

Bilkent University

Strategic Plan

A World Class Academic Community®

2016

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Contents

Part I: Mision, Vision, and State of the University	6
1 Mission of Bilkent University	6
2 Vision: A World-Class Academic Community	7
2.1 Vision for Educational Excellence	7
2.2 Vision for Creative Activities	8
2.3 Vision for a World-Class Organization	9
3 State of the University	11
4 Global and Local Trends	12
5 Strategic Plan Studies and Priorities	14
5.1 Planning Process for the Strategic Plan	14
5.2 Strategic Priorities	15
Part II: Strategic Enablers and Action Plan	17
6 Educational Excellence	17
6.1 World-Class Students	17
6.1.1 Educated Professionals	17
6.1.2 Differential Levels of Capabilities and Accomplishments of Students	18
6.1.3 Science of Learning	20
6.1.4 Advanced Education & Training Programs	20
6.1.5 Graduate Education	20
6.1.6 English Language Proficiency	22
6.1.7 Ethics Education	23
6.1.8 Internationalization: Recruitment, Exchange Programs, and International Participation	24
6.2 World-Class Faculty	25
6.2.1 Faculty Recruitment	25
6.2.2 Hiring Process	26
6.2.3 Next-Generation Leadership	28
6.2.4 Faculty Development & Mentorship and Support	28

6.2.5	Annual Faculty Evaluations	29
6.2.6	Faculty Promotion Process	31
6.2.7	Teaching expectations	32
6.2.8	Teaching Skills	33
7	Creative Activities	34
7.1	Research	35
7.2	Research & Training Centers	37
8	World-Class Organization	37
8.1	Organization, Infrastructure and Operations	37
8.1.1	Governance	37
8.1.2	Budgets	38
8.1.3	Research Enterprise & Infrastructure	39
8.1.4	Organizational Infrastructure	40
8.1.5	Communications	41
8.1.6	Life on Campus	44
8.2	Engagement with Wider Society	45
8.2.1	Community	45
8.2.2	Business Outreach	46
8.2.3	Alumni	47
8.3	Resources	47
9	Summary Table of Action Plans	48

Foreword

Since its inception in 1984, Bilkent University has grown to become a model university, known for its innovative approaches and structure not only in Turkey but also around the world.

Now in its third decade, Bilkent faces numerous changes and challenges, many of which are formidable: laws governing higher education in Turkey, an increase in the number of state and nonprofit foundation universities in Turkey, a resurgence of demand for students around the world, an emphasis on rankings of universities, new technologies for education, and, as importantly, a rapid increase of knowledge in many fields. Many nations now view universities as an essential part of their economic engine, and are adjusting funding priorities and expectations accordingly.

Against this backdrop, Bilkent University has begun the process of re-evaluating its place in the world and developing a road map that will further its educational goals and vision. Through this process, we are addressing fundamental questions, i.e., How do we deliver the best educational opportunities to our current and future students? How do we make sure that our creative works will have high impact and contribute to the well being of the society in Turkey, in the region and the world? How can we accomplish our goals so that we continue our role as an innovative leader in higher education?

Bilkent's primary goal is to become a world-renowned university that attracts the best students, as well as outstanding faculty, researchers and visitors who collectively educate tomorrow's professionals, scholars and leaders. Our strategy is to focus on people, individually and as a community, attract and retain the best, and enable each to reach his or her potential. Guided by this goal and supported by our strategy, Bilkent University hopes to contribute to the solutions of problems facing our world today.

Accomplishing such noble goals, of course, requires resources. Our top priority will continue to be human resources, followed by physical and or-

ganizational resources. Recognizing that financial resources are the necessary enablers of a strong infrastructure, Bilkent has been structured by its founder, the late Professor İhsan Dođramacı, as a distinctive, financially self-sufficient university. The strategic plan outlined in this report is an attempt to continue his vision for Bilkent¹.

The plan has two parts. The first part describes the vision for Bilkent, essentially re-stating the vision of its founder the late Professor İhsan Dođramacı, followed by a brief summary of where we are, who our peers and other aspirational universities are, as well as strengths and weaknesses, external conditions, opportunities and challenges. Part I concludes with a description of the process used to develop the plan and outlines the long-term strategic priorities of the University. Part II of the report outlines more specific issues that have been raised during the planning process. While not all are necessarily strategic, they have to be addressed to continue progress towards the vision outlined in Part I. The second part of the report is designed to be updated more frequently than the first part and is mostly for internal use.

¹Many actions already have been taken in response to the needs identified and suggestions that were made during the strategic planning process, as noted in the document.

Part I: Mision, Vision, and State of the University

1 Mission of Bilkent University

Bilkent University was founded to provide an environment for learning and intellectual growth encompassing the sciences, technology, humanities and the arts to serve human welfare and to foster peace on earth.

Education at Bilkent is not simply a means to pursue a vocation, a career. Instead, it endeavors to nurture students in the way of thinking and of learning to learn. With its diverse educational programs, scientific and scholarly research endeavors, and artistic and cultural activities, Bilkent University aims to help students develop themselves as critical, analytical and independent thinkers and life-long learners, so that they may become the competent, creative, broad-minded, ethical and socially responsible leaders of tomorrow who will contribute to the advancement of humanity.

The educational philosophy of Bilkent University is founded on the premise that those who produce new knowledge also have the best potential to impart it. Our academic staff are exemplary, and scholarly research at Bilkent extends across a wide spectrum. From nanoscience and nanotechnology to political science, from electronics to economics, from fine arts to management and industrial engineering, from philosophy to computer engineering, and in many other areas of science, letters and the performing arts, Bilkent University provides a uniquely integrated environment.

2 Vision: A World-Class Academic Community

Bilkent is an educational community that includes Bilkent University, preK-12 schools that grant International Baccalaureates degrees, the music school, and a renowned Symphony Orchestra. Our vision for Bilkent is to be known as a world-class academic community of students, faculty, and staff who develop and implement processes and best practices to:

Educate tomorrow’s global citizens who conceive, lead and contribute to activities and solve problems for the well-being of humanity, and

Create and disseminate art, ideas, and knowledge that enrich humanity and contribute to the quality of life in the nation, region and the world.

The key to realizing this vision rests with the individuals that make up the community and the stakeholders who benefit from Bilkent’s successes. Together, as a community, these individuals and stakeholders will work to ensure that processes are in place to implement the decisions and activities needed to move the University forward. We also will re-examine administrative structures, as well as authorities and responsibilities accorded, to support the strategic vision of each Faculty and School.

We also envision Bilkent continuing as a financially independent institution. An important element of our strategy is to ensure sustainability of Bilkent as a leading university that for the most part depends on its own resources.

2.1 Vision for Educational Excellence

We envision our graduates to be educated professionals. By “educated” we mean our graduates will be able to critically think about and easily discuss, both in English and in their native language, topics ranging from

fermions to Paganini, RNA to Rothko, and Shakespeare to poverty, and other global challenges. By “professional” we mean individuals with deep knowledge and high level of competency in their chosen fields, who can pose and solve problems, analyze issues they have not encountered before, and who are able to think critically and creatively.

The opportunities for students to develop such attributes will be offered through varied attractive platforms that are integrated into the formal curricula, as well as the “informal curricula” through which learning takes place outside the classroom. The latter include skills of learning, inventiveness and creativity, leadership and collaboration, and communication.

To complement and strengthen these opportunities, faculty will be provided with support in the science of learning, skills of teaching, psychology of communication, and innovative teaching methods. Educational opportunities will be strengthened through improved infrastructure, collaborative teaching, integrated knowledge and incorporation of grand-challenge problems to curricula and classes, where appropriate. Opportunities will also arise through seminars, debate clubs, and professional clubs.

Measure of success will be the degree to which Bilkent graduates are sought after and how soon they rise to higher levels of responsibilities. An equally important measure will be Bilkent’s appeal to world-class students, both undergraduate and graduate, and to accomplished faculty candidates.

