



Tel Aviv University (TAU) Upholding the Promise Gender Equality Plan 2025

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Tel Aviv University – Gender Equality Plan 2025

Tel Aviv University – Gender Equality Plan 2025 (GEP 2025) represents our new commitments for the advancement of gender equity on campus.

Gender equality is a fundamental value of our community. It is not only just but also benefits our research and innovation. Gender equality in the academy produces and expands better knowledge; develops richer experiences that reflect the diversity of our society; allows researchers to fulfil and maximize their potential and ensures respect to everyone, regardless of their gender.

As this Plan shall show, we are advancing special programs and putting effort to bridge the gaps between men and women at TAU yet hold the understanding that much work remains to be done. The introduction of GEP 2025 aims to support these efforts and set ambitious goals to strengthen gender equality as a crosscutting priority of the University.

GEP 2025 represents a continuing effort. In 2015, Tel Aviv University President's Advisor for Gender Equity adopted an extensive five-year strategic plan to promote gender equality – the 2015 Gender Equality Plan (GEP 2015). GEP 2015 had been reviewed and revised to adapt to many developments in this area. Upon completing this review, we drafted GEP 2025 to represent TAU's new commitments to institutional and cultural change.

Among the most recent and important organizational changes, **Tel Aviv University has recently formed, for the first time in the Israeli academy, a Commission for Equity and Diversity.** The new Commission has extended responsibilities and resources for the advancement of women. As of October 2023, The Commission is headed by Vice President Prof. Neta Ziv.

The Commission addresses gender equality as well as other important aspects of equality and diversity on campus (within TAU faculty, administration, and student body), including underrepresented groups – Arab, Druze, Bedouin, first-generation university students, people with disabilities, the LGBTQ community, members of the Israeli-Ethiopian community, and the ultra-Orthodox community.

The new Commission reports directly to TAU President, Prof. Ariel Porat, and was established following the recommendation of the Diversity Committee appointed by the President to examine the issue. The Diversity Committee, headed by Prof. Sigal Alon, recommended, inter alia, that the new Commission will outline a comprehensive university policy, set goals, and help senior TAU personnel to promote equality and diversity in the areas under their responsibility. **The new Commission has thus put forward as its top priorities the commitment to promote gender equality.** This decision was based on significant gender analysis of both data and service delivery, and on conversations with an array of community members and groups (including students, faculty, postdocs, and staff) across TAU, conducted in the past decade about the need to promote gender equality.

GEP 2025 is a direct result of the growing investment of resources over the years in these matters, of previous actions and past multi-year Gender Equality Plans which established our institutional commitment to this matter. We also draw upon recommendations from the recently released report by the National Council for Higher Education – Planning and Budgeting Committee as well as reports by the European Institute for Gender Equality. Thus, the new plan offers a clear vision for our community (part I), provides extensive information and data analysis (part III), includes review of previous measures (Annex I), assessment of current measures (part IV), sets ambitious measurable goals for promoting equality in over nine thematic areas (part V), as well as goals for the continuing allocation of resources (part VI) and for data collection, implementation and monitoring processes to ensure a sustainable change (part VIII). GEP 2025 was also an opportunity for us to examine the impact of COVID 19 and is designed to address the notorious implications of the pandemic on women (part IX).

I believe that this plan is an important step toward a better future for women in the academy both in TAU and in Israel more generally. I welcome your engagement with this plan.

With regards,

Prof. Neta Ziv
Vice President for Equity, Diversity and Community,
Tel Aviv University

This publication was prepared under the office of the Equity and Diversity Commissioner, Prof. Neta Ziv.¹ It constitutes an integral part of the University's strategic plan. It provides both a resource for key stakeholders across TAU and a guiding tool for action in our path for institutional change, articulating a strategic view aimed at achieving gender equality.

GEP 2025 was written by Dr. Cochav Elkayam-Levy, an expert on international law, human rights, and gender equality. It incorporates the most updated research findings and global standards on closing the gender gaps in the academy, including the new guides published by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). It also represents a joint effort of the Commission Team and various experts including Sharon Avraham Weiss, the new director of the Equity and Diversity Commission, Michal Boneh Mizrachi – the Commission's coordinator for gender issues, and Gal Deutsch – director of the Commission's Research Unit.

This publication is available online through the Commission's website: <https://diversity.tau.ac.il/> ; The Commission welcomes TAU staff, students and other inquires: genderequity@tauex.tau.ac.il ; 972-3-6406122

¹ Prof. Ziv is a faculty member at TAU Buchmann Faculty of Law. She has over 30 years of extensive experience, both academic and in civil society organizations, in promoting human rights and gender equity in particular. See [here](#).

1

Our Vision

Gender equality is one of the cornerstones of our society. It is crucial for a just and sustainable future.

As Israel's largest and most comprehensive institution of higher education, which is among the top one hundred universities internationally, **Tel Aviv University aims at becoming a leading academic institute in achieving gender equality at all levels.** We aim at a future in which women would make up at least half of our staff community, student body, junior and senior faculty, and leadership.

We are committed to creating an organizational culture and environment that supports women in research and teaching, invests in work-life balance for the benefit of all of our community (men and women alike), ensures equal participation of women in all decision-making bodies, advances the study and integration of the gender dimension in research and teaching, takes measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, and promotes diversity and inclusion of women of all backgrounds and people of all genders.

Therefore, we believe that the University's ongoing commitment to excellence, creativity, innovation, alongside its values of respect, integrity, pluralism, gender equality and diversity, are essential to our academic culture, so that everyone – across all our schools and departments – can thrive.

Our work is better and more influential because we value different and unique perspectives. Gender bias (and all other bias) undermines our social fabric, devalues the rights of women and notoriously affects all of us. Women form more than half of Israel's population and deserve to enjoy the rights and the opportunities to express and realize themselves fully and to live a life free from the limitations of gender bias.

The fulfillment of our vision for gender equality and diversity is possible and achievable. It also has the potential to benefit and transform both the academia and the future of the Israeli society: TAU is a home not only to the next generation of researchers, but also to future engineers, physicians, teachers, lawyers, social workers, parliament members, decision-makers, and philosophers, who will shape the future of our society. Investing in gender equality across all these fields and across the schools of our university – including in women's education, in research, in our employment policies and in women's equal participation in the institute's leadership and among senior academic staff – would have a far-reaching, significant impact on our institute, on other academic institutes and on the Israeli society.

