senior academic faculty in the School benefit from a remarkable sense of collegiality and companionship.

The three Divisions work together to offer a BA track, a separate, one year BA track for Navy cadets (together there are nearly 600 BA students), and 22 MA programs with more than 850 students. They also have a School-wide PhD program with 50 students. The School runs several labs and research centers.

The members of staff are engaged in impressive research in various fields, and manage to publish in top journals. There is research cooperation between young and more established researchers, which the Committee applauds.

The University aims to rank among the top research universities in Israel. In addition, the University's strategic plan focuses on social and environmental issues as part of its efforts to improve human welfare and Israeli society. The University, as well as the School, are well aware of their location in the north of Israel, and are committed to serve as an academic home to Jews and Arabs in the area.

Since the last evaluation of political science in the University 15 years ago, there have been significant changes. The Committee found that structural changes that were seen as controversial in the previous round of evaluation do make sense, even if they are unorthodox. In addition, the School has grown rapidly in terms of the number of students and staff, although the School and the Dean believe that perhaps the number of MA programs it offers seems too large.

The Committee was impressed with the School, its leadership, the seriousness and devotion of its members of staff, the amicable atmosphere between students and teachers, and with how proud students were to study in the School.

The Committee has a few suggestions and recommendations. The most significant of which are the following.

The School is unique in the number of MA students it attracts, and this should be regarded as an asset that distinguishes the School from other departments of political science and IR in Israel. However, the Committee recommends that the number of unique, non-thesis MA programs be reduced without limiting the number of MA students, in order to optimize capacity across the School and eliminate redundancy. The Committee believes that even if the number of MA programs is indeed reduced, there should be a significant recruitment process, to increase the tenure-track regular faculty to approximately 35 and the "Educational Career Track" faculty to approximately three, within five to seven years.

The Committee was impressed with the Dean's goal to deepen understanding and application of Data Science methods to improve data literacy. To achieve this, the Committee strongly recommends a modification of the ILOs concerning methodological skills.

Finally, the Committee was concerned with the very high number of adjunct lecturers, an issue that was already raised in the previous evaluation process. The School is well aware of the need to reduce the number of adjunct lecturers. In the meantime, both the University and School should better convey to adjuncts their employment rights, as they do not seem to be aware of them.

Section 3: Observations

3.1 The institution and the parent unit

The University of Haifa is a relatively young university. However, it is already very impressive in its research and teaching. Students on the whole are proud to study in a very good research university, and they believe that studying at the University of Haifa is advantageous academically and career-wise. The University leadership thinks highly of the School and appreciates the many students it attracts and the quality of research conducted by its members.

The dedicated Dean of Faculty and Head of School seem to work very well together and, as two distinguished women researchers, serve as role models for the staff members and the PhD students.

The School's organizational structure (with three Divisions) is arguably unorthodox but the Head of School, who is an academic expert on teamwork, manages to lead very successfully the School's work as well as cooperation between the units. There is generally a positive attitude among the staff members and research students.

The Dean seems to have a number of plans to sustain the excellent research and teaching conducted in the Faculty, in general, and the School in particular. Among these, the Committee was impressed with the idea of emphasizing "computational social science", which could distinguish the School from other departments in Israel.

One of the mission statements mentioned in the SER is "international exchange". The Committee has not seen enough about that, apart from the Warsaw program, which is piecemeal. The Committee recommends that if indeed the University and School want to

strengthen international exchange, more resources should be allocated for internationalization and more courses in English should be given, especially for MA students.

3.2 Internal Quality Assurance

The Committee feels that the authors of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) were diligent and conscientious in preparing the document. Clearly, the School took the process seriously and reflected deeply on its internal performance. The attention to detail was extraordinary, indeed overly abundant.

In a more critical vein, however, the report itself, in which appendices were integrated into the body of the text, was unwieldy and challenging to digest. For instance, overall summaries for each section were broken into categories so the Committee had to estimate an overall assessment for the SER, before comparing this to the overall assessment of the Committee.

The self-evaluation process yielded a list of strengths and weaknesses, which align with many of the Committee's assessments and recommendations for improvement. Of particular note is the need to reach out and organize alumni to involve them in university activities and job placement. The ILOs, while consistent internally and successfully implemented, should be reviewed through a systematic process. A similar gap exists in the evaluation of the many MA programs. The University needs to direct more attention to the recruitment of under-represented and minority faculty, and recruit more faculty for the many MA programs currently in operation. Finally, the School should investigate the factors keeping undergraduates and doctoral students from completing their studies in a timely manner.

