A MATTER OF DECISION – FROM COLLEGE TO UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT: *The history of Ariel University began over three decades ago in a small town in the West Bank, with a few dozen students. Over the years the small school managed to establish itself on the local map of higher education and became the first regional college to reach the status of public university. In this paper we shall review and analyze the external and internal factors that facilitated the process. External factors refer to changes in social, economic, political, and constitutional aspects at the base of the development of regional colleges. Internal factors refer to a series of decisions made at the college leading it of all others to become a university. We shall present the teleological approach as the basis for understanding the processes that occurred at the college and that ultimately facilitated the transition.*
KEYWORDS: public university, regional colleges, higher education, Strategic planning, Leadership.

INTRODUCTION

The first regional college to become a public university, a transition previously unheard of in the history of Israeli higher education, did so in December 2012. The transition took place after 30 years of activity in what was first established as a regional college (1982), proceeded to become an academic college (both under the auspices and supervision of Bar Ilan University and as an autonomous school certified to issue academic degrees, 2000), then a university center (2011), and finally – a university (2012).

This paper examines the **development of an academic institution** from an evening school with several dozen students to a popular university with over 14,000 students, **as part of a decision making process.** We shall claim that this school, one of dozens of other regional/academic colleges in Israel, was the one to become a university as a consequence of a series of significant decisions, reached both by policy makers in the area of higher education and of the school's leaders, decisions that facilitated the change. In this paper we shall review and analyze the external decisions made in the context of Israeli higher education that led to the emergence of regional colleges, and the internal decisions reached at this academic college over the last three decades. Our main premise is that academic schools are capable of realizing the academic home they provide to students in the form of a research university as part of their vision. The Israeli educational system, including the academic system, is utilized by policy makers as a social-egalitarian tool, and this is further proven by the similarities between the different academic schools. But similarity does not mean that unique traits of learners and schools are erased, rather the unique role of these elements and their establishment as a meaningful social response are clearly discerned (Davidovitch, 2005). The birth of the eighth Israeli university signifies the trend of a 'monistic' system of higher education, where distinctions between universities and regional colleges will gradually fade, at least in regard to colleges considered academically prestigious. This scenario will persist, in our opinion, and it is not inevitable that a private college shall become a university.

Even changes in the budgeting policy of the PBC (Planning and Budget Committee) cannot stop this trend. In our opinion, recognizing this process will make it possible for other colleges to undergo the transition, while observing and learning from the case of Ariel University, a harbinger of what is to come.

Processes and stages in the development of the regional colleges
Regional colleges first appeared in Israeli higher education in the 1960s. They were established **in response to the changing needs** (Miller, 1990) of Israeli society and its economy, and the demand for professional human resources. Until the 1980s the regional colleges operated mainly as centers of adult education providing cultural enrichment to members of moshavim, kibbutzim (rural agricultural forms of settlement) and remote towns. They were often established at the initiative of the local community, with the help of academics, or as an external initiative of academic elements that sought to provide a "service to the community" while strengthening their own status (see for example: Colleges and Preparatory Colleges Administration, 1995-1996).

From the mid-1960s to the late 1980s, a series of **economic, social, political, and demographic processes** occurred, **leading to a shift** in the conception of public services: **Israel's growing population, the rise in those eligible for matriculation certificates** (due to the emergence of pre-academic preparatory schools), **rising pressure** by various sectors within Israeli society, mainly weaker populations, urging greater **democratization and equal opportunities**, the rising force of the new right wing and neo-liberalism calling for the redesign of public services in general and of education in particular (Israeli, 1997) by means of **market forces** – all these led to the rapid growth of regional colleges.

In the 1990s these public sentiments reached the Knesset, resulting in **decision 3694 and** expansion of the number of schools authorized to award academic degrees. At the same time, approval was given to open **extra-budgetary academic institutions and branches of foreign universities** in Israel. **In 1995 amendment no. 10 to the Higher Education Law** determined that colleges too could award academic degrees, and these consequently became part of the official system of higher education. **The CHE** (Committee for Higher Education) as well **encouraged the development of non-university schools of higher education**, with the aim of expanding Israeli higher education, providing equal opportunities to wide parts of the populace, and stressing the significance attributed to the array of regional colleges throughout the country (CHE, 2000). **The colleges were required to undergo an accelerated process of academization** that included academic development and integration in the national system of higher education, in order to fulfill the vital national demand for study programs leading to baccalaureate degrees (Newsletter of the Regional Colleges of Israel, 1994).