2

The Commission for Equity and Diversity

The Commission for Equity and Diversity is entrusted with the implementation of GEP 2025 and works closely with the university faculties, schools, and departments to ensure that gender gaps are addressed, researched, and carefully monitored.

The establishment of the Commission for Equity and Diversity in 2021 expresses TAU's strong commitment to promoting gender equality and to eliminating discrimination against all marginalized groups in the university. The work of the Commission has received special resources to advance the status of women at all levels in the University.

The Commission's team has a special expertise in gender equality and the implementation of human rights policies. The Commissioner, Prof. Neta Ziv has over 30 years of extensive experience, both academic and in civil society organizations, in promoting human rights and gender equity in particular (See [here](#)). She continues to serve as TAU President special advisor on gender equality. In addition, the team of the Commission comprises of:

- Gender Equality Programs' Coordinator
- A Director who is an expert on human rights and gender issues.² She dedicates approximately 25% of her time to promoting gender equality programs and initiatives.
- Director of Research who dedicates approximately 25% of her time to gender issues.
- A Research Fellow joining from the Women and Gender Studies Program that is awarded with a special scholarship to address gender issues.

An important aspect of our work at the Commission is the opportunity to target intersectional discrimination and to apply an inclusive approach so that we ensure the allocation of resources to **advance women from diverse groups** of our society, including Arab women, Ultra-Orthodox women, etc.

We believe that the new model of a special commission for the promotion of equity and diversity on campus strengthens TAU's ability to promote gender issues and improve the status of women.

² Sharon Avraham Weiss, the current Director of the Commission, has extensive experience in promoting human rights and gender equality. Att. Avraham Weiss formerly served in Israel's Commission for Equal Employment Opportunities.

3

Gender Equity at TAU – Data Analysis (2022)

In the past decade TAU underscored the need of **collecting and analyzing gender-disaggregated data** about its faculty and students to assess the state-of-play of the institution and to identify the areas that require intervention and greater effort to close gender gaps. These data set the ground for the 2025 plan presented below.

Faculty

As of 2021: The percentage of **women with tenure** is 29%.

The percentage of women serving as **heads of programs and or departments** is 42%.

The percentage of women serving as **heads of schools** is 32%.

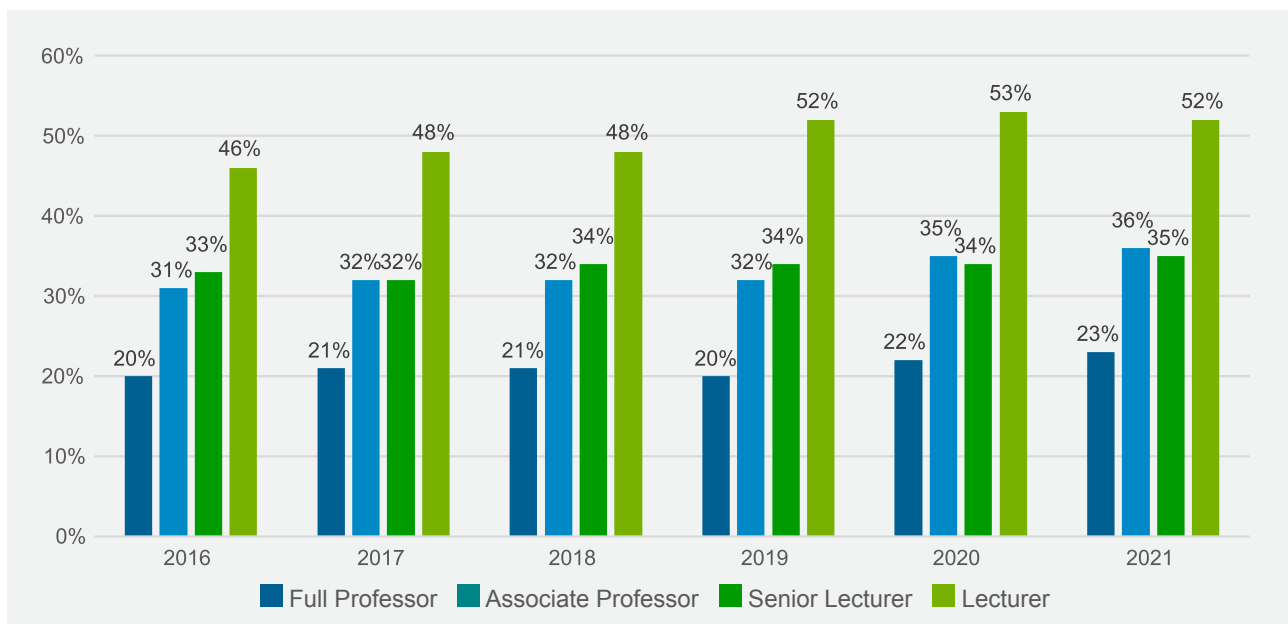
The percentage of women serving as **associate professors** is 36%.

The percentage of women serving as **full professors** (the highest rank) is 23%.

The percentage of women serving as **vice deans** is 35%.

The percentage of women serving as **deans** is 30%.

Figure I: The Percentage of Women Faculty³ Members (2016-2021)



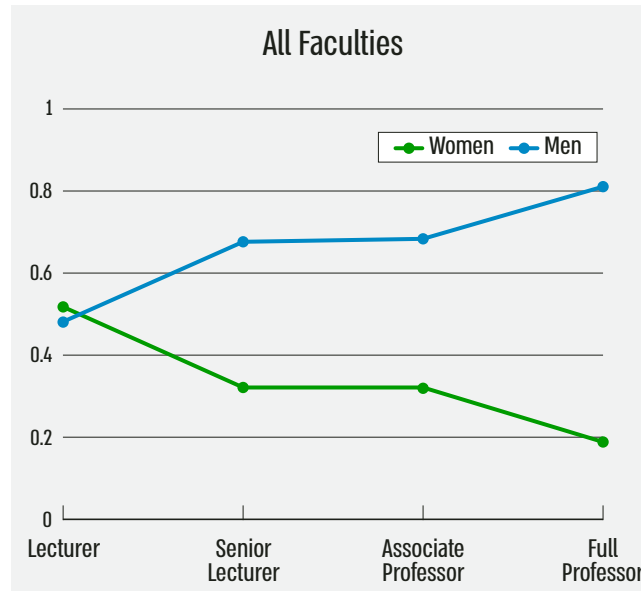
As Figure I shows, there are no gender gaps in lowest rank of faculty positions: women comprise around 50% of faculty in lecturer positions. Yet, there has not been a significant improvement in the percentages of women in senior faculty positions (i.e., senior lecturer, associate professor, and full professor). Further analysis of gender gaps in those positions conducted recently,⁴ indicated that there is indeed a gender gap in senior faculty positions (as shown in Figure II), however it is mainly **the result of significant gaps that continue to exist in STEM faculties** i.e., in the schools of

³ Graphs and tables include tenure and tenure track faculty only. Other academic ranks (i.e., teachers and adjunct professors) were excluded from the analysis.