The Committee also concurs with the self-evaluation exercise on the many strengths of the School. Students and faculty are generally very satisfied in their respective areas of activity. Faculty are also research active and productive, though with some variation across individual members. There is a general feeling of community that prevails, and despite the three divisions remaining separate, the arrangement is working well.

The previous CHE evaluation made many specific recommendations, and the current SER discusses the responses to these suggestions in some detail. The Committee found that most of these responses were productive and appropriate. The Committee will review here a few areas where recommendations were particularly important and were taken or modified by the School.

The previous CHE evaluation suggested that the School reconsider its divisional structure, ultimately with the goal of merging the three Divisions into a single department. It opposed the idea of elevating these divisions into separate departments. The School ultimately disagreed with this advice, and kept the divisional structure as it was, with additional focus on collaboration and cooperation across the groups. The present Committee finds this decision of the School to work well, and recommends it continue along this path. This structure has produced substantial benefits for students and faculty.

The previous evaluation committee also recommended that the School provides systematic guidance for students regarding career opportunities, including further academic training. While the School has made some changes in this direction, the current report further emphasizes the need for greater investment in job counseling and building connections with

alumni who could form important professional connections for current students. Building an active alumni network could produce significant benefits, not only for current students and recent graduates, but also for the School as a whole as it attempts to improve its visibility and attractiveness throughout Israel.

Following the recommendation of the 2011 CHE report, the School claims that it reduced its reliance on adjunct faculty, particularly with regard to introductory courses, which have to be taught by regular faculty. Other courses, particularly in the non-thesis MAs, still appear to heavily rely on adjunct faculty. Their number is still twice as high as the regular faculty. The University should make sure that the planned structural changes by the School will bring down the numbers by hiring full-time permanent teachers, although this offers only a limited solution.

The previous report suggested that the School improve its professionalization for PhD students by offering regular advice about preparing conference papers, grant applications, publication strategies, and so on. The School has responded to this by adding a new format of "preparing for the job market" that has been very well received. In this class, students present ideas about their own research to the faculty and get feedback.

The previous committee recommended that the School improve the diversity of the faculty via new hires, and the School has done that with regard to gender. As the report below discusses, however, much work remains in hiring members of underrepresented minorities including Arabs as new faculty.

The previous evaluation recommended that junior faculty receive additional support with regard to professional advancement, clarifying promotion procedures, and mentoring. The School responded to this advice for the most part. One of the most successful reforms was the implementation of a dual mentor system for each new hire. One of the areas where the Committee felt there could be a continued improvement is in making sure all junior faculty receive and discuss the promotion guidelines of the parent unit.

The School evaluated its overall performance in Internal Quality Assurance:

(1=unsatisfactory, 2=needs significant improvements, 3=needs minor improvements, 4=satisfactory, 5=highly satisfactory)

	1	2	3	4	5
					X

The Evaluation Committee evaluated the School's overall performance in Internal Quality Assurance:

	1	2	3	4	5

				X	

The Committee felt that the SER could have been written in a more usable and accessible format. More work could also be done in pursuing the remaining issues from the 2011 report.

3.3   The Department/Study Program

The School offers a general BA program and an additional, one year BA program designed for Navy cadets, 22 MA programs, and a PhD program.

The SER had all the necessary information about the BA courses and the syllabi. The Committee believes that the students enjoy a profound, varied, and well-balanced program. The BA students seemed very content. They spoke very warmly about the program and the staff. Some of them thought that they needed extra courses in methods, programming for data analytics, and other such courses that will better prepare them for 'a professional life after graduating'. The Committee notes that this resonates with the Dean's vision of 'Computational Social Sciences'.

According to the SER, the School, as part of the Faculty, will become more oriented towards quantitative research and teaching (Computational Social Science). The Committee discussed this with the students and the staff. The impression was that many of them did not know what exactly this implied, and some of the students who were aware of this, thought that they were ill-prepared in methods training. **The Committee suggests that this vision should be communicated better to all stakeholders.**

The Committee understands that methods training is available in the SICSS (Summer Institute in Computational Social Science) which is targeted to graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and newly-hired faculty. Though the Committee did not learn much about this program, it appears to be a promising initiative.

