THE Way of Science
Curiosity

What Is a Research University and Why Does It Matter?
M. İ्रşadi Aksun

FOUND IN TRANSLATION:
Where Curiosity, Innovation and Societal Benefit Meet
İhsan Solaroğlu

The Never-Ending Quest of the Fundamental Sciences
A. Levent Demiřel

Passion

On Work, Passion, and Creating Value
Barış Tan

On the Benefits of Stepping outside Our Intellectual Comfort Zones
Fatços Güncen

Life outside the Lecture Room
Biğen Arif Bıçın

Connection

Creating Business Leaders for the Future
Zeynep Gürhan Canlı

The Work of Building Bridges between Different Worlds
Burcu Sarsılmaz Coşan

Beyond Graduation, a New Bond
Güneş İngin

Contents
Some Thoughts on the Need for a Broader View of Engineering

Fikri Karaesmen

On Becoming Our Best Selves

Aylin Küntay

From the Perspective of Gender and Women’s Studies: Research That Impacts Lives

Bertil Emrah Oder

How to Change the “How” in Learning and Teaching

A. Murat Sözer

Life Skills: Transforming the Culture of Power into One of Empowerment

Zeynep Avcan

The People Factor

Rahmi M. Koç

Looking Back and Looking Ahead

Ömer M. Koç

My Father, Vehbi Koç

Semahat Arsel

“The Young Are My Greatest Hope”

Ali Y. Koç

Demanding Excellence

Tamer Şahinbaş

From İstinye to Rumeli Feneri: A Brief Journey through the History of the University

Attila Aşkar

The Future Beyond the Bookshelf: What Does a Next-Generation Library Look Like?

Tuba Akbattürk Çanak

Equal Opportunity in Education: Lessons from a Pioneering Program

Zeynep Başak Çivi

On the Vehbi Koç Foundation and Its Passion for Sustainability and Principled Representation

Erdal Yıldırım

Suna Kıraç and the University’s Larger Than Life Ideals

Bülent Gültekin

Contents

Milestones

Change

Legacy

Milestones
BORN SOME 250 YEARS AGO, Wilhelm von Humboldt was a German educational reformer who is credited with the rise of so-called research universities. He believed that a university should be dedicated to the objective of creating new knowledge and ensuring the flourishing of the whole person rather than merely providing vocational training and passing on existing knowledge from one generation to the next. He argued that this could only be achieved through "the grand and indispensable condition of freedom and a variety of situations," and that universities should provide an appropriate environment to serve this purpose. He not only founded what is now the Humboldt-University of Berlin, but the "Humboldtian Model of Higher Education" was adopted by leading universities across the western world, especially in the UK and North America. Countless brilliant ideas in the sciences and humanities, countless amazing inventions and life-improving technologies were born of these grand old institutions of learning, creating great wealth and influence for these countries on the way.

25 years ago, our founders formulated a mission for Koç University that carries on this very tradition by promising "to cultivate well-rounded individuals, who can think creatively, independently and objectively" and to consistently strive "to advance knowledge through its efforts and to serve Turkey and humanity as a model of institutional excellence." This lofty mission is also a challenging responsibility.
The systematic creation of new knowledge and the "cultivation of well-rounded individuals" is one of the most demanding and most expensive of human endeavors. It is also an increasingly critical task with far-reaching consequences for the future: given that we are now all hyper-connected and technology-enabled, the qualities, skills, and attitudes we bring to our national and global communities may now matter more than ever before.

At Koç University, we are blessed with the unwavering and generous support of the Koç family, the Vehbi Koç Foundation, the Koç Group, and our Board of Trustees. Together they have been the sure wind in our sails every step along our way and at every critical juncture, enabling and encouraging our ambitions. The induction of the Koç University Rahmi M. Koç Medal of Science in 2016, which recognizes outstanding young scientists of Turkish origin, is just the latest example of the Koç family’s commitment to the ideals and aspirations of the Turkish people and the vision of science in general.

In only 25 years, Koç University has emerged as one of the top research universities in our country and the region. It provides a dynamic environment for research where brilliant faculty and students can freely pursue their interests in order to produce original, world-class scientific research and to make contributions to our nations’ development and welfare.