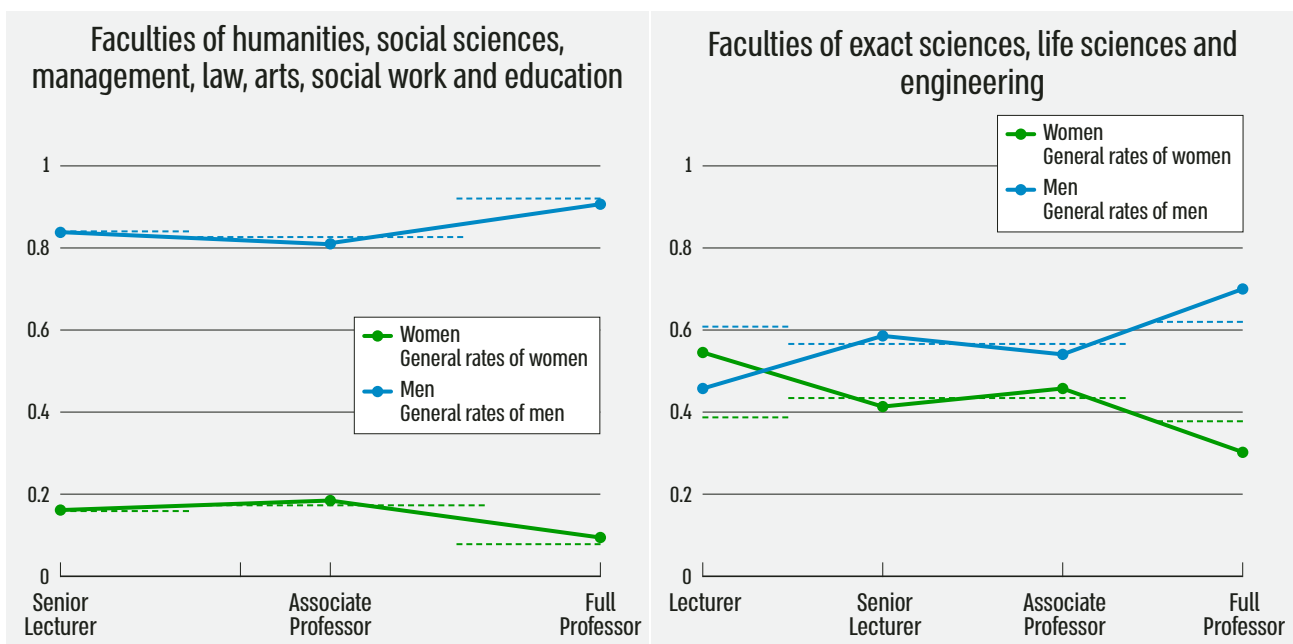
⁴ Ehud Nakar at al., the 2019-2020 survey of the Israel Young Academy, report on gender gaps.

exact sciences⁵, life sciences⁶ and engineering⁷ (as shown in Figure III and IV). **The study interestingly shows that the gap between men and women in senior positions does not reflect the situation in other disciplines, (which present fairly moderate gender gaps) –The major gaps in STEM dramatically affect the overall evaluation of gender gaps in TAU and require special attention.**

Figure II



Figures III and IV



5 School of Chemistry, Computer Science, Environment and Earth Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Physics & Astronomy.

6 Zoology, Plant Sciences & Food Security, Neurobiology, Biochemistry & Biophysics, Biomedicine and Cancer Research.

7 Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, Materials Science and Engineering.

Percentage and number of Women in Senior Academic Leadership Positions (2019-2021)

	2019	2020	2021
Vice presidents	0% (0)	33.3% (1)	33.3% (1)
University executive vice presidents	20% (1)	20% (1)	20% (1)
Faculty deans and deans' equivalent positions ⁸	20% (2)	45.5% (5)	45.5% (5)

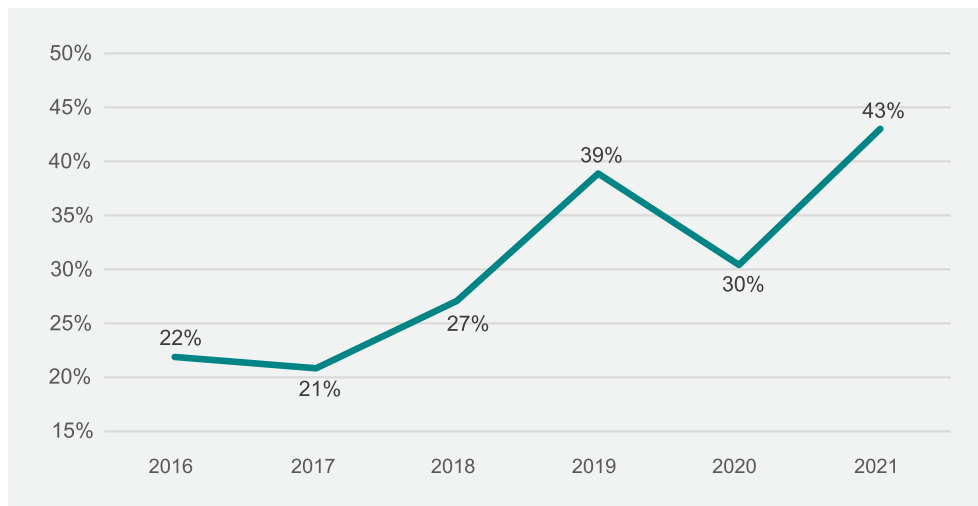
Faculty New Hires

Recruiting women for entry level faculty positions is a crucial step in tackling the existing gender gaps it carries long-term consequences: those who were recruited in the past few years will form the leadership of TAU in the next 15-20 years.