The Committee notes that according to the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) "only about 50% of our BA students finish their degree within three years". The Committee is also concerned with the figures reported on page 187, which suggest significant barriers to completion among BA students. The most recent figures for the year 2018/2019, 61 students out of 100, had not completed their studies within 3 years. **The Committee recommends that the School addresses this issue, first, by analyzing data in order to identify the underlying problems, and then, if and as needed, the creation of assistance programs.**

The Committee did not have a chance to evaluate the one year Navy BA program in any detail. The Committee understands the importance of educating and teaching the cadets, and appreciates the efforts made by the cadets and the University to do this successfully. Having said that, the Committee is concerned about the academic experience that the cadets have and questions the depth of learning that is possible in the compressed schedule available to them. These are very gifted and highly motivated students, who could have benefitted from a more relaxed schedule that will allow them to study, read, and research topics more deeply with the excellent faculty at the School. The Committee was impressed with the expressed

dedication of the faculty to fulfilling their responsibility to facilitate the education of the Israeli military.

The Committee was puzzled by the number of MA programs. On the one hand, it is extremely impressive that the School has managed to attract more than 850 MA students, which is more than all other universities in Israel together manage to do. The Committee also acknowledges that these MA programs play an important role in society and that the students benefit tremendously from studying these programs. On the other hand, in many of these programs, the percentage of courses taught by adjunct lecturers is more than 50%, and sometimes nearly all the courses are taught by adjunct lecturers. This presents a concern to the Committee, especially when the School wants the students to be inspired by their teachers' research and academic capabilities.

The Committee was not clear about the rationale for all the various MA programs. For example, the international program with Warsaw University was described as more historically-focused (SER, p. 83), as concentrating on diplomacy, and as specializing in international law (SER, p. 115). Generally speaking, the Committee understands that the School and the Dean are well aware of the need to re-evaluate whether all the programs are equally needed. The Committee is impressed with the number of MA students (including the large number of Arab students) that the School manages to attract, but the Committee welcomes the intention to re-evaluate whether all these programs should continue. **In particular, the Committee recommends that the number of unique MA programs be reduced in order to optimize capacity across the School.** Note that the Committee is not recommending a reduction in the total number of students in these programs. Reducing the complexity of the MA programs might have further benefits for increasing the salience and recognition of particular programs, whose graduates will then be more highly appreciated and valued outside the University.

The Committee understands that the School has decided to establish a fourth unit (alongside the three divisions) and welcomes this initiative. The Unit will be responsible for the many non-thesis MA programs. There was unanimous approval of this move among the staff. The Committee approves of this reform in the structure of the School to help more effectively manage the non-thesis MA programs.

The Committee understands that each BA student should take two courses in English. At the postgraduate level, however, there appears to be a deficiency in the number of courses available in English. **The Committee recommends that more courses in English should be offered, particularly for MA students**.

Finally, with regard to the MA programs, it was unfortunate that the Committee did not get to meet non-thesis MA students, and that many of the participants, who were expected to arrive, did not attend the meeting.

In order to attract high-quality students to its PhD program, the School decided to request each applicant to submit proof of a paper to an international journal. From our discussions, the Committee understands that the paper is not desk rejected. The Committee is therefore satisfied with the recent softening of the demands so that now students are requested to attend an international conference, or submit a paper, etc.

It is unfortunate that the representation of PhD students in the meeting was quite limited, both in number and working with just one faculty supervisor. Hence the Committee cannot fully assess the broader quality of PhD supervision. As stated elsewhere, the anecdotal evidence seems to be that the program is working very well in training and placing its students, but there was little concrete and systematic evidence provided on this front.

The School evaluated its overall performance in Study Program:

(1=unsatisfactory, 2=needs significant improvements, 3=needs minor improvements, 4=satisfactory, 5=highly satisfactory)

	1	2	3	4	5
				X	

The Evaluation Committee evaluated the School's overall performance in Study Program:

	1	2	3	4	5
			X		

As noted above, the number of MA programs should be reduced and more courses in English should be offered to MA students.

3.4 Teaching and Learning Outcomes

According to the SER, academic staff appear to be satisfied with current University efforts on the training of current and new faculty. Current teaching regulations are also clear to academic staff and implemented at all levels of the School. Evaluation of teaching effectiveness relies primarily on student evaluations and self-assessment. Academic staff perceive peer review and review by the Head of School as less effective for evaluating teaching quality.

The Unit for the Advancement of Teaching, integrated into the "Unit for Online Learning" in 2020, provides support for knowledge and training in pedagogy. The Computing and Information Systems Division provides technical support for issues related to online teaching, such as the effective operation of hybrid classes. A solid infrastructure exists with the potential to provide extensive support for teaching, especially online teaching.

