

## **2020-2025 Strategic Plan for Promotion of Gender Equity at Bar-Ilan University**

### **Bar-Ilan University's vision for gender equity**

Based on the principles of gender equality, social justice and pursuit of academic excellence, Bar-Ilan University shall work toward the advancement of women from all social groups regardless of religion, race and nationality. Bar-Ilan shall spur women toward excellence in research and outstanding academic achievements and shall seek to appoint women to senior positions on par with those of men faculty. Bar-Ilan aspires to be Israel's leading university in the advancement of gender equality and is working toward that end.

### **Gender report as of 2020-21:**

Women comprise 33.4% of all senior faculty at Bar-Ilan. This proportion is similar to that found at Tel Aviv University and at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The proportion of women is particularly high in the social sciences (50%) and in the humanities (49%).

The proportion of women is particularly low in the exact sciences (12%), engineering (14%), Jewish studies (24%) and life sciences (27%).

Representation of women on faculty decreases as rank increases – from 67.3% at the lecturer level to 23.6% at the full professor level. A particularly low representation of women at the associate professor and full professor levels is found in the faculties of life sciences (7%), Jewish studies (6.9%) and medicine (0%).

Submissions for excellence scholarships, grants and awards: In the 2019-20 academic year, women constituted 38% of submitted recommendations for excellence grants for faculty members, 47.8% of all post-doctoral scholarship submissions and 68.3% of excellence scholarships submissions for PhD candidates.

Representation in senior leadership roles: Women hold 27.7% of the senior leadership positions (which include the president, rector, CEO, vice-presidents, deans); when including second tier (vice deans, department heads), their representation increases to 35.8%.

Additional compensation for leadership roles: In the 2019-20 academic year, average compensation for those leadership positions was similar for men and for women (women

received 91% to 96% of the average received by men); there was a gap, however, in the number of position holders at the most senior level – 21 women vs. 30 men.

**Analysis of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the organization:**

This seems to be an opportune moment for advancing gender equity in the Bar-Ilan University environment. The international public discourse among donors, the Board of Trustees, and academic associates in the European Union, has been making protracted demands for change toward gender equity and diversity within the organization. The Equator Index program of Israel's Council for Higher Education-Planning and Budgeting Committee (CHE-PBC) also serves as an incentive for Bar-Ilan to promote gender equity.

Within Bar-Ilan a true desire for change in the status of women is evident, expressed in several ways. First, Bar-Ilan wishes to confront its conservative reputation by rebranding its image to one emphasizing academic excellence and pluralism; holds academic conferences on gender topics perceived as controversial; favors appointment of women to second tier senior positions; and appoints people like Rabbanit Devorah Evron, for example, who has brought a feminist Orthodox voice to campus. Furthermore, four different bodies dedicated to the advancement of women and gender equity currently operate on campus – The Gender Studies Program (the only one in Israel offering a PhD degree); the Midrasha program (a non-academic advanced Torah studies program for women); the Rackman Center for the advancement of the status of women under Bar-Ilan's law faculty; and the forum for gender equity. Together these constitute a large group of women faculty members acting in concert toward gender equity on campus, with close collaboration between the advisor for gender equity and the offices of the president and the rector of Bar-Ilan.

Nevertheless, critical issues remain both inside and outside the organization. On the extra-organizational level – the Equator Index program does not allocate sufficient budgeting for structural changes (such as positions dedicated explicitly to women). Within Bar-Ilan – we must address the low proportion of women in the exact sciences and in Jewish studies, examine the under-representation of women PhDs who continue on to post-doctoral research and focus our efforts to resolve it, and aim toward gender parity in the highest ranks and in university leadership positions. Finally, the university should guarantee an organizational climate of respect, security and equality for all employees and students of the institution.

The objectives detailed below are based on the Equator Index and the policy framework that underlies it; they are classified under a quantitative or qualitative measures with several measures defined as required core clauses.

