



# **Gender Equality Plan**

## **The Technion - Israel Institute of Technology**

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Compiled on behalf of the President of the Technion, Prof. Uri Sivan, under the direction of the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, Prof. Adi Salzberg.

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Technion recognizes that beyond the obvious importance for cultivating a more respectful and fairer society, diversity in general, and gender diversity in particular, are critical for the advancement of better science and research as it broadens the variety of skills talents and perspectives among researchers in academic institution. Therefore, the Technion sets itself the goal of increasing the representation of women among its senior academic staff, in management positions and other influential positions and committees.
- 1.2. In this framework, the Technion aims to increase the percentage of women among tenure track academic positions, as well as the percentage of female undergraduate and graduate students, particularly in engineering and technology faculties with significantly low female participation rates.
- 1.3. An ad-hoc Committee for Gender Representation in the Technion's academic staff was established in 2020 to examine women representation among senior faculty in the Technion and suggest ways to improve it. The committee established by Prof. Uri Sivan, President of the Technion, together with Professor Ayellet Tal, the President's Advisor for Advancing Women in Science and Engineering, was attended by Professor Avinoam Kolodny of the Andrew and Erna Viterbi Faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering; Professor Orit Hazzan of the Faculty of Education for Science and Technology; Dr. Irit Eden, member of the Board of Directors of the Technion; Professor Ashraf Brik of the Shulich Faculty of Chemistry; Professor Yael Shadmi from the Faculty of Physics, Dr. Liat Maoz, Presidential Advisor on Strategic Planning; and Professor Irad Yavneh, Director General of the Neaman Institute and member of the Henry and Marilyn Taub Faculty of Computer Science.
- 1.4. The Committee based its recommendations on an examination of Technion's data, questionnaires, and in-depth interviews to survey faculty members' views on the subject. The Committee has recognized that despite the continuous improvement gender representation at the Technion is currently lacking

The committee recommended for the Technion to declare the tendency and act towards diversity in general, and gender diversity in particular, and identified three main directions of action:

- Increasing the number of women candidates applying to faculty positions and the number of women who accept the offer
- Increasing the number of women in management positions, on committees and in key positions
- Improving the organizational atmosphere and preventing unconscious biases.

- 1.5. In July 2021, in a historic decision, the Technion Senate accepted the recommendation of the Committee and decided on a vision of gender diversity and fair representation; the Technion Senate approved the following declaration:

The gates of the Technion are open to academic and administrative staff as well as students of every gender, ethnicity, religion, and nationality. The Technion recognizes the value of human diversity for a social environment which encourages curiosity, imagination, creativity, the realization of potential, and critical thinking, and strives for truth. Male and female members of the Technion's academic staff, the Senate, and the management of the institute are aware of the lack of fair gender representation at this moment (2021) - reflecting historical, cultural, and social circumstances - and commit to continue to work unceasingly to remedy the situation: enriching human diversity and cultivating fair gender representation at all organizational levels while ensuring quality and egalitarian standards.

- 1.6. As a technological research institute, the Technion faces unique challenges due to its nature, not only as an institution founded almost entirely on the STEM fields, but also that the vast majority of faculty members are affiliated with engineering and technology fields - the TEM in STEM. These fields are characterized by a relatively small number of female high-school graduates with the appropriate credentials and the interest/desire to enter them, leading to a small percentage of women in the bachelor's degree programs, let alone in doctorates. For that reason, the pool of female candidates for a faculty position are very limited.
- 1.7. Accordingly, the Technion management presents this strategic plan including objectives and milestones that will bring the Technion closer to the goal of gender equality and parity. We are aware that the path to this goal is liable to be very long - particularly in the Technion's unique environment, more than at institutions where research areas include fields with greater reserves of female scholars, namely the humanities and the social sciences, as well as the life sciences.
- 1.8 It should be noted that equality already exists at the Technion according to several indices, such as payroll supplements and the time between joining the Technion and the promotion to the rank of Full Professor. The ad-hoc committee has concluded that the average time of promotion from Senior Lecture to Associate Professor is slightly longer for women, apparently for extenuating circumstances. Nonetheless, the gap closes in the promotion from Associate to Full Professor, where women advance more quickly than men.