The Unit for the Advancement of Teaching offers workshops to disseminate information on the latest developments in pedagogy and effective teaching and learning. The Unit offers a wide range of services, but at present only for online or hybrid teaching, from course design to course delivery and assessment design for online courses. There is potential here for the

Unit to offer parallel services for in-person courses. Moving forward, the University and School may consider the following initiatives to enhance training in pedagogy.

In line with faculty members' experience with teaching during the pandemic, there appears to be significant demand for more training and greater clarity on standards for excellence in online teaching. Existing evaluation mechanisms – peer review, student evaluations, self-evaluations, and review by the School Chair – should be modified to include excellence in the technical dimensions of an online module. These may include the use of online assessment tools, online collaboration, and teaching of effective strategies for virtual presentations.

The Committee notes the aspiration of the Unit for the Advancement of Teaching to offer 'continued discussion among faculty members about effective teaching' (p. 122). This is an excellent idea, in effect building on the existing infrastructure resulting from the merging of the two Units (of the Advancement of Teaching, and for Online Learning). **The Committee recommends the Unit expands its activities to promote teaching effectiveness.** For example, it can develop a series of roundtables, perhaps as a 'coffee hour,' for faculty to share and exchange ideas on specific teaching-related issues.

The School's self-evaluation report identifies the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) as general and specific to tracks and degree programs. The ILOs for the BA are comparable to those found in Political Science programs elsewhere, emphasizing the development of critical skills, familiarity with the key ideas, concepts, and units of politics, acquaintance with methods, interdisciplinarity with other fields of social science, and the capacity to develop original and independent research. The SER notes that students are aware of the ILOs for specific courses, which are published in syllabi and on program websites. The Committee recognizes that the School has taken on the recommendations of the previous report (September 2011) to ensure that students have advanced access to syllabi for their courses. These syllabi are useful for identifying course-specific ILOs, which are consistent with general ILOs for the major.

Moving forward, **the Committee strongly recommends a modification of the ILO concerning methodological skills.** Given the entry of ChatGPT and the urgency of building data literacy skills for effective information arbitrage, students would be well-served with more rigorous training in data science methods. These methods would encompass not only quantitative analysis but also important data skills such as web scraping, text analysis, and analysis of big data. Such skills would also make students more competitive in the job market. The Committee notes students expressed a strong desire for more training in data science skills.

The School evaluated its overall performance in Teaching and Learning Outcomes:

(1=unsatisfactory, 2=needs significant improvements, 3=needs minor improvements, 4=satisfactory, 5=highly satisfactory)

	1	2	3	4	5
				X	

The Evaluation Committee evaluated the School's overall performance in Teaching and Learning Outcomes:

	1	2	3	4	5
				X	

The Committee concurs with the School's evaluation, and suggests building on existing strengths.

3.5   Students

The Committee was highly impressed with the students it met, who seemed motivated and enthusiastic about their experience at Haifa. The faculty clearly prizes teaching at all levels of the curriculum, and this provides a very positive learning culture. This section of the report will review some of the challenges facing Haifa, especially in terms of attracting more undergraduate students, managing the large number of non-thesis MA students, and expanding the methods training at every level of the curriculum to support the new initiative in Computational Social Science.

Since the last CHE evaluation, the School's entry requirements were raised substantially in order to improve the average quality of undergraduate and PhD students. The obvious risk of raising undergraduate admissions criteria too drastically is that it reduces the admission rates and potentially overlooks students who might thrive in the unit with some additional time and preparation. The Committee feels that the current level of selectivity for admission to the undergraduate program is appropriate, but enrollments need to be closely monitored over time to make sure numbers are not in decline.

At the graduate level, the School instituted two key reforms in admission to the PhD program. The first is to attempt to cap at the time to degree completion to 4 years, so that more resources can be available to each student per year, for students' stipends, and for supporting the completion of the students' dissertations. Most "one-size-fits-all" reforms such as this are challenging to implement for every type of dissertation project in Political Science. This is especially true for subfields like Comparative Politics, where time-consuming fieldwork often takes place in the 3rd and 4th years of the program. The Committee recognizes the value of emphasizing to all graduate students the need to complete the dissertation in a timely manner. However, the Committee also feels that there is enough flexibility in the process to allow students who need more time to complete excellent dissertation theses. According to the SER, students needing more time are allowed to apply for an additional year.

At the same time, the Committee is aware of the financial cost for the University if and when MA students do not finish their studies within two or three years. The School has to decide whether it wants to put more pressure on students to submit their theses in a timely manner.

The Committee was also impressed that the School has instituted a course to help graduate students with navigating the professional norms of the discipline, such as going to

conferences, knowing when papers are ready for submission for peer review, applying for fellowships and grants, and ultimately networking and applying to academic jobs.