In recent years, there has been a constant improvement in the gender gaps of recruited faculty in the faculties of humanities, social sciences, management, law, art, social work, and education. In addition, while the percentage of women recruited to faculty in 2016 was 33%, we have seen a blessed increase to 43% in 2021 (figure V). When examining the general recruitment rates, the gaps found are especially the result of gender gaps in recruitment in STEM programs as previously noted.

Therefore, 2025 GEP gives special attention to recruitment efforts in STEM faculties.

Figure V: Women Faculty Recruitment (%) 2016-2021



Additionally, women were able to attain positions as junior-level academic staff in similar percentages as men. However, from 2016-2021, more men were recruited at a Senior Lecturer rank than women. Again, this gap is affected mainly by STEM faculties, which hire new faculty members at a higher rank at entry level.

⁸ The data for 2021 includes faculty deans and equivalent to a dean position, reflecting that: TAU has three faculty deans in the faculties of exact sciences, humanities, and Medicine, one Dean of Students and one Dean of Innovation in Teaching (total of five).

Students

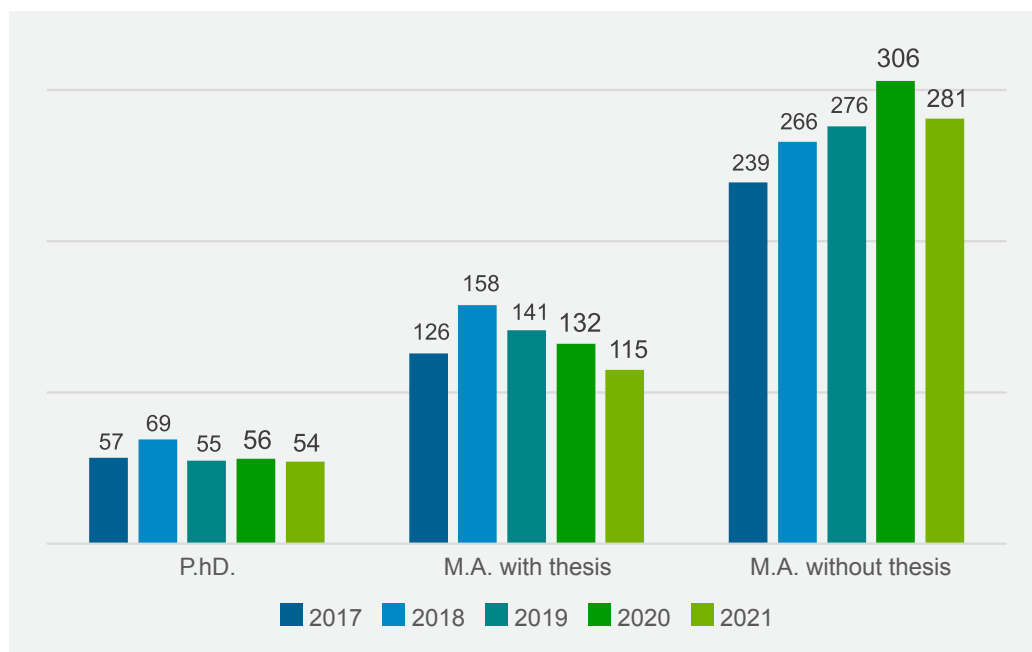
a. Share of Women by Degree Level and Year

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Bachelor-Degree programs	56%	56%	57%	57%
Master programs	54%	55%	54%	55%
Doctoral programs	56%	52%	52%	52%

b. Arab Women

TAU recognizes the importance of addressing intersectional discrimination, and specifically promoting Arab Women. Data collected over the past few years indicates that there has been a steady increase in the number of Arab women students in master's degrees and doctoral programs (Figure III).

Figure III: Number of Arab women in master's degrees and doctoral programs*



* Not including medicine and dental medicine schools

4

Main Current Measures Taken to Address Gender Inequalities (2022)

Removal of barriers to recruitment of young women researchers (In the initial stages of their academic career)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post-doctoral scholarships to women for research in academic institutions abroad• Post-doctoral scholarships to women for research conducted in collaboration between TAU and other international academic institutions• Academic conferences' travel grants for women with infants• Support programs for women in STEM departments• Professional development workshops, conferences and courses for women pursuing an academic career
Addressing gender gaps on campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewing, accommodating, and creating clear parental leave provisions and procedures• Data collection about gender equity in each of the university offices, departments, and faculties.• Establishment and maintenance of nursing rooms on-campus for nursing mothers.• Establishment of "The Safe Environment Forum" to address issues of sexual harassment and sexual assaults on campus. The Equity and Diversity Commissioner serves as the head of the forum and leads its activity.• "International Women's Day" events on campus.• Participating in the National Forum of Gender Equity Advisors• Collaboration with the National Council for the Promotion of Women in Science and Technology to promote women in STEM programs.• Mentoring program for women in science.• Trainings, discussions, and awareness raising on gender equality for decision-makers in the university.• Developing gender-neutral language policy.• Events and initiatives with the Women and Gender Studies Program for the integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content.

5

GEP 2025 – Objectives and Measurable Goals

As described in our vision, TAU is committed to achieving gender equality and taking ambitious actions in the following years to come. To this end, we have identified **nine interdependent areas of intervention**, which represent TAU's commitment to achieving gender equality.

The following objectives comprise of a set of practical measures, whose implementation will be monitored and evaluated by the Commission (as elaborated in the next sections).

1. Achieving gender balance in leadership and decision making

Creating role models is a crucial step in designing gender equality policies. Theories in sociology explain gender gaps by the fact that people tend to judge whether a potential candidate would succeed in a certain job by comparing them to those who are currently holding that job. Additionally, people who lack experience at a certain job, learn and adopt the behavior of those around them. For this reason, it is crucial not only to aspire to women's participation in the academic leadership, but also to learning their modes of success and their professional paths, and **to increase their visibility as role models.**⁹

Having women in TAU leadership is not only just but also sends a message to the young generation of women scholars and faculty that their academic work is valued, that they have a place to aspire to and that their experience matters. It has a tremendous potential to reduce gender gaps in the academy and increase women's involvement in research as valuable members of our academic community.¹⁰

Therefore, in GEP 2025 the commitment to advance gender equality by promoting women in leadership roles and in faculty positions is of highest priority – both in middle career and senior positions.¹¹

► Our goals for 2025 are:

1. **No less than 33% women members in the university's senior management** (President/vice-president, Rector/vice-rector, CEO). As of 2021, there is only one woman in those ranks (out of 6).
2. **To maintain the representation of women as Faculty Deans to at least 33%.** Currently, only three women serve as heads of faculties (out of 9) – i.e., 33% and two more serve in positions equivalent to dean positions (the Dean of Students and Dean of Innovation in Teaching).
3. **No less than least 30% women serving as heads of TAU schools.**

9 Magua W, Zhu X, Bhattacharya A, Filut A, Potvien A, Leatherberry R, Lee Y-G, Jens M, Malikireddy D, Carnes M, and Kaatz A. (2017). Are Women Applicants Disadvantaged in National Institutes of Health Peer Review? Combining Algorithmic Text Mining and Qualitative Methods to Detect Evaluative Differences in R01 Reviewers' Critiques. *Journal of Women's Health*...Vol. 26(5), 560-570.