The facts speak for themselves: About 270 of our current 470 faculty members are active researchers. The number of PhD students at Koç University has been increasing rapidly, and our current 588 doctoral students make up close to 10 percent of the total student body. Koç University faculty are recognized nationally and internationally for their research; many are leading recipients of the Science and Encouragement Awards presented by TÜBİTAK, the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, of the Turkish Academy of Sciences’ Young Scientist Outstanding Achievement Award (TÜBA GEBİP), and of the Science Academy’s Young Scientist Award (BAGEP), as well as several other national and international awards. Furthermore, we are delighted that our faculty lead the field in Turkey for research grants provided by the European Research Council and other international bodies and are honored to have been entrusted with the establishment of several large-scale pioneering research centers, funded by state agencies and industry.

Our commitment to research means that we must continuously improve and expand our technological infrastructure, and our university has made two very large-scale investments in research infrastructure during the past five years alone: the Koç University Hospital, our state-of-the-art teaching and research hospital, opened in 2014 on the Health Sciences Campus in Topkapı, while the Semahat and Dr. Nüreter Arsel Science and Technology Building opened in 2018 on the Rumelihisarı Campus, just in time for our 25th anniversary celebrations. The new building represents a 30 percent increase in usable space on our main campus and provides no less than 36,000 square meters of additional space for such critical research centers as KÜTAM, the Koç University Research Center for Translational Medicine.

This emphasis on interdisciplinary work, on greater collaboration, diversity, and internationally for their research; many are leading recipients of the Science and Encouragement Awards presented by TÜBİTAK, the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, of the Turkish Academy of Sciences’ Young Scientist Outstanding Achievement Award (TÜBA GEBİP), and of the Science Academy’s Young Scientist Award (BAGEP), as well as several other national and international awards. Furthermore, we are delighted that our faculty lead the field in Turkey for research grants provided by the European Research Council and other international bodies and are honored to have been entrusted with the establishment of several large-scale pioneering research centers, funded by state agencies and industry.

Our commitment to research means that we must continuously improve and expand our technological infrastructure, and our university has made two very large-scale investments in research infrastructure during the past five years alone: the Koç University Hospital, our state-of-the-art teaching and research hospital, opened in 2014 on the Health Sciences Campus in Topkapı, while the Semahat and Dr. Nüreter Arsel Science and Technology Building opened in 2018 on the Rumelihisarı Campus, just in time for our 25th anniversary celebrations. The new building represents a 30 percent increase in usable space on our main campus and provides no less than 36,000 square meters of additional space for such critical research centers as KÜTAM, the Koç University Research Center for Translational Medicine.

This emphasis on interdisciplinary work, on greater collaboration, diversity, and internationally for their research; many are leading recipients of the Science and Encouragement Awards presented by TÜBİTAK, the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, of the Turkish Academy of Sciences’ Young Scientist Outstanding Achievement Award (TÜBA GEBİP), and of the Science Academy’s Young Scientist Award (BAGEP), as well as several other national and international awards. Furthermore, we are delighted that our faculty lead the field in Turkey for research grants provided by the European Research Council and other international bodies and are honored to have been entrusted with the establishment of several large-scale pioneering research centers, funded by state agencies and industry.

Our commitment to research means that we must continuously improve and expand our technological infrastructure, and our university has made two very large-scale investments in research infrastructure during the past five years alone: the Koç University Hospital, our state-of-the-art teaching and research hospital, opened in 2014 on the Health Sciences Campus in Topkapı, while the Semahat and Dr. Nüreter Arsel Science and Technology Building opened in 2018 on the Rumelihisarı Campus, just in time for our 25th anniversary celebrations. The new building represents a 30 percent increase in usable space on our main campus and provides no less than 36,000 square meters of additional space for such critical research centers as KÜTAM, the Koç University Research Center for Translational Medicine.

This emphasis on interdisciplinary work, on greater collaboration, diversity, and internationally for their research; many are leading recipients of the Science and Encouragement Awards presented by TÜBİTAK, the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, of the Turkish Academy of Sciences’ Young Scientist Outstanding Achievement Award (TÜBA GEBİP), and of the Science Academy’s Young Scientist Award (BAGEP), as well as several other national and international awards. Furthermore, we are delighted that our faculty lead the field in Turkey for research grants provided by the European Research Council and other international bodies and are honored to have been entrusted with the establishment of several large-scale pioneering research centers, funded by state agencies and industry.