The Committee would have liked to have been able to meet with more non-thesis Masters students, who comprise a very large segment of the student body in the School. There were no specific concerns raised by the SER, or in any of the conversations that took place in person, but it is important to monitor how well these programs are working for the students themselves, especially in terms of course offerings and benefits of the degree after graduation.

Dropout does not seem to pose a significant challenge at the MA or PhD levels, but as mentioned earlier, the Committee understood that most BA students were not completing the degree within the time expected. While information about this was limited, it is important to monitor and address this.

The Committee was impressed with the relatively high number of Arab students, especially in the MA program. Both BA and MA students described a friendly atmosphere among the students, including between Arabs and Jews. However, both the Arab students and the TAs suggested that many of the Arab students should be given extra help and supervision both about methods, scientific approach, and with English and Hebrew proficiency.

During the conversation with BA students, the Committee raised the topic of ChatGPT and other AI programs as a potential threat to academic integrity and undermining learning and mastery of course material. The students responded in a very sophisticated way to these concerns, arguing that Haifa students were motivated to learn rather than seeking shortcuts such as this. In addition, students argued that ChatGPT should be seen as just another technological advancement that could be used to enhance learning goals rather than undermine them, and they offered several specific examples. The Committee was impressed with this discussion, though of course more broadly, all universities will need to continue to evaluate the impact of AI on higher education.

Alumni can be critical in facilitating networking opportunities; however, the School does not currently draw upon their expertise and connections. The School currently does not collect information to evaluate recent levels of success or trends over time in terms of the job placement of undergraduates, MA students, or PhD graduates of the program. The Committee was disappointed by this lacuna, as the anecdotal evidence suggests many individual successes and high morale among students in the School overall. **The Committee recommends that the School collect data on its alumni, with the view to better bridging the gap between current students and alumni, and thereby better inform prospective students about future job opportunities.** This would be perhaps especially important for the non-thesis MA students, who are a very large group and who might be helping to fulfill the cultural mission of the School throughout the knowledge economy of Israel.

The School evaluated its overall performance in Students:

(1=unsatisfactory, 2=needs significant improvements, 3=needs minor improvements, 4=satisfactory, 5=highly satisfactory)

	1	2	3	4	5
				X	

The Evaluation Committee evaluated the School's overall performance in Students:

	1	2	3	4	5
				X	

The Committee concurs with the School's rating.

3.6 Academic Faculty and Human Resources

The Committee was impressed with the genuine and enthusiastic collegiality among colleagues in the School. This collegiality was evident both in the teamwork among the Head of School and the Heads of Divisions, and in the respect among faculty for the visionary approach of the Dean. Additionally, the collaboration among the divisions appears to work well at the level of research. This collegiality was also recognized by the previous (2011) CHE Report on the Political Science and International Relations at the University of Haifa, and is certainly praiseworthy.

The Committee also recognizes that while the previous CHE Report on the Political Science and International Relations at the University of Haifa recommended a merger of the Political Science and International Relations Divisions, this recommendation was not followed. Instead, the tripartite division within the School of Political Sciences is the current organizational structure. The 2023 Committee is of the view that the teamwork among the three Divisions works well and is managed appropriately. The present Committee would not suggest any change to the current organizational structure.

The Committee heard nothing but praise for the double mentoring arrangement for non-tenured faculty. The Committee understands that one mentor is from within the division, and the other is from outside the division. While mentoring of non-tenured faculty is commonplace, double mentoring is highly unusual and the Committee commends the School for adopting and sustaining this arrangement.

In terms of faculty workload, the Committee agrees with the assessment in the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) (supplemented with verbal comments during our visit) that the faculty workload is too high. The Committee understands from the SER that the expected teaching hours for regular faculty is eight hours per week of contact time. Yet, at other large universities (Hebrew University, Tel Aviv University, Ben-Gurion University), the norm is six hours per week. Apparently, the higher load for Haifa was justified in the past, but as Haifa now has a thriving PhD program, the Committee sees no apparent reason to continue the relatively higher teaching load.

Moreover, the Committee also notes from the SER that the School seeks to shift teaching on its non-thesis/professional Master's programs more to "full-time teachers" (elsewhere, these are called "Educational Career Track", or ECT roles, which this Report will use as a descriptor). Such ECT appointments are increasingly used in universities throughout the world, and so the Committee supports this shift in the resourcing of teaching (though at the same time recognizing that multiple career tracks can create tensions among faculty, which will have to be managed sensitively and sensibly).