Following the **government's policy of academization**, regional colleges were transformed from a vocational-applied orientation – to programs oriented towards general education and programs with a research orientation. **The number of students rose significantly and the colleges' prestige as academic schools grew. By the early 2000s all colleges were no longer operating under the auspices of their patron-universities** (aside from two colleges still under the auspices of Bar Ilan) and had become independent (Israeli, 1997). Although the regional colleges met with varying degrees of success, only one managed to make the ultimate transition from regional college to public university. **The Academic College of**

Judea and Samaria is the only one of 20 budgeted institutions that completed the process and became a university in late 2012. The question is: **Why was this the College of Judea and Samaria? What distinguishes this institution from all others?**

The research literature shows that **the external environment in which academic schools operate is a significant factor in the emergence of internal change.** For example, the strengthening of capitalism, manifested in making room for "market forces", has a vital effect on the development of institutions of higher education and particularly on reorganization of faculty work and distribution of resources (Davidovitch, 2012; Kezar, 2001).

Israeli regional colleges all operated under the same external conditions and all had the opportunity, at least theoretically, to make the leap. They all developed in a series of unplanned processes, as at the beginning there was no well-formed institutional system, whether academic or regional. There was no professional organizational framework for deliberations or practical collaboration, a basis for academic work plans, and the colleges had no concentrated sources of information on issues specific to their region and its needs. There were no settings for publicity and for recruiting the political support of other regional factors, to aid the demands made by colleges of national public institutions. Changes in society and in the economy were those that had created a demand for academic studies and therefore the colleges developed with no tools for planning, coordination, and practical collaboration in many fields (Sherman, 1995).

Nonetheless, **despite the significant role of external factors such as demographic, economic, and political conditions** (Rhoades & Slaughter, 1997) in transforming institutions of higher education, **these are also affected by strong forces operating within them** (Kezar, 2001). These forces manage to lead planned processes within the organization despite unplanned processes outside it. In our opinion, the fact that ultimately the College of Judea and Samaria was the one to become a university has to do with the organization's decision making strategy that led a series of planned processes within the organization (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1985; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Schermerhorn & Hunt, 1982).

DECISION MAKING IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Decision making processes in organizations are naturally associated with constraints and effects that derive from one's qualities, feelings, and personality traits (Eilat, 2004). In addition, the process is affected by group dynamics and by the internal structure of the group, including the intensity and force of the organizational structure where the process takes place and its formality. In most organizations decisions are not made by a single factor rather as a group, particularly strategic decisions (Eilat, 2004). The group that makes the decisions is usually composed of those deeply and intimately involved in the work of the organization. These people motivate the organization through the values, processes, and goals that they impart to it (Tierney, 1988). The organization's group of decision makers forms the organizational culture reflected in its practice, manners of operation, and those involved in its work (Tierney, 1988).

Some claim that understanding the organizational culture in schools of higher education might facilitate the most suitable decision making for the organization. For example, the decision whether to increase the number of students enrolled or how to raise funds for the

organization is a product of correct reading of the organizational environment (Tierney, 1988). Organizations, comprised as they are of people, have their own values and beliefs. In a world of frequent change, not only the organizational strategy must be flexible and constantly reexamined, rather also the organizational culture – the beliefs, values, and behavioral norms of the organization – must be constantly reevaluated (Pasher, 2006). This evaluation enables the organization to adapt to its environment. In the field of organizational research, academic organizations are considered unique – an "organized anarchy" (Cohen & March, 1974).

> "Teachers decide if, when, and what to teach. Students decide if, when, and what to learn. Legislators and donors decide if, when, and what to support. Neither coordination (except the spontaneous mutual adaptation of decision) nor control are practiced. Resources are allocated by whatever process emerges but without explicit accommodation and without explicit reference to some superordinate goal. The "decisions" of the system are a consequence produced by the system but intended by no one and decisively controlled by no one" (p. 33).

The research literature on administration in schools of higher education offers six models for understanding, explaining, or introducing change in academic organizations (Kezar & Eckel, 2002): biological (Sporn, 1999, 2001), teleological, political (Burnes, 1996), life cycle (Levine, 1998), social cognition (Weick, 1995), and cultural model (Collins, 1998). **In the current study** we have chosen to embrace the conceptual framework of **teleological models** explaining planned changes in schools of higher education. These models refer to several principles that can explain or help form such changes: mission, vision, strategic planning, leadership, incentives, and interrelations between strategies.