Our commitment to research means that we must continuously improve and expand our technological infrastructure, and our university has made two very large-scale investments in research infrastructure during the past five years alone: the Koç University Hospital, our state-of-the-art teaching and research hospital, opened in 2014 on the Health Sciences Campus in Topkapı, while the Semahat and Dr. Nüreter Arsel Science and Technology Building opened in 2018 on the Rumelihisarı Campus, just in time for our 25th anniversary celebrations. The new building represents a 30 percent increase in usable space on our main campus and provides no less than 36,000 square meters of additional space for such critical research centers as KÜTAM, the Koç University Research Center for Translational Medicine.
Curiosity is the most essential mental attitude for learning in general and science in particular. It is the desire to know what is really happening, to want to know exactly "what" and "why" and "how". As scientists we assume ignorance, make observations, test hypotheses, submit our findings to the critical scrutiny of our peers, and accept to throw out even our best theories—as they frequently are—when they are proven wrong by new facts and reasoning. Science is far from perfect, but the self-correction mechanism of the scientific method has stood the test of time and enabled the most extraordinary, almost miraculous, development of human genius.
The world is changing at such an unprecedented pace that any university has to run hard to keep up with this. However, any university that regards itself as a “research university” has to run twice as hard. And to do this, one needs a firm ground to stand on and a strong team to help along the way. That is what we, as the Office of the Vice President for Research and Development, regard as our main task.

The first requirement for a research university is to do everything necessary to attract and retain highly qualified research faculty. People are the top requirement for research. As faculty cannot conduct all research activities by themselves, strong PhD programs and postgraduate programs are also a must. But this is not enough in itself either; a relevant research infrastructure needs to be in place. Given that even a single piece of laboratory equipment can cost a million euros, setting up this infrastructure is a costly endeavor, but one without which it is impossible to do meaningful research in many areas of medicine, biology and genetics. So, is this enough? No, because research is now often conducted by groups in different locations so that it is important to also have a strong network for collaboration and exchange. Furthermore, we want our students to be able to go abroad and need to attract international students, all of which also requires an active network. Initially, our university’s network was largely in the US, but we are now well known also in Europe. High-impact research can only be conducted under these conditions, i.e., with the right people, infrastructure and network as each of these needs to be very strong.

At Koç University, we have been hiring the best faculty and are working to get the best PhD students into our graduate programs. We are making considerable investments into infrastructure. For example, we have completed an entire building for new research facilities at a cost of about 70 million dollars. It also includes a clean room and a central research laboratory. We hope that it will become the most productive and high-impact research facility in Turkey and the wider region.

We have a standard support mechanism in place for every new research faculty that is customized according to the researcher’s field of study. Engineering, science and medicine, in particular, often have special infrastructural needs. For instance, we provide an initial one-year research fund to each new faculty member that will cover the costs for research students, equipment, and other infrastructural needs. We encourage research faculty to find external funding in the following year but will...
An ERC grant provides significant exposure to both the university and the researcher. We were awarded our first ERC grant in 2012 and have been awarded a total of ten ERC grants since then. Eight of these researchers continue to do their research here at Koç University and have attracted very good postgraduate and postdoc research assistants into their projects. As of today, 8 of the total 16 ERC-funded research projects currently conducted in Turkey are at Koç University. Our ERC application success rate is about 22 percent, higher than the European average, but we are working hard to increase the number of ERC funds even further.

The ERC application support team at Koç University is the best team in Turkey, and other universities often consult with our team when they have a question. We make a point of answering every request for help from other universities, because we believe that this is a matter of national interest.

As Koç University, we also provide in-house funding to basic science and social science research projects through what we call “seed funds”. This fund, granted once or twice each year, supports faculty’s curiosity-based research for which it is difficult to find external funding. It encourages five or six faculty members to apply for an ERC grant, and then works with them for an entire year, helping them in their preparations. For instance, we set up a panel to which they made their initial presentations before presenting to the ERC panel. We enabled them to go to Europe or the US to complete some of their experimental trials. The fact that we provide this kind of broad support is not because we are rich in resources—we are, after all, a relatively small university—but because we regard this as an investment. Unfortunately, most other universities’ bureaucratic structures do not allow them to support their research faculty in this manner.