2.2 Vision for Creative Activities

We envision that through their art, design, discoveries, ideas, literature and scholarship, Bilkent faculty and students will accomplish Bilkent’s mission.

Bilkent University has a dynamic academic environment that encompasses diverse disciplines, each of which can leverage another’s accomplishments and strengths. Bilkent is enriched with having targeted collaborative research activities as well as curiosity-driven, single-investigator discoveries

and other creative works. We need to support and strengthen these activities while seeking new research opportunities.

Looking to the future, we see a convergence of arts, humanities, social sciences, and literature with design, physical sciences, life sciences, and engineering and their interaction with laws and politics. Bilkent is uniquely positioned to set the agenda for such collaborative research for next-generation researchers who are curiosity-driven, need-motivated and nature-inspired.

We also see Bilkent playing an important role in meeting global challenges such as energy, environment, water, sustainability, poverty and economy. Faculty will be invited to develop processes by which we can develop new approaches and platforms to increase Bilkent's contributions through leadership. We envision the development of new sustainable mechanisms, such as centers and institutes, through which Bilkent can contribute expertise in areas such as innovation and entrepreneurship.

2.3 Vision for a World-Class Organization

Our vision of the Bilkent community is a rich set of students, faculty and staff who bring the highest level of intellectual discourse to the University. To continue on the path set down by our founder, our goal is to attract, develop, and retain students, faculty and staff who are, or aspire to be, world-class. To achieve such a vision, we recognize the need to create and sustain a supportive ecosystem of operations, processes, and infrastructure that enables clear communication among all parties, open rules of governance, a collaborative environment, and suitable recognition of accomplishments and contributions.

Mentorship for professional and academic advancement that already exists in some units will be made available across the University. Criteria and processes related to promotion and hiring will continue to be better communicated. Departments and Schools that struggle to hire and retain world-class faculty will be provided assistance and schooled in best practices.

Recruitment of undergraduate students will be emphasized, particularly in those areas where student enrollments need improvement. Schools, Faculties, and Departments will be supported in recruitment activities. Undergraduate student residence halls, life on campus, advising, curricula, and extracurricular activities are part of essential information for recruitment, and will be conveyed through published and internet-based channels.

Recruitment and retention of graduate students and post-doctoral researchers are part of a worldwide hunt for talent. Bilkent envisions attracting the best who will bring new ideas and approaches to our academic programs and creative enterprises.

A world-class organization needs world-class academic leadership. We envision providing opportunities for development of next-generation leaders, along with training and a viable means of assessment.

Recruitment, development, and retention of administrative talent are also essential for a world-class community. Periodic training programs are already available for staff. Many of the administrative operations serve the community admirably well. There will be mechanisms introduced to identify exceptions for additional improvement.

3 State of the University

Bilkent is a research-intensive university that provides excellent educational opportunities to students. As the first nonprofit foundation (private) university in Turkey, it offers scholarships to attract top undergraduates from Turkey and increasingly from around the world. Of the 13,000 students that attend Bilkent, approximately one-half receive substantial financial support from the university.

Bilkent has a unique funding model, given that it owns numerous companies that comprise its endowment. While Bilkent has flexibility and financial independence, as all universities in Turkey, several aspects of its governance are subject to rules issued by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE).

Within Turkey, Bilkent is in a class by itself in terms of research and creative activities, the education it provides, and the manner by which the university operates. Bilkent has competition for students from several universities in Turkey that have perceived advantages of location, size, and accomplishments. However, with 25% of our faculty and 8% of our students coming from forty different countries, Bilkent aspires to become a “World University.”

In terms of size, areas of emphasis, and international student population, Bilkent is viewed at a level between (351-400), as compared to universities with similar or slightly better rankings, such as Times Higher Education (THE) and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS): U. of Science and Technology of China (201-250); Tokyo Institute of Technology, Japan (201-250); National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan (251- 300); Technion, Israel (301-350); and Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, India (351-400).

Bilkent is not directly competing with these universities for students, faculty, or resources. Also, given its unique funding model, it is difficult to identify comparable “aspirational” universities. Bilkent’s environment is completely different from that of, say, Carnegie Mellon, Columbia, Cornell,

Stanford and others.

4 Global and Local Trends

Trends and external factors that adversely affect Bilkent's aspirations are both local and global.

- ▶ Intrusive and pervasive rules and laws governing higher education in Turkey that are designed to improve university processes, but in fact, hamper flexibility, innovation and improvements at Bilkent and other similar universities.
- ▶ Domestic or international rankings of universities, based on quantitative measures, often fail to adequately measure Bilkent goals and accomplishments.
- ▶ Adverse news and perceived trends in the political arena affect recruitment of faculty members from outside of Turkey.
- ▶ Uncertainty in the Turkish economy prevents long-term financial planning.
- ▶ There is the appearance that governmental R&D funds are focused primarily on development and support for industry rather than basic research, which is Bilkent's forte. Such focus causes a disconnect between researchers at universities like Bilkent, who pursue innovative ideas, and funding agencies that determine research agendas.
- ▶ There is a proliferation of universities in Turkey. The number of universities in Turkey increased from twenty-seven state universities in 1985, when Bilkent was established, to 109 state universities and sixty-nine private foundation universities, of which Bilkent was the first.
- ▶ There is a dramatic change in demographics, with a decided shift to a younger population. Currently, 25% of Turkey's population is fourteen

years old and under, and 42% of the population is twenty-five years old and under.

- ▶ Worldwide competition for talented faculty and students continues to increase.
- ▶ Quality of secondary education has dramatically decreased. English language skills of incoming students are at all-time low levels.
- ▶ New technology-based approaches to education, mostly in the USA, offer new opportunities in terms of knowledge availability and dissemination.
- ▶ Developments in technology, such as visualization and virtual reality, are not yet widely used by educational institutions.
- ▶ Advances in science and engineering knowledge continue to be deep and wide, but their integration to education and research pose new challenges and opportunities.
- ▶ Proliferation of research publication outlets make it even more difficult for researchers and universities to have an impact and to measure the significance of their findings.
- ▶ The location of the University is considered by some to be a disadvantage (Ankara vs. Istanbul).
- ▶ The relative youth of Bilkent, as compared to established universities with hereditary wealth and historic reputation, is considered to be a disadvantage.
- ▶ Faculty turnover places an extra burden on smaller academic departments, and the loss of teaching and administrative personnel creates stress for remaining employees.

5 Strategic Plan Studies and Priorities

5.1 Planning Process for the Strategic Plan

Bilkent University launched a strategic planning process in December 2011 designed to ultimately transition the university from its founding “startup” model to its stated goal of becoming a world-class center of learning and research. The preceding sections of this document regarding Bilkent’s vision, the challenges that lie ahead, and strategic remedies were enunciated as part of this process.

The first phase of the strategic planning process, from December 2011 to December 2013, was initiated by the University Administration. Four working groups comprised of University stakeholders - faculty, student representatives, staff and alumni - each issued a white paper and a set of recommendations on Teaching & Learning, Research, Quality of Life on Campus, and Wider Engagement with Society. Generally, these white papers focused on University-wide directions and strategies rather than specific strategies for each Faculty and Department.

The second phase of the strategic process, between July 2014 and January 2016, focused on Faculty and Departments. The Provost met with each Dean, and members of the Provost’s Office visited each department to learn about their concerns and suggestions. Then each Faculty and Department prepared a strategic plan specific to their respective areas considering questions that were prepared by the Provost’s Office.

The four white papers and the strategic plans developed by each unit were used as a basis to develop the following strategic priorities and the enabling actions described in Part II.