10 Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans (GEPs); Gender Equality in Academia and Research GEAR Tool; Iris Bohnet, *What Works: Gender equality by Design* (2016), Harvard University Press, Chapter 7: How To Design Talent Management.

11 In addition, appointing women to leadership positions that involve the management of large and significant university budgets would have direct effect on their ability to get further promoted, as well as on their ability to promote other young women scholars in research and in their academic career.

4. **Conduct active search** for and placement of women candidates for senior leadership positions. Since women often do not apply for senior leadership positions, the current management will take concrete measures to identify women candidates, to encourage them to apply to serve in leadership positions.
5. **Adopt capacity building tools** – Invest in women faculty during the **early stages** of their academic career is crucial for our institutional ability to promote women. We aim at identifying women who demonstrate management abilities and academic excellence and prepare them to serve as the future leadership of the university. For this purpose, we will:
 6. Organize special mentoring programs and academic leadership workshops
 7. Establish a professional forum for women heads of schools to allow for peer learning towards planning a successful career in academic leadership positions.
 8. Continue participation in inter-institutional workshops advancing academic leadership. In 2021, four junior faculty members participated in the inter-institutional workshop on academic leadership. The workshop included six sessions. Four faculty members are expected to join in 2022. We plan to continue this inter-institutional collaboration and involve TAU faculty.
 9. Establish a professional forum for women in STEM programs to create a supportive academic environment and encourage their advancement for leadership positions.

2. Achieving gender equality in faculty recruitment

As our data reveals, faculty recruitment processes are a matter of concern.¹²

► Therefore, our goals for 2025 include:

1. **Faculty Recruitment:** At least 50% women researchers for tenure track positions across all of TAU faculties, schools, and departments. This goal is crucial for our ability as an academic institution to show an increase in the number of women holding senior faculty positions over the next decade. Since in certain areas and departments the gender gaps are greater than others, each school adopted specific targets to achieve in this regard. Part 2a. below details specific recruitment goals set by the different schools at TAU.
2. **Entry level faculty:** to increase recruitment percentages of entry level women in senior faculty positions to 40%. In order to achieve this goal, there is a need to recruit at least 25% women in STEM.
3. The recruitment process will involve **active outreach to find women candidates and a monitoring procedure to ensure representation** – we aim to establish a clear mechanism and procedures to ensure that if women did not reach the final stages of the selection process for faculty positions (i.e. to the short list of candidates), the recruitment process shall be paused and reported to the University's President or to the University Rector for further evaluation and examination of the process. The assessment shall examine whether sufficient measures were taken to identify a women candidate which is eligible for the position, and why were women who did participate found not suitable for the position. The recruitment process will proceed only after the faculty committee has taken further actions and made further efforts to find an eligible women candidate and continue only with the approval of the University President.
4. Setting incentives to promote women – schools, faculties and departments that will show improvement in recruiting women faculty members would receive special resources for their efforts to close gender gaps in their area. The Commissioner would also communicate successful processes to encourage best practices around the campus.

¹² Our analysis indicates that only an average of 30% of TAU recruitment for tenure track positions during 2015-2021 were women (Figure II). (See chapter III – Data Analysis)

➤ 2.a. Specific recruitment goals by faculty/department until 2025:

- The faculties of Medicine, Humanities, Law, Arts and Social Sciences – a five-year average of **50% women recruited as faculty members**.
- The faculties of Life Sciences and Management – a five-year average of **45% women recruited as faculty members**.
- The faculty of Exact Sciences and Engineering – a five-year average of **25% women recruited as faculty members**.

3. Achieving gender equality in evaluation and promotion processes

➤ To address the barriers described above in promotion processes, our goals for 2025 are:

1. **To standardize interviews and evaluation processes** – for this goal, we aim to set clear guidelines and procedures for evaluation committees and throughout promotion processes including, guidelines for conducting structured interviews with clear factors for evaluation, scorecards that grade each candidate's performance, and set specific quotas for women as committee members and as candidates.
2. To work with faculties' heads to **set specific quotas** for promotions (like recruitment goals).
3. **To increase the transparency of the criteria for promotion** (i.e., the number of publications, etc.). The criteria will be publicly available to all faculty members.
4. **To ensure representation of women in faculty promotion committees**, at the same ratio of their representation in the faculty, and no less than one woman on the committee. In instances in which there are no women in senior ranks to serve at the faculty promotion committee, a women faculty member from another faculty will serve on the committee.
5. **To raise awareness to unconscious bias** during promotion processes – to achieve this goal, we aim at monitoring promotion goals, as well as performing workshops and trainings for the leadership of TAU including, to heads of faculties, schools, departments, selection committee members, promotion committees, etc. (as detailed in the next sections).

4. Achieving work-life balance as part of the organizational culture

An organizational culture that supports work-life balance is key to creating an enabling environment for both men and women,¹³ but is especially crucial for women since they continue to carry most of the family care-work. TAU is committed to promoting an enabling working environment in which women enjoy equal opportunities to men, and in which both men and women can thrive and develop their careers while having a fulfilling family life.