Among these, the European Research Council (ERC) is a funding agency that provides some of the most substantial funds awarded directly to researchers. When we first started working on ERC funds, there was not a single researcher who was conducting research in Turkey with an ERC fund. First, we went to Brussels to introduce our university and research faculty to the council. Before making our first application, we worked with our deans to continue to support their research for a second year, if they should fail to do so. However, in most cases, this has not been necessary as almost all of our research faculty have been awarded research funds from TÜBİTAK, the European Union or other sources.
funding. Faculty members only need to write up a short proposal. This two-year research fund will cover special equipment, infrastructural and travel costs.

Looking at research spending from a national perspective, Turkey’s spending, like that of many other countries, has increased overall, and TÜBİTAK is now spending more funds on research and development than in the past. Turkey’s state research budget, which used to be approximately 0.3-0.4 percent of GDP, has now increased to about 1 percent. This is already a great improvement; however, the mere budget increase will not be enough to do high-impact research; having high-quality people is also a must. It is not difficult to guess which countries allocate the highest share of GDP to both R&D and number of researchers: South Korea, Japan, Finland, Sweden, Germany, Israel. As a nation, our R&D funds have increased, but we need to invest in people to increase the number of researchers as well. As our university’s president Professor İnan frequently points out, we need to have many more PhD programs nationwide, and an economic environment needs to be created where students will be incentivized to go on to postgraduate degrees. In Turkey, the exact opposite is the case at the moment, and this frame of mind has to change. There should be better state incentives, and technology companies should offer more attractive career opportunities to people with PhDs. The United States, for instance, has a very high number of PhD students. However, only about 10 to 15 percent of those stay in academia while the rest choose to work in industry.

Next to state policy, there needs to be a change in the perception of research both in industry and society at large. Everyone must be convinced that nothing can be achieved without research. Most business executives will admit that innovation and research are very important but take no action. There is a general notion that return on investment in research is low. This may be the case in the short

Currently, I am seeking to participate in projects on the effects of artificial intelligence, robots and the Internet of things (IoT), which are in the process of taking over many aspects of our lives. I’d like to find out whether a robot could learn legal reasoning or to what extent we will be able to hand over our work to robots.

Ceylan Necipoğlu’12  
SCHOOL OF LAW
Besides the fact that in Turkey the number of researchers is still low, there is also the problem that most funds—as is the case in the rest of the world as well—are allocated to projects with concrete applications. Funding agencies want to see results quickly, and that is killing fundamental science research. National research investment plans should be inclusive and made for the long-term so that future generations can also benefit. In Turkey, TÜBİTAK, the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, has been investing fair amounts in fundamental sciences, even giving scholarships to fundamental science students. But if we look at the overall numbers, the vast majority of funds go to development projects. Fundamental science projects receive much less, and their share in the total budget decreases each year.

As the physicist Richard Feynman famously said in 1959, “There’s plenty of room at the bottom,” meaning that there is much research to be done on a small scale. If it were not for this vision and the discoveries of these earlier generations, we would not have had most of our modern technologies today, the groundwork for which was created in the 1910s and 1920s. At the time, almost nobody foresaw practical applications for quantum theory, but foundational technologies that later led to the internet and computer technologies would not have become possible without these discoveries. And as all of this basic research was conducted in Europe and the United States at the time, they are the ones reaping most of its benefits now.

That is why I believe that investing in fundamental sciences is important both for our country and the world. We, like all research universities, need to keep advocating inclusive research across the board, including those that have little foreseeable practical application or none.
The mind is not a vessel that needs filling, but wood that needs igniting.

—Plutarch, “On Listening”, Moralia, c. 110 AD

**FOUND IN TRANSLATION:**
Where Curiosity, Innovation and Societal Benefit Meet

**İhsan Solaroğlu**

Professor of Neurosurgery / Assistant Dean, School of Medicine / Director, Research Center for Translational Medicine (KUTTAM)

Prof. İhsan Solaroğlu, MD, is a neurosurgeon and a professor at Koç University’s Department of Neurosurgery. His secondary appointment is adjunct professor of basic science research at Loma Linda University School of Medicine, California. With a clinical interest in neurovascular surgery and neuro-oncology, Prof. Solaroğlu’s research focuses on hematopoietic growth factors in neuroprotection and neuro-oncology. He has received numerous awards including the Professor Raja Award for Young Neurosurgeon 2017, and the AANS Young Neurosurgeon Award 2017. He serves as a member or advisory board and reviewer of several scientific journals, including Stroke, Experimental Neurology, Neurological Research, Acta Neurochirurgica and Spine.