5.2 Strategic Priorities

- ▶ Strategically, the highest priority is the need for significant additional financial resources. Additional funds are required to support the priorities listed below and, more importantly, to realize the vision outlined in this plan.
- ▶ Projections of how Bilkent will look like in 5 to 15 years should be made on a continual basis to prevent undesirable deviations from the strategic plan. In particular, the delicate balance between the financial viability of serving a large undergraduate population of primarily tuition-paying undergraduate students and the financial burden of maintaining world-class research centers must be maintained to prevent the university from losing the value of its brand name.
- ▶ The need and strong desire for institutionalizing the University is often expressed, but actions have been slow to follow this goal. Part of the stated reasons stem from lack of a rich cadre of individuals to take on leadership roles on the campus. Centralized decision making without adequate communications also contributes to the slow progress. By its very nature, decisions and many of the activities related to the governance of the university, are conducted by few, and on a part-time basis, since all have other faculty duties. The University should prepare plans to develop the next generation leaders.
- ▶ International presence for Bilkent is another unavoidable next step in becoming a world-class university. Strategies should be developed to determine the type and venues for such presence.
- ▶ Bilkent brand should be both protected and enhanced. Bilkent graduates are perhaps the most important protectors and enhancers of Bilkent brand. Undergraduate education should be reviewed and enhanced with a core curriculum that provides an even better education to future undergraduates who have evolving attributes.

- ▶ Part of being a world-class university is having one or more highly visible programs that attract faculty, students and visitors from around the world. Having even one such program benefits an entire campus and others are able to build on it. Bilkent University should consider targeting, at least, one such program.
- ▶ There is a need to attract senior faculty in many departments who can fill in leadership roles at the University and also attract others. Attracting each such individual is almost a project itself and requires investing time and resources.
- ▶ Because of its modest resources, Bilkent should focus on its unusual, perhaps even unique, aspects to leverage external resources to the university's advantage. These include its economic impact in Ankara and Turkey, Bilkent Symphony, Bilkent high schools, and other initiatives. The success of the "Scholarship for Girls" is one such most recent example of how effective such initiatives can be.
- ▶ Finally, Bilkent should consider if there can be a synergistic collaboration between the Bilkent Holding companies and the university at a greater level than that exists today that can add value to both.

Part II: Strategic Enablers and Action Plan

This section describes recommendations for Bilkent to become a world-class academic community. They should be viewed as the groundwork necessary for the more strategic steps. They are grouped according to each part of the vision described in Part I.

Consistent with our vision of focusing on the individuals that make up our community, this part of the strategic plan addresses needs and recommended actions for students, faculty and staff of Bilkent community.

6 Educational Excellence

6.1 World-Class Students

Bilkent’s strategy for undergraduate education considers the following two questions that any other university would also consider: Why should a student with top exam scores choose Bilkent? Why should a student pay to attend Bilkent?

In other words, what does Bilkent offer to students above and beyond what they can receive at other universities? How do we provide every student the education necessary for the global citizens of tomorrow?

6.1.1 Educated Professionals

Preparing Bilkent students as educated professionals will require periodic re-examination of curricula to ensure that students continue to acquire a deep knowledge of the discipline within a given curriculum. Each curriculum should encourage creativity, innovation, and learning while reinforcing the use of the English language.

The “informal curriculum” through which learning takes place outside the classroom is another factor that differentiates universities. It includes

activities that inspire competency in a student's chosen field and also provides educational opportunities to become a world citizen, or even world leader. These may include organizations such as debate clubs, informal etiquette courses, and seminar series organized by students.

Preparation of educated professionals requires emphasis on all forms of communication, including the psychology and technology associated with it. A core curriculum that incorporates essential elements of an education required for a professional can help achieve this goal.

Bilkent at present addresses this goal, and promotes critical thinking, through its programs such as Cultures, Civilizations and Ideas. However, there is a need to strengthen and broaden this effort through a core curriculum required of all students.

Action Plan: *A working group will be appointed to develop actionable recommendations for a core curriculum for all Faculties that will enhance the preparation of Bilkent graduates. Recommendations are also sought on how to enhance inventive, innovative and entrepreneurial capabilities of students through formal and informal curricula and how to overcome difficulties brought about by second-language education. Considerations will include means of making it easier to introduce new courses without having to "shop" them to be included in various elective lists.*

6.1.2 Differential Levels of Capabilities and Accomplishments of Students

A consequence of Bilkent's scholarship program is a mix of students in a given class who demonstrate distinctly different levels of success at the entrance examination. Some students also face discernable difficulties in classwork, primarily due to the lack of adequate secondary-school preparation. These are usually entry-level courses, such as some in CS and Intro to Economics, as well as English language proficiency courses. Having many students repeating the same courses is a drain on the students and uni-

versity resources and needs to be addressed through innovative approaches. Furthermore, practices such as exclusion of a previous low grade from GPA calculation may encourage students to drop, withdraw from or repeat courses.

Bilkent's policy of having students from different Departments in the same required classes is founded on the belief that exposure to diverse backgrounds and interests contribute to their learning. However, this practice also contributes to and accentuates the differential capabilities of the student groups.

Action Plan: *Examine observed adverse consequences of having students with differential capabilities in the same classes. One example is Introduction to Economics.*

Action Plan: *Each Faculty will identify the courses that pose difficulties to large numbers of students and determine the root causes and possible approaches for mitigation, e.g., remedial support.*

Action Plan: *Develop University working groups to identify support mechanisms, particularly use of technology such as iTunes Academy or Khan Academy engaging COMD and other FADA faculty with those from the discipline of the courses. Approaches may also include weekend boot camps.*

Action Plan: *A task force will be formed to consider the need for special programs for high (and low) achievers, how to implement them, and what consequences such programs may have. The task force would also determine if it is suitable to have multi-level courses as practiced elsewhere.*

Finally, it is suggested that, under the present system, some students may graduate without ever having met with an advisor.

Action Plan: *Faculty representatives will examine the role of advising as practiced and determine if stronger advising, mentorship, and/or apprenticeship programs are warranted.*

6.1.3 Science of Learning

As student profiles change, technologies advance, and access to information becomes easier, how students learn takes on a special significance. For an effective education, a better understanding of the science of learning is thought to be an important step.

Action Plan: *A task force of faculty will be formed to recommend what actions, if any, Bilkent should take regarding the science of learning.*

6.1.4 Advanced Education & Training Programs

Bilkent also provides advanced education and training in a wide-range of disciplines. Some of these programs are designed to educate teachers and future faculty and others target specific professions. A large segment of graduate education is associated with research and creative activities.

Action Plan: *Develop a plan for a series of self-sustaining Master's and Executive Master's Programs similar to those in Intellectual Property Law, Economics and Law, and Energy Policy.*

There is a perceived need for faculty at High Schools and Universities in the fields of Education and Philosophy.

Action Plan: *Develop a PhD program in Philosophy with the intent of educating future faculty members for universities in Turkey.*

6.1.5 Graduate Education

Graduate education, particularly at the PhD level, has become an intrinsic part of the research enterprise at most universities around the world. This trend risks shifting focus from educating PhDs to exclusively conducting research.

While approximately one-third of PhD graduates in science, technology,

engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields join academe in the USA, the ratio is thought to be higher in Turkey. Of particular interest to Bilkent is the high ratio of PhD students in US universities drawn from other countries including Turkey, and this ratio is also increasing in European and several other Asian universities. An immediate consequence of this trend is that Bilkent faces stiff competition for the best graduate students from Turkey and elsewhere. Further, students are inclined to obtain an MS degree at Bilkent and then apply for PhD studies in the US or elsewhere.

Bilkent's long-term strategy is to be known for its world-class PhD education and research activities and accomplishments, even if in select areas. This, in turn, will attract graduate students, researchers, and funding. For the near term, recruitment and retention of graduate students must be improved, and provide these students with the possibility of pursuing their own research agenda with strong mentorship. At the same time, new research models that do not wholly depend on graduate students must be considered.