MISSION AND GOALS

Defining the organization's mission and advance discussion of this mission is an essential condition for creating a process of change. Defining the organization's mission makes it possible to run the organization according to its aims as defined in its founding documents. Clarifying the organization's mission for its workers helps the management create the necessary grounds for change. Despite the significance of defining the mission, schools of higher education rarely define it in an "inspirational" or "imposing" manner (Morphe & Hartley, 2006, p. 468), or in a way that makes it possible to divide the mission into shared goals known on campus (Birnbaum, 2000). The mission must be applicable and quantifiable in order to serve as a benchmark for the organization.

VISION

The vision is the organization's motivation and it is strongly linked to other activities of the organization such as planning, organizational communication, leadership, recruiting workers, etc. The vision is essential for the organization as change usually involves risk and conditions of uncertainty. In this respect, the vision provides motivation and serves as a compass for the organization and its workers. An organization with no shared vision and ambivalent aims will usually not survive over time (Chaffee, 1983).

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning is the connecting link between the organization's mission, vision, and goals. These are operations performed by the organization in order to connect all these components. Some claim that the efficiency of strategic planning in academe has not been proven unequivocally due to the difficulties involved in isolating this variable in such a complex dynamic environment as the academic world (Dooris, Kelley & Trainer, 2004). In contrast, some contend that in the competitive environment of the 21st century academe can no longer pursue personal aims rather it is also required to portray and assimilate a strategic plan (Cowburn, 2005). According to this approach academic institutions are required to perform strategic planning adapted to the school's goals. A university's planning should include the aspirations of academic departments as well as general aims for the entire institution (Duke, 1992).

LEADERSHIP

Although schools of higher education are considered anarchic organizations, in order for change to occur there is need for leadership. People who occupy key positions in the organization have the power to promote processes of change and to form an institutional order of priorities. Although change can also come from below – from within the faculties or from student groups – the management's support is necessary in order to realize it. At times collaborative leadership emerges in academic institutions. Collaborative leadership means including other people in decision making or in certain cases a management approach that makes it possible for people to voice their views without giving them authority for decisions, aims, or the organizational process.

INTERRELATIONS BETWEEN STRATEGIES

It is important to create an affinity between strategies implemented on various levels of the organization. The literature recommends doing this by acting in stages: designing a vision, conveying it to the surroundings, and developing a plan for its assimilation. Taking strategic action helps develop collaborative leadership as it enlists the support of senior managers. Enlisting the support of managers makes it possible to create affinity and a connection between the various strategies and helps the organization proceed towards a common goal.

In conclusion, teleological models explain changes in higher education systems that occur in response to external threats and extensive competition. Such models stress the efficiency of the organization's activities. Some claim that this approach disrupts the goals of higher education and its professional autonomy, as operating according to market conditions introduces foreign considerations that do not benefit society in the long run. In contrast, in a world where everything is a "commodity" and capitalism is not only a general theory rather a type of social outlook that exists everywhere, adopting principles of efficiency and coping with a competitive world are an essential condition for any organization seeking to succeed, including academic organizations.

DECISION MAKING IN THE ACADEMIC COLLEGE OF JUDEA AND SAMARIA

Vision, missions, and goals
Upon its establishment in 1982, the College of Judea and Samaria set itself a goal "to develop into a spiritual and scientific Jewish center serving current and future towns in the State of Israel and Diaspora Jewry" (Bulletin of the Academic College of Judea and Samaria, 2007). The **missions** defined in the college's founding document show that at first its goals had a specific national nature: to spread Zionist education and promote values of love of the homeland. Over the years and in an attempt to adapt to the changing environment, the college set itself additional missions such as developing disciplines required for Israel's economy.

From the beginning, the college formed a **vision of "becoming a university" and conducted itself as do Israeli university level institutions** by separating management and academic dimensions (Newsletter of the Regional Colleges of Israel, 1994). The entire organizational structure was established as if it was a university, embracing the CHE instructions for the "corporation of institutions that are universities": "One clear head subordinate to the public body and responsible for a system that has authority and responsibility towards personnel who are subordinate to their superiors" (CHE, 2004).