Prof. Solaroğlu is the founder and former president of International Basic Neurosurgery Courses, the president of SeENS Neurosurgery Courses, and a member of the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies’ Neuro-Oncology Committee and Neurovascular Disorders Committee. Prof. Solaroğlu also served as the scientific chairman of the 2017 WFNS World Congress.
of a three-year establishment grant. At present, we have completed our first year. The center has about six thousand square meters of space, divided between its facilities at the Koç University Hospital in Topkapı and the Rumelifeneri Campus. In three years, all of our infrastructure and laboratories will have been completed. There are already dozens of interdisciplinary projects underway, but KUTTAM also provides facilities and technology both to research projects at other Koç University colleges and at other universities. There are also joint projects with industrial partners. We are, for instance, currently developing a project on wearable health technologies together with a local manufacturer. All of the clinical trials for this device, a remote heart monitor, are being conducted at Koç University. We are also currently conducting clinical trials for a wearable technology device for Parkinson’s patients. There are several collaborations and joint research projects, both with local and international partners, with universities and other institutions abroad. For instance, we are about to start a joint project on biomedical equipment and healthcare technologies with the Max Planck Institute and Stanford University. We are still in our first year, but research at KUTTAM has already generated a significant number of high-impact papers. Once the facilities are fully completed in the next couple of years, KUTTAM has the potential of becoming one of the most important translational research centers in Europe.

KUTTAM is dedicated to the development of biomedical equipment. (This describes any medical equipment, be it a stent, an intensive care monitor, an MR scanner, CT or angiography equipment, etc.) The reasons for this focus are very clear: Improvements in Turkey’s socio-economic welfare, coupled with population growth and better access to healthcare, has resulted in an increased need for medical equipment and drugs. This has caused social security costs to skyrocket. Turkey’s spending on medical equipment was about 2 billion dollars in 2012; in 2015 that number went up to 2.7 billion dollars. Turkey is one of the top twenty consumers in the global biomedical equipment market. 85 percent of all medical equipment in Turkey has to be imported, only 15 percent are produced locally, and this consists mostly of low-value-added products such as patient beds, simple patient monitors or cables. Turkey buys innovative, high value-added equipment mostly from North America and Europe. This creates a huge burden on the government’s budget. Medical imports are second only to energy imports in Turkey’s national budget deficit.
Turkey spends almost 120 billion liras annually on drugs, medical equipment and medical care. The Turkish government’s target is to produce 20 percent of all medical supplies locally by 2018 and 32 percent by 2023. These goals may be realizable in the pharmaceutical industry, but in the biomedical equipment industry the initial target has so far not been reached. Unless there is change, our social security system will be unable to pay for these costs. Healthcare expenses are not a luxury; they are not things we can do without, and there is no doubt that this need will only continue to grow as the population grows older. We must, as a nation, find a solution to our overwhelming dependency on foreign suppliers for healthcare products.

In Turkey, there are universities with excellent medical schools, and there are universities with excellent colleges of engineering; but no single university has both. This is the advantage that Koç University brings to the field, namely, an outstanding medical school under the same roof as equally outstanding colleges of engineering, natural sciences and social sciences, thereby creating an ideal ecosystem for research. At KUTTAM, our goal is to create an ecosystem that will help produce the innovative biomedical equipment and inventions that our country needs, while also introducing young talent into this field and maximizing university-industry collaboration.

For Turkey to be able to create innovative, high-impact products for the global healthcare market, life scientists, engineers and social scientists must come together to jointly solve a problem, actively conduct research together. Physicians are no longer in a position to solve clinical problems alone. Today, they need to have conversations with molecular biologists and engineers and take advantage of their perspectives on how a specific clinical problem could be solved. This is more than simple collaboration; it means complementing each other to reach a solution together. What matters is that we are able to create high-value results that truly contain the best of our combined knowledge. KUTTAM has brought together a formidable team that is made up of faculty, post-doc, doctoral and graduate students from Koç University’s School of Medicine and its other colleges—all working together with this goal in mind.