Action Plan: *A task force will be formed to develop best practices for recruitment and retention of graduate students in the near term and make recommendations to Provost's Office.*

What can Bilkent do to mitigate the real and perceived disadvantages compared with top universities in the world to attract graduate students? Can we level the playing field in our favor by offering graduate students educational opportunities rarely found elsewhere?

Action Plan: *A task force will be charged with examining formal and informal curricula to offer particularly for doctoral-level graduate students paving their path towards Renaissance PhDs.*

Advanced graduate courses are essential to research and further thinking of subject matter, whereas graduate level introductory courses, with coordination among department, can also help to encourage collaboration among the disciplines. To date, however, low critical numbers of students preclude offering some of the advanced courses on a regular basis.

Action Plan: *The Provost's Office will appoint a task force to review and develop guidelines for "course budgets," the number of courses offered by departments.*

Time to complete PhD degrees varies across the University, with several programs requiring an excessive amount of time.

Action Plan: *The Provost's Office is reviewing individual programs and their respective quality vs. time-to-completion relationship to make recommendations to reduce the times.*

Increasingly, post-doctoral research fellows are considered as an integral part of research programs. While some view such positions as stepping-stones for academic positions, others choose to continue on a research track. Bilkent needs to develop policies to accommodate post-doctoral researchers in both tracks.

Action Plan: *The Provost's Office will develop policies that make it attractive for post-doctoral researchers to choose research programs at Bilkent in which they can develop their skills for academic careers.*

6.1.6 English Language Proficiency

A general decline is observed over the years in the English language proficiency of incoming students, resulting in a higher proportion of first-year students who do not pass the basic English test and attend the Bilkent University School of English Language (BUSEL). Further, an increasingly higher proportion of students in BUSEL take longer to pass the certification exams to begin their university education.

Anecdotal evidence based on their performance in the University suggests that oral communication is less than adequate. Students also report anecdotally that their time spent in BUSEL has an adverse effect on their subsequent academic performance.

English language standards at Bilkent are known to be demanding. Our

goal is to increase these standards even to higher levels since high proficiency in spoken and written English is essential in our increasingly globalized and connected world.

Action Plan: A task-force will be appointed to review the present approach at BUSEL and make recommendations for improvements or alternative ideas. Specifically, suggestions are sought on innovative and effective means of teaching/learning the English language and communication.

Action Plan: A data-driven study of the correlation, if any, between unsuccessful students and other parameters such as disciplines they choose or entrance examination scores, and take action accordingly.

6.1.7 Ethics Education

In response to cases reported and concerns expressed anecdotally in media and among public, Bilkent University is considering studies on its causes as well as how to reduce such ethical violations in academia across the country. Changes in CoHE regulations for handling such cases also make it burdensome for faculty to take disciplinary actions. One approach is to reduce the opportunities for cheating and plagiarism to the extent possible.

Action Plan: *Establish a working group to make recommendations on how to prepare examinations/questions that would not be amenable to cheating.*

Action Plan: *Consider constructive alternative measures, such as requiring homework and oral examinations as a penalty for cheating.*

Action Plan: *Consider classes for students on stress management, how to study, conflict resolution, and other relevant topics.*

There is some concern that cheating cases are not treated uniformly across the University. Two students accused of the same infraction may not

always receive the same disciplinary action.

Action Plan: *We suggest short training sessions to brief faculty members involved in disciplinary actions.*

6.1.8 Internationalization: Recruitment, Exchange Programs, and International Participation

Bilkent has agreements with a large number of universities around the world that focus primarily on student exchange. These programs are reasonably popular with Bilkent students, who outnumber the incoming exchange students. It may serve us better to develop strong relationships with a select few universities with a focus on scholarly activities of faculty members, which should then attract student participation as well.

Exchange programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels can bring added value by increasing the diversity of viewpoints in the classroom and on campus as well as preparing global ambassadors for Bilkent.

Action Plan: *The University will develop a plan for recruitment of exchange students.*

Bilkent has started a recruitment program to increase our international student population. It is worthwhile to examine the consequences of increasing international students not only in classes, but also on campus life. Similarly, it would be useful to provide classes that are particular to Turkey, e.g., research projects involving Ottoman archives to international students.

A common concern relates to a sudden and unexpected increase of international students in certain departments. The University would be better served to balance the number of new international students with the quotas prescribed to the Departments.

Action Plan: *The University will develop a plan for the recruitment of international students with diverse backgrounds and interests.*

Finally, participation of Bilkent students in international contests and

exhibitions can help increase visibility of Bilkent internationally.

Action Plan: *Each Faculty will be asked to compile a list of international student competitions and exhibitions that they find suitable for their students and develop plans and budgets for such activities.*

Bilkent sends students to other universities, particularly in North America, through exchange agreements that expect exchange of students in both directions. If students from partner universities do not choose to come to Bilkent over a period, the agreements become null and void, preventing Bilkent students from attending said universities as exchange students.

Action Plan: *Bilkent University will explore means to provide meaningful and substantive international experience to Bilkent students.*

6.2 World-Class Faculty

6.2.1 Faculty Recruitment

Faculty members represent the intellectual strength of the university. As Bilkent continues to add new disciplines and research areas to its portfolio, new faculty members will be recruited. Also, as many of the faculty who joined Bilkent in its early days begin to retire, plans need to be in place for their replacements.

Recruitment will focus primarily on the research and creative capabilities faculty candidates can bring to the University. The University will also recruit teaching-track faculty for their excellence in teaching and for their contributions to educational endeavors of the University. Bilkent's recruitment strategy will be three-fold:

- Recent graduates for junior faculty positions;
- Senior faculty members with commensurate accomplishments and those who can assist in the development of new programs, mentor younger

faculty or provide leadership; and

- Short-term visiting faculty who can contribute to our programs through short courses, master classes, or research and creative projects.

Action Plan: *Each Faculty and Department will have a continuous recruitment plan that identifies potential senior recruitments, universities where successful faculty candidates are educated, and means of attracting candidates to Bilkent. The Provost's Office will work with each Faculty on hiring of faculty members, particularly senior faculty. These plans will be reviewed at least annually in June.*

The need for training in Turkish at the faculty of Law makes it difficult, and in some cases impractical, to recruit international faculty candidates, and yet Bilkent aspires to have an international presence in the field of law as well.

Action Plan: *Bilkent University will support the Faculty for Law School by sending top graduates to select universities abroad to receive PhD degrees with the expectation of returning to Bilkent as faculty members.*

Action Plan: *Bilkent University will send selected Bilkent Law School PhD graduates to selected universities abroad for two years. These graduates will pursue post-doctoral research work and gain teaching experience needed to bring different methods of teaching law to Bilkent University.*

6.2.2 Hiring Process

Hiring decisions traditionally have been managed in the Provost's Office, usually between a dean (or, in many instances, a department chair) and an Associate Provost, who prepares and communicates the final confidential offer to the candidate.

Three primary considerations go into hiring new faculty: the needs of

the department, the quality of the candidate, and the budgetary constraints. Discussions with departments and faculties suggest a perceived lack of clarity on how many faculty members should be in a particular department. A more contentious issue relates to the differences in judgment about the quality of candidates.

Significant variation in recruitment practices exists among the departments. While many of the units are able to recruit and attract topflight candidates, there are units that are not able to do so. A common scenario is to select the “best” from among applicants without the benefit of a serious international search.

Action Taken: *To assist departments in identifying and recruiting faculty candidates and developing new faculty, the University has developed a process. Annually, early in the summer, the Provost’s Office meets with each department chair and dean and together they establish the numbers and expected attributes of faculty positions to be recruited. While there may always be unexpected opportunities or needs, these annual plans should expedite the search process.*

Many departments are in acute need of senior faculty who can provide vision and guidance to the department and mentor younger faculty. In such cases, hiring of senior faculty is given priority and, if possible, hiring of junior faculty is postponed. Once senior faculty are hired, they may provide input in hiring of junior faculty.