## **2. The Strategic Plan - Quantitative Aspects:**

The Technion plans to lead a change in the below issues:

### **2.1. The percentage of women in academic tenure-track positions.**

- 2.1.1. The Technion aims to recruit more women faculty relative to their current percentage in academic tenure-track positions. In the academic year 2019-2020, 19% of Technion faculty were women, but 21% of newly appointed faculty were women. We aim to reach a steady annual rate of 25-30% female faculty recruitment within the next five years.

As explained in the introduction, the Technion is a unique institution. The majority of faculty members are affiliated with large technological faculties without sufficient reserves of female scholars. Reaching a steady recruitment rate of 25-30% female faculty is therefore a challenging goal which should be comparable to parallel faculties at other universities. Note that today the rate of offers made by the Technion to female applicants is already higher than the rate made by the Technion to male applicants, thus a major challenge is to increase the number of female candidates for faculty positions in areas in which they are under-represented.

### **2.2. The percentage of women faculty among the ranks of Associate Professor and Full Professor.**

- 2.2.1. The average time a faculty member stays at a certain rank at the Technion is very similar between men and women. The time of promotion from Senior Lecture to Associate Professor is slightly longer for women, apparently for extenuating circumstances. Nonetheless, the gap closes in the promotion from Associate to Full Professor, where women advance more quickly than men. Looking at the median, the situation is satisfactory: when advancing to the rank of associate professor, there is a gap of 3 months in favor of men, while when advancing to the rank of full professor, there is a gap of 4 months in favor of women. Thus, the average time between joining the Technion as a Senior Lecturer and the promotion to the rank of Full Professor is very similar for men and women, and therefore, if the acceptance rate for women increases, the percentage of women faculty in the higher ranks will consequently improve as well.

### 2.3. The representation of women in influential committees and management.

- 2.3.1. Women in management positions: Currently, there is one woman in senior management positions (President/Executive VPs/CEO/VPs), whereas the representation of women in the second tier of management positions (Deputy Executive VPs and Deans) is significantly higher (7/22 Deans and 3/5 Deputy Executive VPs).
- 2.3.2. Women's representation on the Presidential Candidate Search Committee: The proportion of women on this Committee is currently 14%. Our ambition is to increase that figure to 20%.
- 2.3.3. Women's representation on Faculty appointment committees: At the Technion, all women (and men) at the rank of Full Professor are members of the departmental tenure and promotion committee. Accordingly, insofar as the number of women in the rank of full professor increases, the greater the representation on the committees will be.
- 2.3.4. Women's representation on senior appointment committees: There are two relevant committees that serve the entire Technion: The Senatorial Preparatory Committee and the Standing Committee. In the academic year 2019-2020, these committees had female membership rates of 8% and 0%, respectively. A focused effort to increase women representation in these committees was very fruitful - in the academic year of 2020-2021, the percentage of women on these committees has already increased to 30% and 22% respectively. Our ambition is to increase and maintain that figure around 30% in both committees.
- 2.3.5. It should be noted that Articles 2.3.1-2.3.5 cannot be disconnected from the ratio of female Full Professors. Therefore, they shall increase in proportion with the increase in the rate of female professors.

## 3. The Strategic Plan - Qualitative Aspects

- 3.1. Following a recommendation of the ad-hoc committee the Technion Senate approved the appointment of Professor Adi Salzberg of the Rappaport Faculty of Medicine as a VP for Diversity and Inclusion. The new office for Diversity and Inclusion is being established to accelerate the transition of the Technion to a more diverse and inclusive institute.
- 3.2. Leadership workshops and the implementation of gender-based thinking: Unconscious biases are learned stereotypes that are automatic, unintentional, and

able to influence behavior. While we would like to think that we can judge faculty candidates and faculty members objectively based on their professional accomplishments, we acknowledge that all of us, men, and women alike, hold unconscious biases that can influence our judgement. For that reason, as part of developing a policy for equal recruitment, the Technion implemented training programs for leadership and decision-making faculty members (for example training for search committee members and preparatory committees) to learn to identify and avoid the influence of unconscious biases in recruitment process (implicit bias awareness program). Members of the Technion's management and senior personnel will participate in these fellowships.