The local initiative instigated at the town of Kedumim set itself a vision of becoming a formal academic institution. At the first stage the college operated as a branch of Bar Ilan University, in the format of academic courses outside the Ramat Gan campus. At the same time, the college saw itself as an autonomous academic institution and was sometimes defined as an "evening university" (Bulletin of the Academic College of Judea and Samaria, 2007). The institution's self-concept was not compatible with the fact that at first it had no more than ten registered students. Nonetheless, this did not discourage its founders who adhered to clear goals: "to develop academic teaching and research on the highest level… [to be] a center striving to reach a synthesis of academic schooling and Jewish-Zionist-national consciousness" (ibid.). In order to realize these goals the founders operated in an organized and institutionalized manner to establish the college as a serious school. For example, the names of international scientists were included in the college's initiative in an attempt to receive recognition of its academic standards (Granot, 1982), a pattern that has characterized the conduct of the college throughout its existence.

LEADERSHIP, STRATEGIC PLANNING, AND INTERRELATIONS

Once opened, the College of Judea and Samaria was recognized as a raging success. Students enrolled in the institution, although the First Intifada was then in process (1987). This fact caused decision makers to appreciate the potential of the college to attract "external" students and they began operating energetically to enlist students from within the Green Line (pre-1967 borders). As a result of these efforts, by the early 1990s the rate of students who did not originate from the West Bank reached ninety percent of all students of the college (Soen & Davidovitch, 2003).

The increase in the number of students and the strong wish to realize its vision placed decision makers at a crossroads: on the one hand, the physical conditions in Kedumim were not conducive to forming a "serious academic institution"; on the other, in Ariel it would be easier for the college to develop but this would come at the expense of the ideology guiding

the institution. Thus, the heads of the college were required to decide between two trends of development (Slonim & Slonim, 1997) – between preserving the religious character and the public designation of the college as a unique center for Land of Israel, Judaism, and Zionism studies, and developing the academic designation of the college as an extensive institution combining applied disciplines (Goldstein, 2005).

To begin with, the college intended to establish itself as a regional school attracting mainly residents of the West Bank. However, in time it seemed that this would limit the college's activities and prevent it from fully realizing its vision. Accordingly, **a decision was made to open a pre-academic preparatory program and vocational training studies and offer them to students coming from within the Green Line.** The preparatory program was opened in the town of Ariel, which became the scientific center – teaching courses in computers, management, computer engineering, and electronics (Newsletter of the Regional Colleges of Israel, 1994). Kedumim continued to serve as the "ideological" spiritual center, where Land of Israel studies, Jewish literature and thought, psychology, and education, were taught.

The heads of the college were conflicted as to the nature of the institution and its designation – public or academic, specializing or comprehensive, religious or general, in Kedumim or in Ariel. There was a concern that developing the college (opening its gates to the general population and varying the fields of study) would come at the price of losing its uniqueness as a national Zionist college. The question was whether the effort to attract more and more students was compatible with the aspiration to establish a "Zionist Weizmann Institute" in the West Bank? (Yigal Cohen Orgad, in: Zelikovski-Katz, 2010). Ultimately, the decision reached was to **leave Kedumim and build up a base in Ariel**. In 1990 all activity, academic and administrative, moved to Ariel, based on a science center as a foundation for developing the city and the region. The move to Ariel marked a retreat from the major orientation of nurturing "a spiritual bond with the Land of Israel" and full adoption of the expansion orientation urged by Yigal Cohen Orgad and others. All this while **opening the gates of the college to students from within the Green Line as well as to secular Jews and Arabs.** In fact, after the move to Ariel the religious issue, conspicuous among the population of students and disciplines in the first years, "was no longer relevant" (Yehuda Friedlander, in: Zelikovski-Katz, 2010).

These decisions, made in the first years of the institution's operation, were fundamental decisions that laid the foundations for future years. According to the research literature on decision making, this style may be typified as the mixed scanning approach (Etzioni, 1967). This approach combines several strategies and claims that one's decisions are comprised of two parts: a fundamental (basic) decision and a secondary decision. The fundamental decision is a strategic decision with long-term significance, which one usually makes carefully (for example using the optimization method: Young, 1966), while the significance of secondary decisions derived from the fundamental decisions is more misleading and therefore they are usually made less carefully (for example using the acceptable method: Simon, 1976).