Action Plan: *Restart the orientation program that used to be in place for new faculty to introduce them to the university and their department is suggested. Orientation will include information on promotion, mentorship, teaching expectations, and resources. A welcome reception for new faculty is organized at the “Rector’s Residence” (Building 49) in early Fall to acquaint new faculty with administration and other colleagues.*

The International Center already gives support to international fac-

ulty and guides them in their application for the Higher education CoHE-mandated Docent title for associate professorship.

6.2.3 Next-Generation Leadership

Bilkent will provide opportunities and encouragement to faculty members who show interest and ability in becoming academic leaders. As individuals move through committee memberships and chair positions, more experienced faculty can help mentor them. Balance must be maintained between presenting opportunities to (particularly younger) faculty and burdening them with “committee” work, which is not the intent.

Part of the plan for academic excellence is to fill leadership positions for shorter periods in an effort to bring in and circulate new ideas.

Action Plan: *Appointments for all administrative positions will be made for three years and renewable following a review that includes feedback from peers.*

6.2.4 Faculty Development & Mentorship and Support

Hiring faculty and helping them to reach their potentials are the most important tasks and investments of a university. Each Department and Faculty needs to prepare a plan for each new faculty recruit to reach his or her goal. These plans should be reviewed by a senior faculty, if available, who can act as a mentor. Often, department chairs or deans will fulfill this role. Annual Faculty Reviews do not adequately address individualized goal plans for faculty, but do provide formal feedback from the Provost’s Office to all faculty.

Action Plan: *Each department, with the support of the dean or chair or mentor, develops a career plan for faculty members at the time of their hiring. These plans will identify their goals and what support they need to accomplish these goals. Similarly, each Assistant and Associate Professor will also be encouraged to prepare a career plan. Departments need to include in such plans types of course assignments and expected departmental committee work. These plans will be reviewed by the respective deans and the Provost's Office, and will then be used as part of the Annual Faculty Review to help monitor and assist in their progress.*

Action Plan: *The Provost's Office will work with the Deans to develop a sample template for career plans. These plans may be tailored to meet specific needs.*

6.2.5 Annual Faculty Evaluations

Annual Faculty evaluations are conducted jointly by the Dean, Department Chair, the Provost, and Associate Provosts. The purpose of the evaluation process is to become acquainted with faculty members' activities and accomplishments, recommend an intra-rank promotion (with a step increase in salary) if they are eligible, and discuss those faculty members who exhibit prolonged inactivity in their scholarly and creative pursuits and performance and teaching performance of faculty. Department Chairs and deans have the responsibility of communicating the Provost's Office's evaluations of Annual Faculty Surveys (AFSs) with each faculty member, with particular attention given to those with inactivity.

For a segment of the faculty, the annual evaluations and subsequent short letter are mysterious and somewhat meaningless. In part, they find the letters pro forma and unresponsive, particularly in those cases where the faculty member has included comments and recommendations.

Action Plan: *Now, more care is exercised in trying to align the letters sent following the AFSs according to expectations from the promotion process. To this end, AFS letters have been more diversified. It seems that there is still room for improvement. [ACTIONS TAKEN WHERE SUITABLE AND RESPONDED TO EACH FACULTY.]*

Action Plan: *Investigate the possibility of personalizing AFS letters. At a minimum, there should be a response to those who have taken the time to include comments in the AFS forms. [COMPLETED]*

Action Plan: *AFS forms will be web-based effective Fall 2016. Instructions will be developed by the Provost's Office for implementation by the Bilkent Computing Center. [Completed]*

Bilkent traditionally has emphasized creative output of faculty for intra-rank promotion (see below) and annual merit raises that are awarded separately from the inflation-adjusted increases. As in most well-regarded universities, Bilkent ties merit raises to quantity and quality of faculty publications as measured by the importance of the publication determined from various metrics. Proliferation of publication outlets as well as reported manipulation of simple metrics are thought to weaken the correlation between the quality or value of publications and their outlets. A byproduct of this result occasionally appears during the promotion process during which experts in the field examine a candidate's publications.

Action Plan: *The Provost's Office will examine evaluation methods of faculty members' creative activities at other similar universities and make recommendations.*

There is concern that the annual evaluation of research and creative activities may have an adverse effect on significant potential accomplishments, such as books, that typically require more time.

Action Plan: *The Provost's Office will develop an evaluation plan regarding creative activities of faculty and make recommendations to better balance accomplishments and activities including retroactive recognition of such accomplishments under unusual circumstances.*

6.2.6 Faculty Promotion Process

1.2.6.1. Intra-Rank Promotion (Step Increases) There are two types of promotion at Bilkent. Aside from the well-known promotion from one rank to the next, there are intra-rank promotions, called step increases within a rank. Each rank has five steps. The practice has been to award the step promotion during the annual evaluation based on advances a faculty member has made in the previous one or two years, with weight placed on creative and scholarly activities. Lack of written criteria or guidelines may have given the process an appearance of informality. Because step promotions are separate from regular rank promotions, there have been occasions where the “message” received through step promotions has been contradicted by the regular promotion decisions.

Action Plan: *The Provost's Office will develop a process for step increases.*

1.2.6.2 Promotion to the Next Rank Promotion continues to be a concern to faculty for its apparent lack of transparency. This perception is exacerbated when Bilkent's promotion process is compared with the promotion processes elsewhere in Turkey, where promotions are based by and large on number of publications, presentations and other quantifiable academic activities. Bilkent's promotion system is based on creative and scholarly contributions of the faculty that leave a “footprint,” recognized by experts in the world.

Action Plan: *A checklist has been prepared that outlines steps of the promotion process and responsibilities at each step.*

Action Plan: *Annual town-hall meeting for all assistant and associate professors to explain the promotion process and expectations. [IMPLEMENTATION HAS STARTED.]*

6.2.7 Teaching expectations

Among the concerns expressed regarding teaching duties, several themes emerge:

- There is a common preference for less teaching in order to have more time for other creative activities or research. There is a lack of enthusiasm for the required preparation of course folders annually requested by the Provost's Office as part of the annual faculty evaluation process.
- Courses are spread over most of the week, which does not allow two or three days set aside for research.
- Administration and faculty disagree about the workload of courses that involve laboratories and projects.
- There is discontent about the new grading policy, which places a cap on the value of final examinations in determining final grades.
- Service requirements (e.g., committee work) are often viewed as burdensome.

Reducing teaching assignments for faculty would mean increasing the class sizes and/or size of faculty in those areas. While the latter is desirable for a number of reasons, resources that would be required are beyond the University's current financial capabilities.

Action Plan: *The Provost's Office will study the feasibility of teaching load adjustment and equitable distribution, and their potential consequences.*

Course folders are used both for accreditation and for annual evaluations. Several Faculties undergo accreditation by their respective professional

organizations. Such processes normally require details of courses taught, including those taken from outside the department and school. The University also has plans to go through accreditation, which requires a significant self-study and a detailed report outlining how the courses support a particular educational goal.

Conventional wisdom about how much students learn during a course suggests that a multi-mode evaluation process is more effective than a single examination. A comprehensive oral exam may be an alternative but the preference is a distributed diagnostic. While the University's general policy is to allow faculty to determine the process and final evaluation, the University also has an obligation to the students to offer a uniform policy of grading, without disadvantaging anyone intentionally or unintentionally. The policies established are primarily to even the playing field among the students.

Action Plan: *The Provost's Office will work with the Deans to assure a viable multi-mode evaluation process throughout the University. A committee will be appointed to develop an evaluation process that also describes the rationale for multi-mode evaluations.*

Service provided by faculty either within the University or outside (reviews, refereeing, etc.) can at times be overwhelming. Faculty members at Bilkent are generous and enthusiastic about moving the University forward and accept requests to serve on committees quite willingly. There is a need to recognize such efforts as well as to regulate the average effort and time required of faculty in the context of all other contributions they make.