As to my own interests: I am a brain and neurosurgeon. My clinical areas of interest lie in neurovascular surgery and neuro-oncology, while my research interests lie in the molecular biology of brain tumors, especially of malignant brain tumors.
I have written a great many articles, books, and research papers over the years, but the one that I value the most is an article, published in 2011, on a spinal surgery subject. This research article defined a new anatomical structure, which I named the “ATA ligament”, and which has since become part of the medical literature in this field. My research on this previously undefined connective tissue in the spine was published in the most influential journal in the field, Spine. Even though my research interest was related to the brain rather than the spine, it is the latter—triggered simply by curiosity about a clinical case—that has become the most prestigious and professionally rewarding research I have done so far.

I am still actively engaged in my research at the Loma Linda University in California, where I have been a professor since 2012, as our collaboration did not end with my return to Turkey. I have also visited a great many medical centers in the field of brain surgery across many different countries and have had the opportunity to meet and discuss with many of the world’s most famous brain surgeons. In 2017, I was the scientific chairman of the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies. Naturally, I know most of the universities in the world that are productive in the molecular or clinical field. Among these, Koç University is relatively small in academic terms and research volume, but its work in the life sciences is already creating impact, and I have no doubt whatsoever that this impact will become much larger in the future. There is much research going on around the world, but there are only a handful of people working on problems in certain areas or working with the innovative methods I mentioned above. Koç University is one of those few places that includes members of this small group of people, and that makes it very influential.
The Never-Ending Quest of the Fundamental Sciences

I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious.

—Albert Einstein, Letter to Carl Suida, 1932

A. Levent Demirel

The Never-Ending Quest of the Fundamental Sciences

A. Levent Demirel
Professor of Chemistry / Dean, College of Sciences /
Director, Graduate School of Science and Engineering

Prof. A. Levent Demirel earned a BSc in electrical engineering and physics at Boğaziçi University in 1989, and a PhD in physics at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign in 1996. He was a post-doctoral researcher at the FOM Institute AMOLF in Amsterdam in 1996–1997. Prof. Demirel joined the Koç University Chemistry Department as a faculty member in 1997 and was promoted to full professor in 2008. Currently, Prof. Demirel is dean of the College of Sciences and director of the Graduate School of Science and Engineering. He received the TUBITAK Young Scientist Award in 1998, the TUBA Young Scientist Award in 2001 and the Koç University Werner-von-Siemens Excellence Award in 2003. Prof. Demirel’s current research interests are in the field of surface and polymer physical chemistry.

The way of science

All of our current projects at the College of Sciences and the Graduate School of Sciences and Engineering tackle interesting questions, but for me, the real excitement lies in the range of subjects under investigation by our research faculty and students. We are looking at the structure, dynamics, and function of a single molecule while also trying to understand the brain, the most complex biological structure of all, where billions of neurons interact with each other. Similarly, as we are looking at the electron, a single entity, we are also delving into questions relating to astrophysics and the study of galaxies.

One specific example of ongoing research in cell biology in the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics, for example, has to do with molecular defects that cause the so-called centrosome amplification in cells. Centrosomes are organized structures deep inside the cell, and centrosome amplification, i.e., the occurrence of more than two centrosomes in a cell, is a common feature of cancer tumors. However, whether this is a cause or a consequence of cancer remains unclear and a hotly debated subject in cancer research.

Another exciting piece of research by a young faculty member from the Department of Physics involves optogenetics to control the brain functions of C. elegans, a tiny worm about one millimeter long, to make it move towards the left and right or back and forth. Optogenetics is a new technique that involves the use of light to control nerve cells that have been genetically modified to become light-sensitive. Optogenetics...
molecules which have both hydrophobic and hydrophilic molecules restructure in water and controlling this process is a long-term research project. It involves manipulating the chemical structure of these molecules, ideally one atom at a time, to observe its behavior and self-restructuring.

This brings me to the importance of fundamental science. Pure science or curiosity-driven research is not really concerned with the “usefulness” of new knowledge but simply in expanding the boundaries of existing knowledge, opening up previously unknown territories. When we do research as fundamental scientists we do not ask “What is it good for?” but “Which unknown question does this answer?” That does not mean that research in the fundamental sciences has no practical value. Quite the opposite is true. All great technological advances of the present are based on new insights in the fundamental sciences, but often the utility of a newly answered scientific question is discovered later, sometimes much later.