➤ Our goals for 2025 for achieving work-life balance and an environment of equal opportunities for women are:

1. To reform current maternity/paternity/parental leave provisions to reduce teaching obligations, especially for women returning from maternity leave.
2. To create work hours provisions that consider childcare, especially for parents of infants and young children. For example, such provisions would ensure that regular staff meetings, faculty seminars and weekly academic discussions shall not be scheduled to end after 3:30pm.
3. Specific measures for post-doctoral scholars: the post-doctoral program period, especially in Israel, is when scholars (male and women) establish their families and raise young children. Leaving the country for post-doc positions in other countries for a few years is challenging, especially for women. Therefore, our goals are:

13 Gender Equality in Academia and Research GEAR Tool, page 39.

- To increase the number of post-doctoral scholarships for women.
- To ensure entitlement to scholarships during parental leave and create protective provisions that would extend the period of eligibility for receiving post-doctoral scholarships from the university (as done for doctoral scholars)

5. Increasing women's participation and visibility in research and in academic conferences

Having women taking an active part in our academic community, sharing their knowledge, and participating as equal counterparts to men, is a top priority for achieving gender equality at TAU.

TAU has several programs aimed at advancing the active participation of women in research including: the Women Entrepreneurs Program of the TAU Entrepreneurship Center,¹⁴ She Codes¹⁵ and Prowoman¹⁶ programs operating on campus.

- ▶ **Our goal for 2025** is to continue these programs and to also **ensure women's equal participation in academic events and conferences**. For this latter purpose, we shall publish specific policies requiring appropriate representation of women in all conferences and major academic events organized, funded, and supported by the university. In addition, we aim at offering traveling grants to academic conferences for women with children.

6. Using gender-sensitive communication and gender-neutral language

The Hebrew language differentiates between men and women in nouns and pronouns and in many other aspects. **Several studies** have shown that the ways people are communicated with gender-wise creates differences in their behavior, in their perception of themselves and in the performance of different tasks and actions. Gendered language was shown to fail women in math and in other circumstances.¹⁷ Therefore, the Commission for Equality and Diversity has recommended the use of gender sensitive communication and of gender-neutral language in TAU. This recommendation was recently approved by the Rector of the university, and we plan on monitoring its implementation throughout all TAU departments.

- ▶ **Our goal for 2025** is to ensure the use of gender sensitive communication and of gender-neutral language in the university's publications, and to design and enforce specific guidelines on gender-sensitive use of language in teaching, in exams, formal letters and formal inquiries sent to students, workers and faculty members. In addition, we are currently conducting a special workshop on gender-neutral language for TAU staff.

7. Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content

Integrating a gender dimension into research and in teaching opens new horizons and creates new knowledge. Considering a gender dimension in research can have a positive and powerful impact on society and on improving people's lives. TAU promotes **gender analysis in research and teaching content** in several ways. First, the university has a special *Women & Gender Studies Program*.¹⁸ The program provides a vast variety of courses in different schools and departments studying the gender dimension of different areas. The program also provides scholarships for excellent students.

14 Women Entrepreneurs Program: <https://anyflip.com/wrcne/mnol>

15 SheCodes: <https://she-codes.org/she-codes-branches>

16 Prowoman: <https://en.prowoman.org.il>

17 Kricheli-Katz, T., Regev, T. Do gendered languages fail women in math?

https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=iw&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=GENDERED+LANGUAGES+kricheli&btnG=

18 For the list of courses in the program visit: <https://humanities.tau.ac.il/yedion/gender/courses>

In addition, many courses on gender are offered on campus by different schools and departments and the Equity and Diversity Commission funds a special course on gender and science that is open for the entire student body to attend.¹⁹

TAU further conducts several events, special lectures, and workshops throughout the year and on International Women's Day that are also open for the public to attend and that are meant to encourage the study of the gender dimension in research.

- ▶ **Our goals for 2025** is to continue promoting these important programs and measures.

8. Measures against gender-based violence including, sexual harassment

All staff of TAU should be able to freely develop their skills and fulfil their career expectations. Beyond compliance with existing rules, preventing verbal, psychological and physical gender-based assaults and sexual harassment is a basic requirement for a safe work environment.

TAU strives to be an institution that maintains respectful work, research, and study environment, without sexual harassment, maltreatment originating from sexual harassment or related sexual assaults. **The laws of the state of Israel and TAU regulations prohibit both sexual harassment and maltreatment originating from sexual harassment**, as well as intimate relations in the context of an authority relationship.²⁰

TAU further has a Complaints Commission Against Sexual-Harassment (CCASH)²¹ with two commissioners entrusted with handling complaints – Prof. Tamar Brosh and Dr. Na'ama Scheftelowitz, as well as a team of currently one member (working part-time) who serves as the Commission's Coordinator. Notably, the Coordinator, Michal Boneh Mizrahi, is a social worker and an expert on gender matters.

The Commissioners encourage victims to report on sexual harassment on campus and work to prevent sexual harassment through a variety of publications, special trainings, lectures around the campus, including for faculties' staff, promising that every complaint will be checked and handled discreetly, quickly, professionally and thoroughly.²² During the process, the Commissioners make every effort to stay in touch with the person who filed the complaint and keep her/him up to date with the status of the complaint.²³ Furthermore, the Commission's

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- 19 The syllabus for the course: https://www.ims.tau.ac.il/Tal/Scans/Syllabus_Download.aspx?kurs=18801802&syllabus=kr_syllabus_s20201_k00_v00.pdf&dt=05122021144516
- 20 Sexual harassment is one of the following behaviors, briefly described below (according to the Law for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment, 1998): Forcing a person through extortion or threats to perform an act of a sexual nature; Indecent acts; Repeated proposals of a sexual nature addressed to a person who has shown that he/she is not interested in these proposals. In the context of authority relations – there is no need to show lack of consent; Recurring comments addressed to a person about his/her sexuality, when that person has shown that he/she is not interested in these comments. In the context of authority relations – there is no need to show lack of consent; A debasing or humiliating attitude toward a person regarding his/her gender or sexuality, including his/her sexual preferences; Publicizing a photograph, video or recording which focuses on a person's sexuality, when the publicity can debase or humiliate that person, and he/she has not consented to the publicity.; Such references/comments can be written, spoken, or presented through a visual or auditory display such as a PC, cellphone etc. Pestering deriving from sexual harassment is defined as abuse of any kind originating from sexual harassment or a complaint filed about sexual harassment.
- 21 For the CCASH website visit: <https://harassment-prevention.tau.ac.il/safe-campus/english>
- 22 TAU's protocol for preventing and tackling sexual harassment and gender-based violence provides that a person that wishes to file a complaint, shall meet with the commissioner. The Commissioner shall help the complainant file the complaint and shall read it for him/her to confirm all the reported details. After the complainant approved the content of complaint, he/she shall sign it. The Commissioner shall then examine the complaint and shall consult any person found relevant for the examination. The Commissioner has the authority to rule on interim measures to be taken if necessary. After examining the case, the Commissioner will hand its recommendations as to the continued employment of the worker accused with sexual harassment. If the accused is a faculty member, the recommendations shall address the University's Rector; If the accused is a student, the recommendations shall address the relevant academic secretary. If the accused is part of the administrative staff of the university, the recommendations shall address the Head of the University's Human Resources Department. The recommendations shall detail the process of the examination of the complaint and one of the following recommended measures for continuing the process: 1) to initiate disciplinary proceedings; 2) to adopt certain disciplinary measures; 3) to dismiss the complaint.
- 23 In 2019-2020, the Commission managed over 50 complaints and inquiries. In addition, in the past few years, there has been an increase in the number of cases that the Commissioners have received. In this regard, the process is usually lengthy: after receiving the complaint,