It is unfortunate that, as noted in the SER (p. 27), the adjunct faculty did not play a prominent role in the self-evaluation process, particularly as they constitute twice the number of regular faculty in the School (60 adjuncts relative to 29/30 regular faculty). The Committee was grateful for the opportunity to speak with several of the adjuncts. From our discussion with the adjuncts, a number of observations emerged. First, several were unclear of their employment status (e.g., 10+ years constitute permanent employment) and some were willingly working hours for which they did not think they were being paid. The Committee queried this with the University heads and was assured that employment rights and privileges were given to adjuncts. While being satisfied with this statement, **the Committee does, however, recommend that both the University and School better convey to adjuncts their employment rights.**

The Committee also notes from the discussion with the adjuncts that there exists at least two quite different types of adjuncts: professionals (who come as teachers of practice, e.g. the example given to us of a judge who teaches a course on law), and Political Science teachers. The Committee has no information on how many professionals versus Political Science teachers comprise the large cohort of adjuncts, although the Committee suspects that perhaps the reliance on regular teachers is heavy. It is desirable that adjuncts would primarily fall into the category of professionals, where they are able to bring their experience, expertise and knowledge to their teaching.

Given the heavy teaching load, the creation of ECT roles in the School, and the apparent overreliance on adjuncts, **the Committee recommends a recruitment strategy for increasing the tenure track regular faculty to approximately 35 and the ECT faculty to approximately three**. Increased numbers of regular faculty would enable a more reasonable teaching load among academics, but would also offer the School an opportunity to better pursue the "computational social science" objective of the Dean. **The Committee thus further recommends that at least some new tenure track appointments explicitly seek applications from candidates with research skills, such as advanced statistics, computer-aided text analysis, big data, formal modeling, or any other approach that entails advanced data literacy.**

Turning to promotions and review of faculty, the Committee notes from the SER that the criteria for the promotions process "is not in consensus" with respect to transparency and accessibility. That is, for some faculty, it was not transparent or the messages received were conflicting, but for others, the criteria were very clear. This assessment was borne out from the discussions with the faculty. The Committee queried this with the leadership of the School and University and the response was very much to the contrary – that is, the criteria were said to have been communicated both in bilateral sessions with faculty and in a document available on the University website. The English version of this document was sent to the

Committee following the visit, and the assessment of the Committee is that it is sufficiently clear in terms of the criteria and process for promotion. **The Committee thus recommends that this document be re-circulated to all faculty, and that mentors be encouraged to discuss these criteria with their mentees.**

With respect to administrative and support staff, the Committee was not able to properly assess this during the visit to campus. However, from the SER, the Committee notes that the level of overall satisfaction with technical and administrative staff is high and all the stakeholders are reasonably satisfied.

The School evaluated its overall performance in Academic Faculty and Human Resources:

(1=unsatisfactory, 2=needs significant improvements, 3=needs minor improvements, 4=satisfactory, 5=highly satisfactory)

	1	2	3	4	5
				X	

The Evaluation Committee evaluated the School's overall performance in Academic Faculty and Human Resources:

	1	2	3	4	5
				X	

The Committee concurs with the School's rating.

3.7   Diversity

There was a clear message from the parent unit and the School that the diversity of the student body, especially in terms of Arab students, was a significant strength and at least somewhat unique in Israel. The student body at Haifa has an impressive proportion of Arab students, one of the highest in the country.

However, all the stakeholders suggest significant work on diversifying the faculty remains. The benefits of diversifying the faculty are broad. It can obviously improve the undergraduate experience for those coming from underprivileged backgrounds. Diversifying the faculty also potentially dovetails with efforts to further internationalize the program. The Committee fully recognizes and supports the goal of further diversifying the faculty along several dimensions. It encourages the University and the School to consider academic excellence and minority diversity as complementary and potentially reinforcing rather than competing goals.

In terms of gender, the Committee was impressed with the positive transformation in the School over recent years as a result of hiring and creating a gender- and family-supportive

environment. The youngest cohort of faculty is nearly equally balanced between men and women, and the senior faculty were appropriately proud of this progress. The Committee particularly acknowledges the scholarship program for women for post-doctoral studies abroad and the maternity leave support package for researchers.

At the same time, faculty diversity along other dimensions has not kept up the pace. Given the diversity of the undergraduate population, it is important to begin to work on hiring faculty from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds as soon as possible. This will provide role models for the many Arab students as well as those Jewish students from underrepresented groups.