Action Plan: *A working group will be appointed to formulate means by which to recognize exceptional service.*

6.2.8 Teaching Skills

Teaching skills of faculty can always be augmented using new approaches and/or technologies. The teaching traditions embedded in different disciplines vary from information memorization to critical thinking, and in some

cases to an emphasis on the experiential. However, established best practices often are welcomed by new faculty members. More recent approaches include technology-enhanced active learning, learning in collaborative environments, and the “flipped classroom.”

Action Plan: *A task force will be formed to recommend what actions the University should take to provide opportunities to faculty for enhancing teaching skills, classroom communications, interactions with students, and general educational activities.*

7 Creative Activities

As a comprehensive university, Bilkent’s creative activities include the arts, design, discovery, ideas, inventions, and music, manifested and disseminated in forums suitable for each accomplishment. Because some activities are more visible, appreciated and supported by government, our challenge is to nurture the underappreciated areas of creativity while continuing to support and excel in the more visible ones. One approach is to leverage our excellence in the creative arts, design, and music with those areas that receive more external support and visibility.

Action Plan: *Establish a working group to investigate possible areas of collaboration between the Faculty of Arts, Design, and Architecture and the Faculties of Science and Engineering, Business Administration, as well as Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences.*

Action Plan: *Establish a task force to develop collaborative activities among the Departments of Economics, Computer Engineering, Mathematics, and Industrial Engineering that can significantly enhance the mission of the University. [AN INTERDISCIPLINARY TASK FORCE HAS STARTED WORK ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A “DESIGN & CREATIVITY” CENTER.]*

7.1 Research

Consistent with the vision and mission of Bilkent University, the strategic plan for research must be bold and aspirational. As a world-class institution, Bilkent seeks to help solve global problems through high-impact research. In this quest, Bilkent faces challenges both at home and abroad, particularly in competition for talent.

A common concern of faculty during strategic planning for research was the perception that resources would be directed only to specific target research areas, thus devaluing research not in those target areas. Creating such perception must be avoided, for individual research has shown to produce highly successful results and will continue to be encouraged and supported. The strategy is to invest in research on selected important problems by either responding to existing opportunities or creating new ones. Part of the strategy is for the University to develop its own processes for selection and investment. The most important element of the strategy, however, is to recruit and to retain faculty and to develop highly productive research groups and infrastructure. Important problems, such as those addressing grand, broad-scope challenges, often require diverse research skills and backgrounds and transcend academic territories beyond the traditional departments. This plan proposes establishing infrastructure that provides an environment conducive to innovation and creativity through synergy.

Action Plan: *Invite an external advisory group of individuals representing international research organizations, companies that value and invest in research, and academic institutions to provide recommendations about the best directions of research for Bilkent.*

Traditionally, graduate education and doctoral students have been an essential part of the research enterprise in universities. This model needs to be augmented with professional research staff for high-impact, competitive research outcomes that can lead to Nobel prizes and other similar achievements.

The strategic planning process also identified numerous infrastructural needs. Among these are offices for sponsored research, technology transfer, and ethics. Other challenges are external to the University and include laws and regulations that govern universities, patent laws, funding for research, and other factors, all of which must be addressed.

Action Taken: *A Technology Transfer Office (TTO) has been established that has been successfully assisting faculty in their pursuit of external funds while complying with the cognizant regulations.*

Action Plan: *Further introduce the role of TTO to faculty outside of engineering and the physical sciences to encourage proposal submission. [IMPLEMENTATION HAS STARTED.]*

As at many universities, research agendas at Bilkent are driven by the availability of funds and the reward mechanisms. The latter include merit raises, supplemental salaries, awards, and recognitions. Exceptions exist in cases where external funding is not required or is minimal and where individual goals prevail.

Significant discoveries and accomplishments in research correlate well with a number of factors. Among these, a critical number of faculty with common or overlapping interests rates high. Particularly, research areas that involve multiple disciplines benefit from synergy of their experiences.

Action Plan: *A University-wide committee and the Provost's Office will identify existing research areas that can benefit from interdisciplinary participation and also identify new research areas on important topics. Their recommendations may include other activities to enhance research among groups of faculty from different Faculties, such as University-wide colloquia to create an environment for exchanging ideas between diverse fields.*

Action Plan: *The Provost's Office will assist the Departments and Faculties to coordinate their hiring for interdisciplinary positions.*

7.2 Research & Training Centers

Bilkent already has several strong research centers such as UNAM, NanoTam and UMRAM, and the new Brain Research Center. These centers need to be continuously strengthened and supported. In addition, new centers need to be planned. Candidate topics include Design Institute (Yaratım ve Tasarım), Cognitive Robotics, and an Energy Policy Center.

Action Plan: *The Provost's Office will enable groups of faculty to propose new fields of research and support these endeavors according to a protocol to be developed by a committee. [AN INTERDISCIPLINARY DESIGN AND CREATIVITY CENTER IS UNDERWAY. AN ACTIVITY HAS BEEN INITIATED BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND NEUROSCIENCES.]*

8 World-Class Organization

8.1 Organization, Infrastructure and Operations

A world-class academic community requires a world-class support structure that includes a dynamic human and sound physical infrastructure, a well-conceived organizational structure, and fully functioning operation processes. The recommendations outlined in this section are for the benefit of the entire university community and programs.

8.1.1 Governance

The Council of Higher Education (CoHE) dictates many of the rules related to governance of universities in Turkey. Successful universities, however, are run neither through referendums nor by fiat, but somewhere in-between depending on its traditions and culture. Universities where voting on every issue is prevalent have often become dysfunctional. Bilkent has traditionally placed decision-making at the top of the administrative structure but is now taking steps to distribute the decision-making process throughout the Faculties and Departments in order to promote innovative approaches and

bring out new ideas. Improved two-way communication is an essential part of these efforts.

An important aspect of governance and a strong organization is to give voice to recommendations as well as concerns and having an institutionalized mechanism to evaluate and respond to them.

Action Plan: *It is recommended that a University Ombudsman is appointed to hear grievances against administration.*

Along with some general policies affecting Faculties and Departments, faculty hiring and budget allocations have also been a source of contention between the Provost's Office and the Faculties and Departments. In order to align expectations, new processes should be introduced to expedite these processes.

Action Plan: *The Rector's Office will consider providing signature authority to Department Chairs and Deans for up to pre-scribed amounts.*

Current practice of spending from Individual Discretionary Research Fund (Turkish acronym KAF) and Department Discretionary Research Fund (BAF) budgets bypass the Deans and go directly to PDK for approval.

Action Plan: *Develop guidelines for expenditures from KAF and BAF and provide training and instructions to chairs while keeping the Deans informed.*

8.1.2 Budgets

Traditionally, budget allocations to Departments and Faculties have been made annually to cover basic line items, except for salary, and were augmented throughout the year, as requests were made. In addition to unexpected one-time expenditures, such as infrastructure improvements and travel expense of faculty candidates, the departments could also request additional allocations to the operating costs, such as minor repairs and graduate students support, with appropriate justifications approved by the deans.

Further, departments had to request and receive approval from the Provost's Office to move funds among the budget lines. Again, the level of management of budgets is varied among the departments; some have been able to use these resources to effectively promote the strategic goals of the department.

Since September 2015, the Provost's Office has implemented a pilot budget allocation plan where the budget for the whole year is established in a conference with each dean and chair who are then empowered to use their judgment to move funds among the budget lines. The expectation is to implement this approach across the campus to reduce the number of minor budget requests throughout the year.

Action Plan: *Institute a semi-annual audit of budget expenditures in the Departments and Faculties.*

8.1.3 Research Enterprise & Infrastructure

The recently formed Technology Transfer Office (TTO) sends e-mails to inform faculty of calls for proposals, organizes meetings about new grant programs, and provides support to faculty who are planning to apply for grants.