Etzioni claims that this mix of several strategies is compatible with the need of democratic governments and organizations required to change their current policy and operate according to the following order: at first they examine all the relevant alternatives and analyze their

advantages and disadvantages, until eventually choosing one of them as the best alternative for the organization or the country. The decision made is a fundamental decision, a strategic decision reached by optimization (focusing on the question – **What** is the best course of action?). Further on, decision makers will focus on the choice made and examine how to implement it in practice (focusing on the questions – **When? How?**). In the case of the College of Judea and Samaria, the board of trustees outlined a strategic course for development of the organization and determined that the institution should become a university in the future. This decision was a milestone that served as a foundation for future secondary decisions on questions such as – What is the schedule for completing this process? What is the most appropriate course? In secondary decisions, in contrast to fundamental decisions, leaders of the institution demonstrated a more flexible approach in order to achieve or realize the fundamental decisions. It was clear to decisions makers that leaving Kedumim and recruiting students from the entire population were an essential condition for the institution's growth and increase in numbers. At that early stage they understood the principle of capitalist economics, that it is necessary to increase the demand in order to strengthen the existence and force of the institution in practice. This decision can also be associated with the fact that the founding group was composed almost entirely of academics with rich administrative experience in the establishment of academic institutions. Having been part of the establishment and construction of other Israeli universities they knew that in order to establish an academic institution in Israel it is necessary to act first and only then deliberate on the need or lack of need for additional Israeli universities (for more on this topic see: Davidovitch, 2013).

BETWEEN STRATEGY, MISSION, AND VISION

Once the vision had been designed, goals were set, secondary decisions made, and after eight years of activity the College of Judea and Samaria was awarded the status of a "regional college" under the auspices of Bar Ilan University. The main benefit of becoming a regional college was that it was now funded by the College Division in the Ministry of Education. Nonetheless, although the college was established in order to fulfill regional needs, it was probably not a strictly regional college as in practice it fulfilled countrywide needs of the entire population (Davidovitch, 2005). The academic pattern of conduct and development of the College of Judea and Samaria as well indicates that it was not strictly a regional college. Moreover, the relations between the university and the college during the period of patronage were perceived differently by each. The university strictly maintained the patronage arrangement and its rules. The college, however, tried to conduct itself and to develop independently and with no consideration for the limitations imposed by the university's patronage. The college continued to make its own strategic decisions, even at the price of deviating from the limits of academic patronage and in an attempt to create a bond between its prospective views and its vision of becoming a university.

The college opened autonomous study programs and gradually began receiving recognition from the Council for Higher Education in Judea and Samaria (CHEJS). In contrast to the curriculum in the college's first days, in which Land of Israel, Zionism, and Judaism studies received prime place in accordance with the college's fundamental goals, **development of the study programs during the period of academic patronage was characterized by a decisive emphasis on disciplines of applied science** as the basis for research activity. By opening these programs the college expressed its intention to exist independently and to reach a significance presence on Israel's map of higher education. In those years, the activities of

the College of Judea and Samaria became institutionalized and diverse, in an attempt to provide a response to the national, economic, and social need for developing higher education. **The college opened unique programs, not only "pen and paper disciplines" common in regional colleges rather also those requiring investment in academic and research infrastructure.**

In 1990 **the College established a research authority** in order to develop its applied and basic research. In its first years, the authority made efforts to **absorb new immigrant scientists** from the former Soviet Union, in what was described as "[…] a Nachshon-like jump into the fields of science and engineering with their quality key faculty" (Letter from Yuval Ne'eman to Amos Altschuler, 2006). The large wave of immigration from the Soviet Union in the 1990s was identified by leaders of the college as a window of opportunity for development. Scientists were absorbed gradually in a process that took several years, and many resources were invested in training scientists first as lecturers and then as researchers (Documents of the Ariel University Center of Samaria, 1996). New immigrant scientists took a major part in the foundation of the academic departments and in research activities. Indeed, 20% of the university's academic faculty is composed of scientists who immigrated from the CIS over the past twenty years (most joined the Faculty of Natural Sciences and the Faculty of Engineering). Research indicates that the relative contribution of immigrant scientists to the college's research output ranges from 19% to 28% in the various disciplines (Davidovitch, Sinuany-Stern, & Soen, 2009).

In the years when the college was occupied with expansion of its academic faculty and diversifying its study programs, demands for higher education in Israel changed. The status of colleges was enhanced following an amendment to the Council for Higher Education Law (amendment no. 10, 1995), called the "Colleges Law". This law, certifying colleges to award academic degrees, created fertile ground for future developments. Leaders of the College of Judea and Samaria identified the changing trends and chose to refrain from limiting the number of students in non-professional disciplines that do not require special infrastructure. This decision made it possible to attract a high proportion of immigrant students and positioned the College of Judea and Samaria at the head of the list (second only to the Sapir College in Sderot) in the proportion of students of Ethiopian origin (Zemer, 2008). This decision was not without risk, as at first it was not clear whether Ariel would receive the same budget as other colleges considering its geographic location outside the Green Line. Nonetheless, its leaders chose to strive for a maximal increase in the number of students, understanding the power of a large institution. Finally, the CHE (Jerusalem) stated that it would recognize degrees approved by the CHEJS.