### **Quantitative measures – goals, and milestones for achieving them:**

1. Balancing the proportion of women on senior faculty:

Bar-Ilan University's goal is to increase the proportion of women on the academic faculty from 33.4% in the 2019-20 academic year, to 37% in the 2024-25 academic year. **We plan to increase the per annum proportion of women on the senior academic faculty by an average of 2.2% over the previous year.**

The CHE's goal of 40% women among total academic faculty in 2024-25 was carefully considered, but scenario analysis demonstrated that this goal is unrealistic. To reach a 37% proportion of women we would need to hire 41 women by the 2024-25 academic year (22 to replace women who will be retiring, and an additional 19), and 36 men (due to 51 who will be retiring); to reach 40% proportion of women, however, we would need to hire 60 women and 17 men, a goal that the university cannot commit to.

To achieve the intended goal, we plan to increase the proportion of women in faculties where women's representation is below 30% – an increase of women on the faculty of the exact sciences from 12% to 20%; in engineering from 14.7% to 20%; in the life sciences from 27% to 30%; and in Jewish studies from 24% to 30%.

2. Hiring rate of women compared to their representation on senior faculty:

In each of the two academic years between 2018 and 2020, women and men were hired in nearly equal numbers; women were thus 50% of all new faculty, while constituting 33% of the faculty overall. In the 2020-21 and 2021-22 academic years women were hired proportionately to their representation on the academic faculty. We plan to increase hiring of women such that they represent an average of 56.9% of all new hires over the coming three-year period.

3. The rate of women hired at the rank of senior lecturer compared with the rank of lecturer, in contrast to hiring of men at the same ranks:

In the 2019-20 academic year, the gap in hiring of women and men by rank was particularly wide, where nearly 90% of men were hired at the rank of senior lecturer while only 36% of

women were hired at that rank. This gap narrowed in 2020-21 and in 2021-22. We intend to continue to narrow this gap, by hiring more women in the STEM fields at the rank of senior lecturer.

4. Balancing the proportion of women at the rank of associate professor and full professor:

In 2019-20 the proportion of women at the rank of associate professor and full professor stood at 26.2%. We intend for the number of women at these two ranks to be increased by an average of 4.95% per annum over the previous year, to a goal of 33% in 2024-25.

5. Recommendations for external scholarships:

Bar-Ilan intends to submit recommendations for faculty grants and excellence awards such that at least 40% of them are for women; for post-doctoral fellowships and PhD scholarships, at least 50% of submissions will be for women.

6. Additional compensation for leadership roles:

Our goal is to maintain gender parity in additionally compensated leadership roles by appointing more women to senior leadership positions. Our intent is to increase the proportion of women in senior roles (department heads, deans, vice-presidents, and others) from 35.8% to 40%, and thus to achieve compensation parity per position by 2024-25.

### Qualitative measures – goals, and milestones for achieving them:

1. Develop an action plan to address the adverse effects of the pandemic:

The plan agreed upon in April 2021 by Bar-Ilan University's senior leadership forum includes an automatic one-year extension for promotion for all pre-tenured faculty, a requirement for reducing teaching obligations for faculty who were especially affected in the year of the pandemic, including an allocation of 250,000 ILS to fund reduced teaching obligations, and a requirement for easing of administrative responsibilities. The plan went into effect in June 2021 and will remain in effect through the 2024-25 academic year.

2. Leadership and gender sensitization workshops:

We conducted one gender sensitization workshop for all deans in 2019-20, and two such workshops in 2020-21. In 2021-22 we plan to hold four workshops, and eight in each of the subsequent years – for the appointments committee, for department heads and for academic faculty. Seminars will also be held on use of gender-egalitarian language – one in 2020-21 for administrative staff, and four in each of the subsequent years.

3. Increase representation of women in academic leadership positions and on vital institutional committees:

Our goal is to establish in the Senate charter that the proportion of women in the Senate shall be equal at least to their proportion on the academic faculty, increasing as the latter increases. On the central committee, elected members (that is, those who do not sit on the committee by virtue of their position) shall comprise 50% of each gender. The percentage of women on the appointments and promotions committee shall be 50%.

4. Employment equality and equity:

Bar-Ilan University strives for gender equality – among students, faculty and administrative staff – to be achieved through various institutional initiatives shown below and in the reporting tables.

5. Construct a gender-supportive institutional environment:

Bar-Ilan University is striving to create a fair and respectful environment, by raising awareness of gender issues at every level of the university as detailed in the strategy list.