The challenge to diversifying the faculty is at least partly due to a lack of hiring resources at the University level. According to the feedback received during the official visit, there are very few resources available to the School to actively pursue hiring scholars from diverse backgrounds outside the normal process of recruitment. This often means the School must make extremely difficult choices between this laudable goal and meeting other program needs such as hiring in particular substantive specializations. **The Committee's recommendation to the University is to allocate hiring to enable better diversification of the faculty.** Of course, whenever possible, we strongly recommend hiring committees take special attention to stimulating a diverse hiring pool via talent scouting, outreach, and recruitment during searches, so that excellent candidates from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds are encouraged to apply and are strongly considered.

The School evaluated its overall performance in Diversity:

(1=unsatisfactory, 2=needs significant improvements, 3=needs minor improvements, 4=satisfactory, 5=highly satisfactory)

	1	2	3	4	5
			X		

The Evaluation Committee evaluated the School's overall performance in Diversity:

	1	2	3	4	5
			X		

The Committee felt the School's goals for diversification were laudable, and that they had made significant progress along the lines of gender. However, we also agree that much more progress needs to take place in terms of ethnic and religious backgrounds among the faculty.

3.8 Research

Overall, the Committee found the research level of the Divisions of International Relations and Government and Political Theory very high. Some of the most senior faculty are internationally renowned scholars in their fields that have made a broad impact. Daphna Canetti has quickly risen to be one of the most influential political psychologists. Her nearly 100 journal articles on a variety of topics, including terrorism, religion, democracy, and cyber issues, have had a major impact on a variety of fields in political science. As'ad Ghanem has written six prominent books on the Palestinian minority in Israel, in addition to 50 articles in refereed journals. Annabel Herzog is an example of a political theorist who has impacted her field. Her book, *Levinas's Politics: Justice, Mercy, Universality* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), won the 2021 Association of Jewish Studies' Jordan Schnitzer Prize in the category of Philosophy and Jewish Thought. In addition, she has written multiple journal articles including in Q1 journals, such as *Political Theory* and *Theory, Culture & Society.*

Among associate professors, Aviad Rubin has published two books on democracy and religion plus articles in prestigious journals on the topic. Additionally, he has published articles in important journals, such as the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, on Israel's naval power.

The relatively new hires also demonstrate high potential and have already begun to have an impact on their field. Michael Freedman, for example, has already published articles in top journals in the field, including the *American Sociological Review,* the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, and *Political Behavior,* all Q1 journals. His sophisticated use of empirical methods and the topic of conflict and religion promise to catapult him to the top of the field.

The collegiality in the School has extended to collaborative research projects. One example is the 2017 article, "The Israeli Elections 2015: The Triumph of Jewish Skepticism, the Emergence of Arab Faith," by Doron Navot, Aviad Rubin, and As'ad Ghanem, which appeared in *The Middle East Journal*. Another instance is Nizan Feldman, Ehud Eiran and Aviad Rubin's Q1, 2021 article, "Naval Power and Effects of Third-Party Trade on Conflict" in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution.*

The faculty as a whole has done well in garnering outside funding for research, especially from the Israel Science Foundation. Projects have been in a wide variety of fields, with significant contributions and impact in political theory, international relations, and comparative politics (especially research involving Israel).

The Committee notes some variation in the research productivity among the faculty (not related to rank). The University has done a good job in assisting faculty in preparing for research grants through the Research Authority. Non-tenured faculty also found the seed grants that they could apply for to be very helpful. The Committee supports the University's efforts to assist and incentivize faculty in conducting and publishing high-quality research, e.g. by providing additional research funds, and applying for external research funding.

The IR Division has expanded to include more regional studies. Two hires have been made in the last two years with expertise in the European Union and Asia. And there is a plan to continue growing this research area by recruiting additional faculty members who will

allow the division to cover more areas of IR in regard both to regions of the world and the different sub-disciplines of IR.

Another area of planned research growth is the behavioral/experimental research capabilities of the faculty. The School includes six research centers and labs, and at least two of the labs involve increased use of computational social science. The Political Psychology Lab is run by Professor Canetti, and the new Political Behavior Lab has been founded by three faculty members, Professor Israel Wismel-Manor, Dr. Liran Harsgor and Dr. Michael Freedman. The Political Behavior Lab includes both tenured and non-tenured faculty and enables the expansion into research areas such as cyber security.

The School's goals mesh well with those of both the faculty and the University as a whole. The self-evaluation report employed Google Scholar's h-index to evaluate the impact of individual faculty members' research outputs.