The research literature explains such risky decisions as a product of the well-rooted and well-established vision of an organization. When the vision is assimilated in the organization it provides motivation and makes it possible for decision makers to act even when there is a high degree of uncertainty (Chaffee, 1983). In the case of the College of Judea and Samaria, the compass was the ambition to become a significant public research institution on the map of higher education. One essential condition was recruiting researchers, and another was recruiting students. Despite the high investment and the risk involved in these decisions, it was obvious that a window of opportunity had opened but it was not clear how long it would last. The external conditions were suitable and it seemed to be the right time to "strike while

the iron is hot". The motivation for these decisions was a clear view of the college not in its current form but as it should be.

Over the years and as the college became stronger it strived to become independent and to leave the patronage of Bar Ilan University. In 2001, following a decision of the CHE to end the academic patronage arrangements of universities with regional colleges, the college received a "golden opportunity". It submitted a request to transform study programs held under the auspices of Bar-Ilan University into independent programs of the college. The fact that throughout the patronage the college had conducted itself as though it was independent, developing autonomous teaching and research activities, made it easier to reach independence and was another milestone in the vision of becoming a university. By 2006 all students were studying in autonomous programs operated by the college.

As part of the aspiration to become a university, and following the constitutional change that made it possible for Israeli colleges to open graduate programs (both academic and research oriented), in 2001, even before the college had completed its process of reaching autonomy, it submitted a request to open a graduate program in electrical engineering and electronics. Later on, other graduate programs[1] were opened and as recommended by the Altschuler Committee, once four graduate programs were operating the college received temporary recognition as a "university" for a period of five years.

The Altschuler Committee, after examining the activity of the institution for an entire year, including all aspects involved in its transformation to a university – academic activities, teaching and research, academic level, range of study programs, management facilities of the college, and future plans for development – decided that the College of Judea and Samaria was operating as a university in all respects, aside from independent supervision of doctoral students (which it was not authorized to perform by definition as a "college"). The committee stated that there was a justification for gradual recognition of the college as a university. At the first stage the recognition would be temporary and after sufficient academic development its final status would be discussed. In December 2012 final recognition was awarded and the College of Judea and Samaria became Israel's eighth university, Ariel University.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This analysis of the Israeli system of higher education versus the development of the College of Judea and Samaria shows that the transformation of the latter into a university is no coincidence. It was a combination of external decisions that formed the fertile ground for the growth of the institution with a series of courageous internal decisions by its leaders. The fact that it was the College of Judea and Samaria that charged forward and realized its vision is not, as some say, a product of its geographic location, rather the contrary. This location was another obstacle that had to be overcome in order for it to become a university. Unlike other institutions, the College of Judea and Samaria had to prove in a large number of committee appraisals that it was worthy of the title "university" (see Davidovitch, 2013). Despite the varied tests applied to the College of Judea and Samaria, it managed to pass them all with flying colors. The success is no coincidence – the college had planned for this day from its inception.

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[1] In social work, business administration, and psychology, after undergoing the academization process (approval and permission) of the Council for Higher Education Judea and Samaria and receiving the approval of the Council for Higher Education (Jerusalem).

The series of decisions reviewed above show that from the very first day the vision of becoming a university was the "beacon" that guided the college's leaders. From time to time the management was tested by its adherence and devotion to this vision – for example in the decision to move from Kedumim to Ariel; when opening the gates of the college to secular students from within the Green Line; when choosing study programs "unpopular" among colleges, that require a large investment of resources; when recruiting academic faculty from the USSR; when developing academic study programs with no restriction of the number of students even before the budget was assured; when accepting students from poor socioeconomic backgrounds, etc. **These decisions could have been made by any other Israeli institution at the time.** Moreover, we believe that other institutions would have found it easier to make such decisions as they did not have to cope with a political stigma and could obtain budgets more easily. Nonetheless, these decisions were not made elsewhere, they were made at the College of Judea and Samaria. The main issue is the complete faith with which the organization advanced toward its vision, even when circumstances seemed impossible. In this respect, the organization's success is similar to that of individuals throughout the history of the human race – people who persevered in their attempts to promote their dream even when those around them assured them that they were wrong to do so. The leaders of the College of Judea and Samaria didn't stop at dreaming rather remained awake to realize their dreams.

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