**Strategies for achieving these goals:**

The strategies are divided into ten interconnected and mutually supportive practices: policy change; increase proportion and promotion of women; increase representation of women in management positions; increase gender awareness; advance women doctoral candidates; support women researchers at critical life stages; develop programs at the faculty level; integrate gender into Bar-Ilan's brand; map, promote and improve existing programs for the

advancement of young adult and adult women; and hold general events to advance gender equity.

### **1. Policy changes:**

During the 2021-2022 academic year we will work toward amending the Senate charter with the following policy changes:

- ❖ The proportion of women in the Senate shall be equal at least to their proportion on the academic faculty (and shall increase as the number of women faculty members increases).
- ❖ On the central committee, elected members (that is, those who do not sit on the committee by virtue of their position) shall comprise 50% of each gender.
- ❖ The appointments and promotions committee shall comprise 50% men and 50% women.
- ❖ The search committee for deans shall include 30% women or the advisor for gender equity (or another representative of the forum for gender equity).
- ❖ Each department search committee for filling tenure track positions shall include at least one woman. In departments with no women of the appropriate rank, the search committee shall include an external woman reviewer – a member of the forum for gender equity (from the relevant faculty), or a woman reviewer from another university.
- ❖ Professional committees for the advancement of women shall include at least one researcher who is a woman.
- ❖ The advisor for gender equity shall participate in coordinating committee meetings and in university Senate meetings on a regular basis.
- ❖ Bar-Ilan University's vision for gender equity shall be included as a central clause in Board of Trustee decisions.

## **2. Increase hiring of women:**

- ❖ institutionalizing a mechanism for control and tracking appointments and promotion processes
- ❖ pro-actively hiring appropriate women candidates, especially from among Israeli post-docs abroad
- ❖ establishing a database of women researchers in Israel and primarily abroad, and directing announcements of positions openings to them
- ❖ setting up a mentoring program for instructors at the lecturer and senior lecturer levels
- ❖ verifying use of gender egalitarian language in announcements of position openings
- ❖ developing other acceptance and promotion criteria at the university as an alternative to post-doctoral research abroad which is required today

## **3. Increase representation of women in management positions:**

- ❖ establishing a program to develop women's leadership and management skills

## **4. Increase gender awareness:**

A. Conduct workshops on the following topics among different audiences to expand awareness of gender bias:

- ❖ use of gender-egalitarian language in university reports and communication, classrooms, teaching materials and ceremonies
- ❖ how to read candidate files, promotion files and letters of recommendations in recruiting

B. Formulate an academic code of ethics for lecturer-student relations, and advisor relations in advanced degrees.

**5. Advance women doctoral students:**

- ❖ developing a program preparing PhD students for post-doctoral research and for an academic career
- ❖ advancing a post-doctoral scholarship program for women
- ❖ encouraging candidacy submission of women PhD students for excellence scholarships

**6. Develop faculty-based programs:**

- ❖ establishing a forum for gender equity including representatives from all faculties
- ❖ developing a strategic plan for the advancement of gender equity customized expressly to each faculty, beginning in June 2021

**7. Support women faculty at critical life stages:**

- ❖ conducting a thorough survey among women scientists about their specific needs
- ❖ developing an implementation plan following the survey results
- ❖ reducing teaching load upon return from maternity leave

**8. Integrate gender awareness into Bar-Ilan's branding:**

- ❖ developing and implementing a marketing program for gender-equal marketing (use of language, images, etc.)
- ❖ updating and refreshing the website of the advisor for gender equity on its new platform
- ❖ adding gender studies courses for bachelor's degree students as part of general course offerings

**9. Map, promote and improve existing programs for the advancement of young adult and adult women:**

- ❖ setting up a women's "students mentor students" program in computer science (beginning 2021-22)
- ❖ establishing a forum for women researchers in life sciences (June 2021)





- ❖ continuing the “young adult women in science” program in computer science for high school students
  - ❖ establishing a ProWoman program supporting empowerment of women students in their undergraduate and graduate degrees
10. **Hold campus-wide and faculty-level events for raising gender equity awareness, such as on International Women’s Day.**