The School evaluated its overall performance in Research:

(1=unsatisfactory, 2=needs significant improvements, 3=needs minor improvements, 4=satisfactory, 5=highly satisfactory)

	1	2	3	4	5
				X	

The Evaluation Committee evaluated the School's overall performance in Research:

	1	2	3	4	5
					X

The Committee is impressed with the research output of the Divisions and encourages the faculty to continue publishing in high-quality outlets and acquiring external research grants.

3.9   Infrastructure

The Committee has little reason to question the adequacy of the infrastructure available to the School of Political Sciences. No concerns regarding office and teaching space were raised during the visit. The Committee encourages the University to continue its efforts at updating the technological infrastructure in the classrooms. The one problem the Committee noted was a lack of designated space for adjunct faculty to work and meet with students outside the classroom.

The university library appears up to date. Neither students nor faculty raised any concerns with regard to the availability of databases, journals, and books. The library makes good use of digital technologies to provide access to study and research material and assist the teaching and learning processes. The library should continue its efforts to obtain political science texts

in Arabic. **The Committee recommends that the library, and the University at large, provide signs and user information in English and Arabic to facilitate access for non-Hebrew speakers**.

The School evaluated its overall performance in Infrastructure:

(1=unsatisfactory, 2=needs significant improvements, 3=needs minor improvements, 4=satisfactory, 5=highly satisfactory)

	1	2	3	4	5
				X	

The Evaluation Committee evaluated the School's overall performance in Infrastructure:

	1	2	3	4	5
				X	

The Committee concurs with the School's rating.

Section 4: Recommendations

Essential

The Faculty and School have to take measures to reduce the number of unique non-thesis MA programs in order to optimize capacity across the School.

The Faculty and school need to implement a recruitment strategy to increase the number of tenure-track regular faculty to approximately 35 and the Educational Career track faculty to approximately three faculty, in the next five to seven years.

The School has to convey better to adjuncts their employment rights.

The School has to recirculate to all faculty the promotion criteria document, and encourage mentors to discuss these criteria with their mentee(s).

The Faculty and School have to deepen students' understanding and application of Data Science methods, to improve data literacy.

Important

The University should allocate hiring resources to enable better diversification of the faculty.

The Faculty should communicate better to all stakeholders the vision to enhance computational social science training.

The School should explicitly seek applications from tenure-track candidates with research skills, such as advanced statistics, computer-aided text analysis, big data, formal modeling, or any other approach that entails advanced data literacy.

The School should collect data on alumni, with the view to better bridging the gap between current students and alumni, and better informing prospective students about future job opportunities.

The University should provide signs and user information around campus in English and Arabic to facilitate access for non-Hebrew speakers.

Desirable

The Committee recommends that the School addresses the student dropout problem, first, by analyzing data in order to identify the underlying problems, and then, if and as needed, the creation of assistance programs.
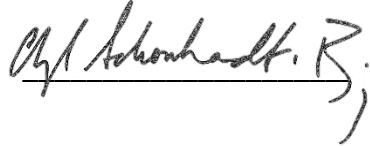
The School should define in greater clarity the standards of excellence for online teaching, and communicate them to the faculty.

The University should expand the activities of the Unit for the Advancement of Teaching to promote teaching effectiveness.
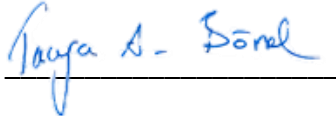
The School should offer more courses in English, particularly for MA students.

Signed by:

Prof. Cheryl Schonhardt-Bailey
Committee Chair

Prof. Dr. Tanja A. Börzel   Prof. Joel Migdal

Prof. Soo Yeon Kim   Prof. Avner de Shalit

Prof. Nicholas Valentino

המועצה להשכלה גבוהה
مجلس التعليم العالي
COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

March 2023

Prof. Nicholas Valentino,
Department of Political Science,
University of Michigan
<u>USA</u>

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 a member of the Council for Higher Education's Committee for the Evaluation of **Political Science and International Relations** departments. In addition to yourself, the composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Cheryl Schonhardt-Bailey (chair), Prof. Tanja A. Börzel, Prof. Soo Yeon Kim, Prof. Joel Migdal, Prof. James Perry, and Prof. Avner de Shalit.

Ms. Pe'er Baris-Barnea and Ms. Anat Haina will be the coordinators of the Committee.

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

Sincerely,

Prof. Edit Tshuva,
Vice Chair,
The Council for Higher Education (CHE)

Enclosures: Appendix to the Appointment Letter of Evaluation Committees

cc: Sigal Mordoch, Acting Deputy Director-General for QA, CHE
        Ms. Anat Haina, Committee Coordinator