- 3.3 A long-term training program for male and female academic leaders: Following a recommendation of the ad-hoc committee the creation of a long-term training program for male and female academic leaders "Leaders in Campus" started this year. The Technion shall strive to include equal gender representation in its program in order to expedite the Technion's progress towards fair gender representation in key roles.

## 4. The Strategic Plan - Institutional Initiatives

- 4.1 To address the low representation of women, especially in the high-tech oriented faculties (Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, Mechanical engineering, Aerospace Engineering, Math, Physics), a comprehensive plan aimed at widening the funnel continues to be implemented. Due to the COVID19 pandemic, most of the annual face-to-face activities have temporarily stalled, some were replaced by virtual activities and the rest are being resumed in the current academic year. The various activities are directed at all the stages in the academic career. Some examples are listed below:
  - 4.1.1 **High-School students**— increasing the pool of female candidates: the pool of female high school pupils with the right credentials (namely those that study high level of math, physics, and computer science in school) is small (less than 10% of female pupils). The chances of a girl that did not acquire this kind of knowledge at school to continue to higher education in the STEM fields is very slim. Therefore, the Technion extends its effort to high-school, and even mid-school female pupils to encourage them to pursue a science-oriented track in school.
    - Annual TechWomen events for high school students take place (in the past 2 years as virtual events). Together, in the past two years 2,300 outstanding female high school students in science and mathematics attended these events which showcased an array of opportunities flowing from academic studies in science and engineering at Technion.

- Events for mid-school educators (home room teachers) to expose them to the beauty of the scientific and engineering professions, to possible career tracks and to female role models from the academia and the industry, in order to turn them into agents of change who encourage female pupils to choose a science-oriented track in high-school.

4.1.2. **Undergraduate and graduate Students** - To expedite the rate of change in the number of female applicants to academic positions at the Technion, it is critical to coordinate efforts to increase the number of PhD students and increase the number of women leaving for post-doctoral training abroad. For this purpose, several actions are taken:

- Empowerment workshops for excellent female PhD students and events for female PhD students and their spouses to discuss the professional, personal, and familial opportunities and obstacles in a postdoctoral training abroad. These annual workshops were halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. They will be resumed in 2022/2-23.
- An annual “LadyTech” conference for female students and alumni, focusing on exposure to female role models from the industry and academia and developing networking skills.
- Social groups of female students are active in various departments. The aim of their activity is to create a supportive interaction both in the virtual world and in the real one, with social and professional events. For example, a welcome event to new students is held every semester in the Erna Viterbi Faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering, in which a panel of senior students share their experience and advice. Another example are workshops (held in different departments) aimed at preparing female students to job interviews and exposing them to career options in the industry.

4.2. Formulation of a gender-sensitive action plan for coping with the repercussions of the damage caused by COVID with these principles:

4.2.1. An extension for the time for tenure in the wake of COVID was approved by the Technion Senate.

4.2.2. Extension of intake budgets by a year at least for those who make the request

4.2.3. Giving preference to young women for research infrastructure

4.2.4. Consideration as regards overseas travel: A young female staff member may receive a supplementary budget for travel from the Provost for Academic Affairs; travel shall be made possible even during the semester (after a substitute teacher

has been found).

4.2.5. Lowering the burden of teaching - Subject to support by the Planning and Budgeting Committee

4.2.6. Achievement of prizes: The Technion has begun to build a database of female researchers to examine female candidates for each prize and to increase the number of female applicants for prizes.

4.3. Budget - In order to promote women in engineering and technology and to meet the objectives that have been established, the Technion has set aside biennial funds for support and administrative assistance as well as for holding activities in accordance with the work plan. Additionally, a budget to support the women's counselor was authorized on behalf of the Planning & Budgeting Committee



