IEEE Turkey Section Presents Awards to Bilkent Faculty Member and Graduates

A ceremony held on October 3 via Zoom, a Bilkent faculty member and two Bilkent graduates received awards from the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) Turkey Section.

Asst. Prof. Erçument Çiçek, a faculty member in the Department of Computer Engineering, received one of the section’s 2019 Research Incentive Awards in recognition of his contributions to the development of machine-learning techniques for the analysis of genetic diseases.

The IEEE Turkey Section gives its Research Incentive Awards to faculty members who reside in Turkey, finished their PhD studies no more than 10 years ago, have gained distinction through their scientific activities and contributions to their field, and have conducted most of their research work in Turkey.

Asst. Prof. Sedat Nizamoglu, a graduate of the Bilkent University departments of Physics (MS) and Electrical and Electronics Engineering (PhD), also received a 2019 Research Incentive Award.

In addition, Dr. Musa Furkan Keskin, a PhD graduate of the Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, received the section’s 2019 PhD Thesis Award for his thesis “Visible Light Positioning Systems: Fundamental Limits, Algorithms and Resource Allocation Approaches,” which he defended in August 2018.

CS Student Wins Graphathlon

Yusuf Said Canbaz, a master’s student in the Department of Computer Engineering, took first place in the TigerGraph 2020 Graphathlon. Sponsored by TigerGraph, a California-based software developer that produces enterprise graph database tools, the competition attracted 331 participants.

Yusuf, who is doing his master’s work under the supervision of Prof. Ugur Dogrusöz, won the Graphathlon’s top award with his software project “Davraz.” The software can be downloaded at https://github.com/canbaz/davraz.

BSO Opens Season at the Odeon

The Bilkent Symphony Orchestra opened its season on Sunday, October 11, not in the Bilkent Concert Hall as usual, but in the campus’s capacious outdoor pavilion, the Odeon. The BSO also arranged the seating layout for both audience members and musicians to allow for greater distancing.

The opening concert featured two violin concertos, one by Haydn and one by Bach, along with Piazzolla’s “The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires.” The violin soloist was Voveny Kostrytksy.

For a schedule of upcoming concerts, please see Page 3.

Serim İlday Named Young Academy of Europe Fellow

Asst. Prof. Serim Kaycan İlday of the National Nanotechnology Research Center (UNAM) and the Institute of Materials Science has been elected a fellow by the Young Academy of Europe (YAE).

The mission of the YAE, which was founded in 2012, includes providing input on scientific exchange and policy making, and fostering scientific curiosity and engagement among the younger generations. It also promotes networking among coming generations of European leaders.

Dr. İlday’s multi-disciplinary research focuses on self-assembly, complexity, far-from-equilibrium systems, and nonlinear and stochastic dynamics. A PhD graduate of Middle East Technical University, she was a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Physics at Bilkent before joining UNAM in December 2017.

Interview Adventure With Talent Hunters

The Career and Alumni Office is inviting all third- and fourth-year students to participate in its Interview Adventure With Talent Hunters program for the fall semester. In the 2019–2020 academic year, 418 Bilkent students were paired with representatives of 32 companies from various sectors, giving them the opportunity to experience an online interview and take a first step toward life after graduation.

Students who want to participate will need to have visited the https://stars.bilkent.edu.tr/srs Other Services/Interview Adventure with Talent Hunters (EXTH) menu by September 30, uploaded a CV and made an appointment with the Career and Alumni Office.

After the completion of an initial interview with the Career and Alumni Office, students will be paired with company representatives for the company interview stage. These interviews with talent hunters will take place between November 16 and December 18, and will be set up by the companies as Skype, Zoom, Teams, Hangout or telephone meetings.

New Book by Tudor Onea


The book explores what grand strategy is, what grand strategies are available to great powers, and the situations in which they are used. It puts forward a classification of great powers’ grand strategies over the past four centuries, examining the strategies of rising, status quo and declining powers.

Among the grand strategies discussed are divide and conquer, biding one’s time, prymacy, concert, containment and appeasement.

Dr. Onea presents the tenets of each grand strategy and then provides a historical illustration, using as examples the experiences of renowned strategists of the past such as Bismarck, Peter the Great, Metternich, Richelieu, Stalin, Truman and Deng Xiaoping.

“The Grand Strategies of Great Powers” is envisioned as becoming the go-to textbook on the topic for students of international relations and history, diplomats, and military officers as well as anyone interested in contemporary affairs. At Bilkent, the book is expected to constitute the foundation of a future elective course on grand strategy, the first of its kind to be offered in Turkey.