Coordinator assists victims of sexual assaults and gender-based violence (which happened outside of the campus) and helps them through the process of getting TAU's counseling and psychological health services.

Currently, the Commission is in the process of reviewing its work and preparing an extensive plan to extend its services, to raise awareness to healthy work environment, and to expand its measures to prevent sexual harassment on campus. The plan requires additional resources and is currently examined.

➤ **The Complaints Commission Against Sexual-Harassment goals for 2025 are:**

1. To review our anti-harassment policy and complaints procedures and services and submit a detailed plan to expand the work of the Commission (as noted above).
2. To allocate more resources for the Commission – including an additional commissioner, team members, budgets for lectures, workshops, and additional trainings.
3. To recruit contact person in every faculty/department that will work to promote anti-sexual harassment policies and measures with the guidance and help of the Commission.
4. To continue to monitor and collect data about the number of complaints, including checking how actual cases are **qualitatively** dealt with.
5. To publish TAU's anti-sexual harassment policies around campus for instance via pamphlets and special explanatory brochures.
6. To conduct a periodic survey regarding our organizational culture and the safety of our community, specifically addressing sexual harassment and sexual assaults.

9. Trainings and awareness raising on gender equality and unconscious gender biases

Each year the university conducts several discussions in the Senate, Board of Directors and Organizing Committee on gender gaps and takes measures to promote awareness to gender bias. Additionally, there are several administrative and academic forums which conduct regular discussions on these issues and promote measures to address gender gaps, including the Equity Committee, the Implementation Committee, the Heads of Faculties Forum, and the Safe-Environment Forum (dealing specifically with issues of sexual harassment).

TAU also conducts an annual training program for senior and junior faculty members – named Chilly Climate-aimed at raising awareness to gender bias.

➤ **Our goals for 2025:**

1. To continue current workshops and special training programs for faculty members and administrative staff about unconscious bias in research, in recruitment and promotion processes, and in other processes that may serve as an obstacle for women's advancement in the academy.
2. To continue conducting dedicated events raising awareness and promoting gender equality.
3. To develop whole organization engagement and discussions on GEP 2025.

the Commissioners turn to investigate the case, search for evidence, consult with the legal department, consult with the University's Counseling and Psychological Services Department, and thoroughly examine the matter.

6

Dedicated Resources

As noted before, TAU has recently established the Equity and Diversity Commission, which addresses gender equality as a top priority as well as all aspects of equality and diversity on campus (within TAU faculty, administration, and student body), including inclusion of underrepresented groups Arab, Druze, Bedouin, first-generation university students, people with disabilities, the LGBTQ community, members of the Israeli-Ethiopian community, and the ultra-Orthodox community.

The Commissions activity budget is nearly two Million NIS. Part of this budget (200,000 NIS) is funded by the National Council for Higher Education – Planning and Budgeting Committee which allocates these funds for the advancement of gender equity in academic institutions across Israel.

7

Goals for Data Collection and Monitoring Progress

The Equity and Diversity Commission and other TAU units regularly collect gender disaggregated data on personnel, faculties, and students. The Commission requires faculty heads to submit data about key sites of inequality so the Commission can produce institutional statistics on gender gaps. The annual report published by TAU presents data on staff and gender, including by level and trends over time.

In addition, we work with University's most senior staff to develop institutional gender benchmarking and set specific goals that would enable us to monitor progress (as was done in the process of preparing GEP 2025).

▶ Our goals for 2025:

1. To continue the annual reporting procedure (based on indicators and evaluation of progress and outcomes).
2. To have each school and department prepare its own Gender Equality Plan. Co-producing the targeted GEPs would involve members from different faculties and fields, as well as administrative and academic staff and would ensure their positive engagement in this process.
3. In addition, the Commission has set to itself as a goal to encourage progress and reward positive changes (whether by financial or honorary awards). We further aim at communicating success stories to increase the cooperation with our monitoring processes and communicate the potential for positive change.

8

Implementation Measures – Ensuring Sustainability

The Commission on Equity and Diversity is responsible for the implementation of GEP 2025 together with the most senior leadership of TAU (including faculty deans/departments/school heads).

► The Commission's goals are:

1. To organize a competition between the departments – rewarding the unconventional ideas called for in the vision.
2. To institutionalize as many measures/actions as possible and create clear procedures and measurable goals addressing gender gaps.
3. To organize regular discussions, trainings and meetings with senior management and leadership, human resources staff, and other relevant stakeholders. The purpose of these meetings is to create accountability, a sense of urgency and ownership of the Gender Equality Plan. In addition, these meetings' goal is to motivate the faculty and staff involved to advance GEP 2025, and to maximize the impact of the Plan's actions.
4. To give visibility to the 2025 Gender Equality Plan and inform TAU faculty and staff about its existence and the possibilities it creates for them, using different channels and routes to communicate the Plan, its principal areas of interventions, timeframe, and achievements.
5. To review the Plan in 2023 looking for adaptations that may be needed. The Plan may require modifications or amendments. This review process will also assess why some measures are not being (fully) implemented and we will adjust as needed.
6. To exchange and share knowledge with other academic institutions regarding the implementation of the Plan and innovative actions to promote it, building alliances with other institutions.
7. To nominate gender equity representative in each faculty/department who will be devoted for promoting GEP 2025. Our goal is that the change agents would raise awareness of gendering processes in their faculties, share initiatives and data as well as help address gender inequalities.²⁴
8. To generate short term wins that would incentivize implementation, looking for ways to reward the people and faculties involved with recognition.