Action Plan: *Form a faculty review committee to determine how the university community can help TTO broaden and further improve its activities.*

Most universities in Turkey developed mechanisms by which to raise funds through nearly commercial work for pay, which are usually the staple of private businesses. At Bilkent, the Project Review Committee (PDK) was established early in the University's history primarily to ensure that research carried out at the University led to contributions to fundamental knowledge. Such an oversight was necessary partly due to the scarcity of research funds compared with today where funds for basic research are more readily available. Bilkent PDK, which consisted of three to four faculty members who did not have administrative positions at the University, was authorized to accept or reject project proposals on behalf of the University.

PDK also assumed responsibility for how the project budget is allocated to primarily protect the University's interest in terms of what portion of the relevant expenses should be allocated to the University. PDK also enforces a University policy that allows faculty members to receive extra remuneration from their grants and contracts, if allowed by the sponsor, for which the University must also be compensated from the same source. The compensation includes the benefits associated with the extra pay. Unused fungible funds can be transferred to the principal investigator's (PI) discretionary research accounts (KAF), with a 10% overhead kept by the University for expenses; PIs can then use these funds to support their research following the University's policies and guidelines pertaining to financial expenditures. PDK also assumes responsibility for enforcing whether an expenditure from a KAF is a suitable expenditure or not, resulting in occasional complicated arrangements since the guidelines are not always clear.

Action Plan: *The University Accounting Department that processes reimbursements will develop a clear set of guidelines for acceptable and unacceptable expenditures from discretionary and other funds.*

Action Plan: *Rector will appoint a working group to examine the PDK functions and make recommendations.*

The new TUBITAK Policy on compensating universities for overhead expenses may become an issue.

Action Plan: *A working group will be formed to recommend policy alternatives for overhead returns.*

8.1.4 Organizational Infrastructure

All faculty holding administrative positions at Bilkent are effectively on a part-time basis since they also teach and most also supervise graduate students and conduct research or perform creative activities. Coupled with Bilkent's centralized decision-making practice, in most cases reflection and planning for the future fall behind the daily responsibilities.

The current organization worked well when the University was in its start-up mode and it is tempting to continue in the same manner. However, the phenomenal growth of Bilkent, its competition, and the current aspirations make it incumbent on Bilkent to re-examine its administrative structure and take measures to secure its place as a mature University.

Action Plan: *Rector's Office will consider examining the need for additional positions and re-organizing responsibilities among the top administrative structure of the university.*

A byproduct of the current organization is its flexibility, which on occasion leads to inconsistent practice of the rules, whether written or not. A world-class organization needs processes in place and people who follow them and improve them. It is common to have periodic examination of whether individual units follow established processes, whether there is a need to improve existing processes, and, better yet, to learn best practices to spread to other units.

Action Plan: *Rector's Office will consider appointing an Auditor of Processes to periodically review the business practices throughout the university for compliance with the University rules, where they exist. In cases where written descriptions of processes do not exist, Auditor's Office will develop them. Such activity will also help develop and maintain the institutional memory.*

8.1.5 Communications

8.1.5.1 Communications within Bilkent

There is general agreement on the need to improve the effectiveness of communications throughout the University. Cited needs range from a better use of BAIS on one hand, to announcements of new policies or initiatives that include explanatory rationale for them on the other. Clean and clear information flowing in all directions will lead to a better-informed community and avoid emergence of false, and often counterproductive, misinformation.

The deans and chairs have a particularly important role in transmitting information to their faculty colleagues, staff and students in a timely manner through written form, such as faculty meetings that have widely-distributed recorded meeting minutes.

Action Plan: *All new policies will include a section describing the rationale for it and be communicated to the relevant parties in a timely manner.*

Action Plan: *A working group will be tasked with determining effective communication means, e.g., better use of BAIS and improved use of Bilkent website, making sure all communications are bilingual.*

Flow of information among upper administration as well as from faculty can be vastly improved. There is a need for more formal, written communication of information on policy changes and decisions.

Action Plan: *A working group will be appointed to identify patterns and make recommendations to improve communications among administration and between administration and faculty.*

An increased number of formal and informal communication platforms across the University for faculty members can also help exchange ideas and information. Similarly, celebration of successes of faculty members, such as distinguished awards and promotions, demonstrate appreciation. Many such activities already exist and a more formalized annual calendar of events can be developed.

Action Plan: *The Provost's Office will develop an annual calendar of events that includes:*

- *A welcome reception for new faculty members with all chairs and deans (September)*
- *Annual meeting with department chairs only*
- *Bi-monthly Deans' meetings*
- *State of the University - Bilkent Day, April 3*
- *Celebration of successes of awards, etc. (May)*
- *Teaching Awards (June -Graduation)*
- *Periodic receptions for Faculties*

There is a need to establish effective mechanisms by which ideas that will benefit the university can be captured. The Provost's Office will continue to hold bi-monthly meetings with Faculty Deans/School Directors during the academic year. It is expected that Deans/Directors bring relevant issues from Departments/Unit Chairs to these meetings and share the outcome of the meetings with the Chairs. The Chairs in turn are the conduits of communication between Deans/Directors and Faculty/Students in their programs and vice versa.

8.1.5.2 Communications Regarding Infrastructure

Ideally, educational settings would benefit from a flexible, adaptable, high-performing, sustainable, and technologically rich infrastructure. This is particularly true for Fine Arts, Design, Architecture and some of the sciences and engineering.

Audio-visual equipment and software in some classrooms and lecture halls fail or fall below par. Bilkent's Construction and Maintenance Office personnel mitigate these problems as soon as they are notified. The difficulty appears to be communicating such problems to those responsible at the university.

Action Plan: *Develop and implement a plan to periodically identify needs in teaching facilities and establish a means to communicate the needs as they are observed by faculty, e.g., communication between the department secretary and building coordinator (if there is one) or a special e-mail address.*

Action Plan: *Examine the feasibility of establishing a “TechShop” for student projects, as well as creative and entrepreneurial activities across the campus. [UNDERWAY]*

8.1.5.2 External Communications

External communications form the basis of Bilkent’s engagement with the wider society. As such, these communications must further our reputation while, at the same time, protect the “Bilkent brand.”

Bilkent sends messages to several types of external recipients, both domestically and internationally. The messages may range from simple information to influential policy advice. The communication channels available include broadcast media; print media such as newspapers, magazines, and brochures; and electronic media including websites and social media.

Messages for one set of recipients are generally available to all. There is a need to strategize and manage external communications according to the recipients, the types of messages, and means of delivery, and a method of measuring its impact

Action Plan: *A working group will be appointed to examine Bilkent communications and seek advice from experts in order to improve Bilkent’s external communication modes and qualities.*

8.1.6 Life on Campus

Many students and faculty members spend much of their time and many live on the campus. In response to and in anticipation of their needs, many infrastructure projects have been completed since the strategic planning process has started. Included among these is a new swimming pool, renovated

apartment buildings for faculty and graduate students, new cafeteria for students, conversion of a parking area in front of the administration building to a small plaza. In addition numerous renovations in the departments and a new Brain Research Center building has been built.

There is a continuing need to enliven life on the campus. Suggestions include additional renovations of lodgings for faculty and students, integrating the lake with the campus, setting up a botanical garden, and creating well-lit, safe bicycle and walking paths.

International faculty members in particular feel it is important to have a gathering place as Building 49 had provided. In partial response to this request, the University arranged for a discount at Bilkent Hotel facilities.

Action Plan: *The Office of the Vice Rector for Administrative and Financial Affairs will continue with the development plans for the campus.*

8.2 Engagement with Wider Society

Bilkent has an established reputation within Turkey and in several parts of the world. This reputation is founded on the activities and reputation of faculty members and alumni, as well as the unique attributes and activities of the University.

8.2.1 Community

Bilkent's high schools are an attraction to public-at-large in Ankara, including embassy staff, high government officials, and highly-educated professional in general.. The Bilkent Symphony Orchestra makes a unique contribution to Bilkent's reputation.