Share Your Experiences!

We’re beginning a new series for Bilkent News featuring the experiences of smokers who’ve decided to kick the habit.

Our hope is that hearing from others who’ve been in the same position will motivate those who want to quit smoking but, for whatever reason, haven’t been able to.

In order to make this series a success, we’re asking for your input. But first, congratulations on making the decision to quit smoking! You’ve made your health a priority, and you should be proud of yourself.

So, whether you’re a student or a member of the faculty or administrative staff, please contact us to share your experiences on your journey to a smoke-free life.

The first interview in the series, with Canan Bolatlar, appears in this issue on Page 2.
Journey Toward a Smoke-Free Life

Here we feature the first interview in this series, with Canan Bolatlar, Head of the Records and Archives Unit. Congratulations on making the decision to quit smoking! How long did you smoke? How many cigarettes a day? I smoked for 28 years, 10 cigarettes a day. Even though I was facing a lot of pressure during that time, I tried to quit; but since I tended to become too irritable and difficult to get along with, I gave up. When did you decide to quit smoking? What influenced your decision the most? For a long time, I never considered quitting. But then I saw some of my close friends quit smoking, and as I watched their efforts, I started to have second thoughts. Just before the pandemic entered our lives, a very close friend of mine from school was diagnosed with advanced COPD. Breathless, silent, and in pain... his helpless eyes caused me to finally make the decision.

What kind of plan did you follow? Who did you get help from? Was it hard? I got help from the 171 Quit Smoking hotline and from a dear friend who had quit smoking. Even though I couldn’t go to the hospital due to the pandemic, I took the recommended medications on the basis of preliminary discussions with my doctors. I didn’t experience any side effects from the medication. I never got angry; on the contrary, it was a very calm, quiet process. When did you quit smoking? I quit smoking on April 15, 2020. On my 50th birthday, I gifted myself a smoke-free life. The reactions I got from other people were always very positive and supportive. What kinds of effects - physical, mental and social - has not smoking had on you? In terms of the physical effects, I started to lead a much more active life. Sports were already part of my life, and now I see that I’m stronger than before. I’ve realized that smoking affected my social life a lot. In the past, I didn’t mind being in places where people were smoking, as I was also a smoker. But now I see how disturbed people are by the smoke and the smell, and I experience the same feelings. As I continue my life breathing more freely, I’m very happy to see that my close friends are going toward the fresh air too.... I thank Dr. Mete Aker and Dr. Başak Soyoluğlu for all their support toward the fresh air too....

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Sweat, Sculpt, Rock: POUNDFit

A s part of the Sports as a Way of Life program, the Sports Center is holding a POUNDFit workout session Tuesday, October 27. This unique form of full-body exercise, designed for all fitness levels, transforms drumming into a workout, using special lightly weighted drumsticks and combining cardio, conditioning and strength training with yoga and Pilates-inspired movements. As POUND’s creators say, "Instead of listening to music, you become the music.... POUND provides the perfect atmosphere for letting loose, getting energized, toning up and rockin’ out!" The POUNDFit workout will take place at 4 p.m. on the mini football field. The session is limited to 30 participants, so registration is required; you can register at any of the sports halls. Students taking GE250/251 will receive 20 points for the course.

For more information: spor@bilkent.edu.tr

Faces on Campus

BY ALEYNA GÜRBÜZ (PSYC/III)
Outdoor Exercise Program

The Physical Education and Sports Center is continuing to hold outdoor group exercise sessions on campus this semester. The new schedule for the exercise program can be viewed at https://w3.bilkent.edu.tr/bilkent/physical-education-and-sports-center/sports-courses/.

Sports Halls Open by Reservation

Due to huge demand and the need for social distancing, starting from Friday, October 9, the Dormitories and Main Sports Halls will be open for use from 8:45 a.m. to 7:45 p.m. by reservation only. Please note that the facilities will be closed for cleaning at intervals throughout the day. To view the halls' new schedule in detail, please see https://w3.bilkent.edu.tr/bilkent/physical-education-and-sports-center/sports-facilities/.

Student Clubs for 2020–2021

Students who think they may be interested in joining a student club and would like to learn more about the variety of organizations currently active at Bilkent can access a list of student clubs and societies updated for the 2020–21 academic year via this link: http://www.ogrencidekanligi.bilkent.edu.tr/okk/kulupler.html. Students can join a club or society through STARS-SRS. In accordance with the Bilkent University Student Clubs and Societies Directive, students have the right to become a member of any club or society they choose, without restriction.