²⁴ Husu 2013; Vollmer and Löther 2013.

9

2025 and Beyond – Addressing the implications of COVID-19

Lastly, women were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 in ways that call for our special attention in GEP 2025. The evidence available today suggests that the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic endangered the engagement, experience, research, participation, and retention of women in the academy, and may roll back some of the achievement gains made to advance women in the academy to date. After about two years of a global crisis, there is a consensus that women have also suffered greater economic consequences than men, especially since they continue to be the main caregiver in the family. This situation calls for specific measures.

The Equity and Diversity Commission has thus recently presented a special plan to address the implications of COVID-19. The plan targets the situation of women, but its principles and recommendations are also relevant for men that are the primary caregivers of young children and / or of children with disabilities, and whose academic activity was impaired during the pandemic. We are pleased to report that TAU president allocated 1.35 Million NIS to support this plan.

The plan focuses on two main groups – 1) post-doc and doctoral students 2) young faculty members without tenure. Both groups show greater vulnerability to the pandemic. Thus, the plan offers detailed information about their situation and the measures that should be taken to mitigate any long-term negative consequences for the continued advancement of women. For example, the plan offers: reduction of teaching requirements and administrative tasks; extension of submission deadlines; establishment of a special fund to support extension of scholarships for women for additional periods; tuition fee waivers for post-doc and doctoral students; allocating additional funds for scholarships and traveling grants.

In 2021, TAU has already approved special funds for researchers affected from the pandemic; published a provision allowing consideration in circumstances caused by the pandemic during promotion processes; allowed extension for tenure positions approvals; and allocated emergency budgets for doctoral students to support research that suffered delays due to the pandemic.

▶ Our goals for 2025 are:

1. To promote and monitor the implementation of this plan.
2. To initiate discussions and actions around the plan to create a sense of urgency around the need to close the gender gaps in TAU due to the pandemic.

Annex 1: GEP 2015

Assessing Previous Plans & Measures to Advance Gender Equality

TAU 2015 Gender Equality Plan (GEP 2015)²⁵ was a key step towards assessing existing gender gaps at TAU and promoting gender equality on campus. It has been implemented until recently (2020) and serves as the basis for the new plan presented above – GEP 2025.

Goals and objectives

GEP 2015 embodied three main goals:

1. To increase the number of women among the senior faculty members (from 29% to 35%).
2. To increase the number of women admitted to undergraduate degrees, Master's, and Doctoral degrees in STEM programs.
3. To develop and implement a new program – the Talent Management Program – that would support the academic careers of faculty members. One of its goals was to help overcome gender barriers in women's academic careers.

The situation of women in the Israeli academy

Additionally, GEP 2015 analyzed the situation of women in the Israeli academy noting that in 2012 women comprised only 28% of faculty staff, even though the number of women students at universities exceeded the number of male students.²⁶ The gaps were evident along two main axes:

1. **Ranks:** While the percentage of women at the rank of lecturer was 48%, the proportion fell to only 15% among full professors (for comparison, recent data indicates a continuing gap – In 2019, the percentage of women in the highest faculty ranks in TAU was 20% women vs. 80% men)
2. **Disciplines:** In the Faculty of Engineering and Natural Sciences (including the exact physical sciences) there were significant gaps from the level of senior lecturers (the typical entry level in these areas), with the percentage of women being about 19% and 25% respectively. Among full professors, the proportion of women fell to 7% of the Faculties of Engineering and 10% in Life Sciences (these gaps remain, see section **).

GEP 2015 noted that the gender gaps at Tel Aviv University are like those which were documented in other research universities in Israel.

GEP 2015 – Recommendations and Action plan

In light of the data collected and assessed at the time, GEP 2015 included several recommendations and conclusions:

1. **Increasing the number of women applicants for higher education:** establishing a scouting mechanism in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the IDF; branding of the university as an institute encouraging women in the areas of STEM; a retraining program in the STEM disciplines for outstanding women students.
2. **Increasing the number of women students admitted to undergraduate and Master's Degrees programs:** granting scholarships for outstanding women students; establishing mentoring programs; initiating career workshops.

²⁵ "Implementing Gender Equity in Tel Aviv University: Five-Year Strategic Plan, August 2015," Prof. Rachel Erhard, Dean of Women.

²⁶ The data was collected by the Higher Education Council and was presented in the Knesset Committee for Science and Technology on 6.3.2012.

3. **PhD students:** initiating a new program for women – “Becoming a Scientist” – which will include workshops for professional development throughout the doctoral studies; granting scholarships for academic excellence for women in STEM programs; establishing a mentoring program; granting expansive scholarships for women PhD graduates attending post-doctoral studies abroad.
4. **Recruiting new women faculty members:** establishing a mechanism for maintaining ongoing contact with potential women doctoral candidates abroad; building a network of faculty members who will be delegated the responsibility for maintaining contact with women graduates of the Faculty that are studying abroad; promoting meetings between decision-makers and potential women candidates; drafting binding guidelines for search and faculty committees to be applied in recruitment processes; admitting women faculty members with excellent records, without reference to quota allocations (i.e. whether their research area is not a high priority for the Department).
5. **Women junior faculty members (before tenure):** initiating a mentoring program; reducing administrative requirements/extra remuneration for performing administrative functions; establishing procedures for parental leave.
6. **Addressing the promotion process:** promoting gender awareness among decision-makers; when considering promotions, other academic services (guidance, participation in committees, etc.) should be considered; remuneration for undertaking these roles.
7. **Adequate representation of women on faculty committees:** setting guidelines for adequate representation on all major university and faculty committees determining the minimum number of women on each committee, to be achieved, if necessary, by the inclusion women from other academic units or faculties.
8. **Organizational changes:** Convening a gender equity committee and faculty committees; conducting systematic collection of sex-segregated data, research, and continuous mapping of gender equity in the university.
9. **Family-supportive environment:** Expansion of daycare facilities; flexible teaching hours; extension of time for the determination of tenure to include parental leave; extension of time of scholarships to include maternity leave; designating nursing rooms in each faculty; financial assistance to doctoral candidates and junior faculty members attending conferences abroad with a baby.
10. **Organizational structure:** Institutionalizing the role of the Advisor to the President on gender equity; the establishment of a staff development unit