Another example of current projects at the Department of Physics is in optofluidics, a newly emerging field of research that combines optics and microfluidics. Optofluidics applications include “lab-on-a-chip” devices, fluid-based and fluid-controlled waveguides, optic devices such as lasers and lenses, biosensors, imaging tools, renewable energy solutions produced via photocatalytic reactions, and so on.

There is, of course, much excitement in the field of nanoscience and nanotechnology in the Chemistry Department and the chemical sciences, where our researchers are trying to synthesize and characterize various nano-sized objects smaller than a hundred nanometers (one-billionth of a meter) or make computer simulations of them. The diameter of a human hair, for instance, is one hundred thousand nanometers. At these microscopic scales, the mechanical, chemical, optical, and electrical properties are very different from those of larger objects, and they allow for new functions. For example, adding certain nanoparticles into a polymer nanocomposite will make the plastic stronger, while adding different nanoparticles will increase its flexibility. There are now a great many different engineering applications in nanotechnology such as nano-micro electromechanical systems; this is a very vibrant field of research.

My own research interest also lies in the nanostructuralization of nanocomposite materials and molecules. I am particularly working on the nanostructures composed by hydrophobic interactions. (“Hydrophobia” means fear of water.) Hydrophobic molecules attract each other. Understanding how
One such example is the discovery of two-photon absorption, or TPA, first predicted by Maria Goeppert-Mayer in 1931 in her doctoral dissertation. No practical application for this phenomenon was foreseen at the time. Even Goeppert-Mayer herself remarked at the end of her thesis that the probability turned out to be very small and that there would likely never be any practical application for her calculations. Thirty years later, the invention of the laser permitted the first experimental verification of her prediction and TPA led to the development of nonlinear optics, which is a standard technology in use today in spectroscopy, where light is used to analyze materials, enabling vast new areas of scientific discovery and technological advances in optics, astronomy and many other fields. There are many similar examples in the history of science where an answer to a seemingly minor question in fundamental science eventually led to scientific and technological developments with great social and economic impact. Any new knowledge that is generated through fundamental science research, therefore, must be appreciated and should not be underestimated. Even if the discovery seems in itself small or insignificant at the time, it may turn out to have a major impact on the course of science later on.

Fundamental science research has always been significant, and that has not and will not change. What has changed, however, is the way research is being conducted. This means that the personal skills needed to be a successful research scientist today have also changed. It is no longer sufficient to be just brilliant and hard-working. Researchers today also have to have great communication skills as they need to collaborate effectively with other researchers in interdisciplinary and cross-national teams, and excellent language skills in English are a must in any field today. Secondly, it is virtually impossible for any one scientist to tackle any major problem by him or herself, so the ability to engage in productive teamwork is also absolutely essential today.

The ability to work under pressure is also more important today than in the past. There is the pressure from funding agencies and pressure to publish.

I am interested in environmental politics and economics, and I am currently working on international climate and energy policies. I want to show politicians and national leaders that taking action against climate change has economic benefits.

Gökçe Sencan ’16
Molecular Biology and Genetics & Chemical and Biological Engineering, Graduate Student, University of California, Santa Barbara

I am interested in environmental politics and economics, and I am currently working on international climate and energy policies. I want to show politicians and national leaders that taking action against climate change has economic benefits.
Consider this scenario: Trying to develop a super-strong adhesive, a researcher spills some chemical on the floor. A stack of papers falls onto the spill, and the researcher realizes that the paper can be peeled off easily and repositioned again. Such an unexpected result will become an important discovery only if the researcher has a flexible mindset. Without such a mindset, he might just be annoyed with the spill, wipe it up and pick up the paper. It was just such a coincidence that enabled the invention of the sticky notes known as Post-it. The researcher, Spencer Silver, had been looking for a super-strong adhesive but found a weak adhesive instead. Using this adhesive for papers, one of his colleagues, Art Fry, realized that the papers could be peeled off easily. To observe this kind of chance occurrence with an open mind, recognize its importance and come up with a new idea is what defines the true scientist.

Some students today are rightly concerned that the career they are aiming for as a research scientist or engineer might not offer viable job opportunities anymore in five to ten years, as the pace of technological change is speeding up by the day. I always tell them that the best precaution is to get a solid foundation in sciences. Once the base is strong, you can build anything on it, no matter the direction science and engineering are taking at the moment.