Bilkent University has the intellectual resources to provide learned advice to policy makers in the Nation and beyond on important problems within our expertise areas.

Bilkent is uniquely positioned in Ankara, where government and most policy makers and funding agencies are located, but away from the Istanbul area, where most businesses are located. The proximity makes engaging with the government agencies easier. Examples of current such interactions are the new Energy Policy Institute, Turquality program, and English language support for the Ministry of Justice.

Recommended similar actions include:

- Offering public presentations
- Increase effectiveness of the BSO and Bilkent Schools
- Holding adult evening and/or weekend classes and offering continuing education. These can generate income for the University and faculty, and improve the efficiency of facility utilization.
- Engaging students on societal problems by focusing on specific needs, such as playgrounds for kids or toys for handicapped children
- Considering creating lecture space in Ankara

8.2.2 Business Outreach

Bilkent Cyberpark is an important incubator for small businesses and start-ups. The recent joint venture with ASELSAN is an unusual example for any University. One question to explore is whether or not Bilkent should be more involved in business development in Ankara and in Turkey at large.

Action Plan: *A recommendation by the Rectorate will be made to the Board of Trustees to examine the degree to which Bilkent should broaden its engagement with the business community in terms of business and technology development.*

8.2.3 Alumni

Alumni are the products of a university; as such, their successes reflect on the University as do the successes of Bilkent reflect on alumni. This symbiotic relationship needs to be reinforced and brought to a new level of engagement.

Alumni relations start on the first day a student arrives on the campus. They need to know, feel and believe that Bilkent is organized to serve their best interests and need to be treated accordingly, starting on their first day. An alumni-relations strategy is required to engage the current and future alumni.

Action Plan: *Appoint a working group consisting of alumni, faculty, and staff to examine best practices for alumni relations at other universities, and make recommendations.*

Action Plan: *Reactivate the Friends of Bilkent University (FOBU) to provide a collaborative platform to Bilkent Alumni in the USA.*

8.3 Resources

The improvements and strategic initiatives outlined in this plan for a World Class Academic Community require significant resources, above and beyond the present state. In the world of academe, highly respected universities are all nonprofit universities, whether state-supported or private, and income generated through tuition fees and research overhead generally is not adequate for either education or research. Hence the support required from endowments and/or state budgets.

Bilkent has a singularly unique funding model in that its endowment consists of companies managed professionally and whose profits support Bilkent's efforts in education, research and student scholarships. Hence, this presents a risk that the draw from Bilkent's endowment is directly influenced by the economy.

Many highly-ranked universities around the world receive gifts and support from alumni and friends. Bilkent has started to benefit from such generosity in recent years, punctuated with a gift for the Brain Research Center. In 2017 an initiative to provide scholarships support for “girls from priority development regions,” received strong support from businesses and another for engineering students.

Action Plan: *Rector’s Office will develop a plan for proactive fund raising with specific targets.*

9 Summary Table of Action Plans

Bilkent University, A World Class Academic Community: Strategic Plan Summary

Educate Global Citizens to Solve Problems for the Well-being of Humanity, by Creating Ideas and Disseminating Knowledge			Who	When	Cost
Vision Element	Strategy	Key Actions	Who	When	Cost
<p>Education Excellence Creating educated professionals, who think critically and creatively & apply deep knowledge to global challenges...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To attract world-class students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Redesign formal and hidden curricula and science of learning • To mitigate differing student capabilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Redesign existing courses ○ Tutoring, mentoring, electronic support • Develop advanced education programs • Enhance graduate education - be known for our PhDs • Improve English Language proficiency • Develop Ethics Education to reduce cheating and plagiarism 	<p>Working group to evaluate and redesign curricula, as needed</p> <p>Evaluate root causes, streaming by capability, remedial support (iTunes / Khan academies, etc.)</p> <p>Masters, Executive Masters in Property Law, Economics and Law, and Energy Policy</p> <p>Review global best practice for the retention of graduates including time to completion</p> <p>The Provost's office will develop quality standards and policies</p> <p>Review current BUSEL approach & make recommendations</p> <p>Working group to evaluate mitigation measures</p>			

Educate Global Citizens to Solve Problems for the Well-being of Humanity, by Creating Ideas and Disseminating Knowledge					
Vision Element	Strategy	Key Actions	Who	When	Cost
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Internationalization 	Develop plan for admissions of international students and recruitment of exchange students			
...Will require world-class faculty , steeped in the science of learning and teaching as well as their own disciplines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty Recruitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit recent graduates for junior faculty positions Recruit senior faculty to develop programs and mentor juniors Recruit short-term visiting faculty Apply special focus to Law Faculty to develop international base 	<p>Each faculty department will have a recruitment plan that is reviewed each June</p> <p>Provost's office will work with departments on hiring senior faculty</p> <p>Send selected Law School graduates abroad to receive PhDs and return as faculty; send Law School PhD graduates abroad for international broadening</p>			
World-class faculty (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve faculty hiring process Develop next-generation leadership Enhance faculty mentorship and support Improve Annual Faculty Evaluations Clarify Inter-Rank Promotion Process 	<p>New process implemented: Provost meets with each department to establish annual recruitment plan</p> <p>Develop an orientation program for new faculty</p> <p>Shorter (4 year) administrative appointments</p> <p>Each department head works with each faculty member to create career development plans, including mentorship, education, and opportunities (reviewed by Dean and Provost)</p> <p>Revise AFSs to expectations of the promotion process; improve interface (web-based) and communications</p> <p>The Provost's office will create a process for step increases</p>			

Educate Global Citizens to Solve Problems for the Well-being of Humanity, by Creating Ideas and Disseminating Knowledge					
Vision Element	Strategy	Key Actions	Who	When	Cost
	(step increases) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify Promotion to the next rank Evaluate teaching expectations to determine teaching and lab workload and timing, service requirements, examination weightings Enhance teaching skills 	<p>A checklist of promotion requirements was created and communicated in a town hall that will be held annually</p> <p>Provost will examine and potentially revise teaching expectations</p> <p>A task force to examine opportunities to enhance teaching skills and classroom communications</p>			
Creative Activities Individual & collaborative research & other creative works that capitalize on the convergence of the sciences and humanities to meet global challenges like energy, environment, water, poverty, and sustainable economy Creative Activities (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to nurture areas that may be less visible to the public and/or supported by the government Create research focused on global challenges; promote research in non-targeted areas that may prove fruitful in unanticipated ways 	<p>A task force to investigate collaboration between Arts, Design, Architecture, with Science, Engineering, Business Administration, Economics & Administrative and Social Sciences</p> <p>Develop collaboration among departments of Economics, Computer Engineering, Mathematics, and Industrial Engineering</p> <p>Invite an external international research advisory group</p>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create infrastructure 	Expand the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) beyond			

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Vision Element	Strategy	Key Actions	Who	When	Cost
	<p>and support for research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage interdisciplinary research 	<p>Engineering to other disciplines</p> <p>The Provost's office will develop a research evaluation and recognition/reward plan</p> <p>A University-wide committee, led by the Provost's office, will recommend research areas that would benefit from interdisciplinary input, and coordinate with faculty departments in the hiring of interdisciplinary positions</p>			
<p>World-Class Organization</p> <p>Create a supportive ecosystem of leadership, governance, infrastructure, operations and financial processes that helps to realize our vision of a collaborative world-class academic environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance – distribute some decision making Evaluate broadened budget responsibility Research Enterprise and Infrastructure 	<p>The Rector's office will consider providing limited signing authority to Department chairs and Deans</p> <p>Consider the ramifications of moving BAF/KAF spending from PDK to Deans, after providing training</p> <p>Hold semi-annual audit of budget expenditure</p> <p>Develop clear guidelines for reimbursed expenditures</p> <p>Rector will appoint working group to evaluate PDK functions and make recommendations</p> <p>Working group to recommend overhead expenditures policies in line with TUBITAK</p>			