Currently, hot research topics in biology and medicine revolve around neuroscience, the understanding of the human brain, and molecular biology in general. In physics, “two-dimensional” materials such as graphene, a sheet of atoms only a single layer thick, have fascinating electronic and chemical properties with many exciting applications. In mathematics and computer engineering, big data analysis mathematics and graph theory are at the forefront of researchers’ interest, while nanomaterials and nanotechnology in chemistry will continue to be hot research topics in the near future.

The Never-Ending Quest of the Fundamental Sciences
Nothing great has been achieved in the world without passion.

GEORG WILHELM FRIEDRICH HEGEL
Lectures on the Philosophy of History
1832

COOL CURIOSITY ALONE WOULD NOT HAVE GOTTEN US HERE. WE MUST ALSO HAVE REAL PASSION FOR WHAT WE DO, FOR OUR FIELD OF STUDY AND WORK. ONLY PASSION WILL SUSTAIN OUR EFFORTS WHEN THE GOING GETS HARD AND OUR DETERMINATION IS PUT TO THE TEST; ONLY PASSION WILL HELP US OVERCOME MISTAKES AND FAILURES, SO COMMON ON THE WAY OF LEARNING AND ACHIEVING ANYTHING NEW—BE IT IN MATHEMATICS OR PHILOSOPHY OR SPORTS OR POETRY. BUT WHEN WE DO OVERCOME THEM, THE REWARDS ARE USUALLY WONDERFUL, AND SOMETIMES EVEN GREAT.
HARD WORK IS, of course, necessary to succeed; one can’t get results without investing the required amount of time. But rather than just working towards a specific goal, I think it is more important to work I believe that once one invests the necessary time in something one is really dedicated to and feels passionate about, results will naturally follow.

I am one of Koç University’s first faculty members. This is where I started my academic life after completing my PhD. Everything I have accomplished since has become a part of the university’s and my own development. That is why Koç University means more to me than simply a place of work.

The first time I came to Koç University was in September 1993. I had come for an interview while still working on my PhD thesis and started working at the university in July 1994. At the time, I was a young, 25-year-old faculty member, freshly out of graduate school. I was asked later on, and somewhat unexpectedly, to join the university’s administration as director of the Graduate School of Management. I regarded the position not really as an administrative post but as an opportunity to contribute to the development of the institution. I started thinking about what needed to be changed and how I could improve things here.

Since then, I have served as dean of the College of Administrative Sciences and Economics and as vice president for academic affairs, but I also love to teach and do research and have continued to do so throughout this time. This year, I am also doing research as a visiting professor at University College London, directing a European project, editing two journals and supervising five doctoral students.

When I was doing research at Harvard University during my sabbatical, I came across a series of portraits of the university’s deans in one of the meeting rooms; each had a simple caption summarizing their main contribution underneath. I believe that the significant contributions we make will ultimately be summarized in such simple sentences. I always

Zeal is proper for a task, time-wasting is taboo; anyone who wastes time on his task is neglecting his task.

— "The Advice of a Supervisor to a Younger Scribe" (Tahha'a C, Sumerian cuneiform text, c. 3000 bc)

Barış Tan

On Work, Passion, and Creating Value

BARİŞ TAN PROFESSOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING / VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Prof. Barış Tan graduated from Boğaziçi University Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering and completed an MSE in industrial and systems engineering and an MSc in manufacturing systems at the University of Florida. He received a PhD in industrial and systems engineering from the same university. Among his research interests are design and control of production systems, inter-firm cooperation in supply chains, stochastic modeling, and business models.

Prof. Tan joined Koç University in 1994. He was dean of the College of Administrative Sciences (2007–2013) and director of the Graduate School of Business (2003–2006, 2008–2010). He held visiting scholar positions at Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge University, and the University College London. He is a member of the international advisory board of EM Lyon (France) and Norttingham Business School (UK), senate chair of EM Lyon University of Management and Economics (Lisbon), and a member of the EQUIS Awarding Body by the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD). Prof. Tan is the recipient of the Turkish Academy of Sciences Distinguished Young Scholar Award, TÜBİTAK Fellowship, NATO Science Fellowship, the Rockefeller Foundation Residency Award at Bellagio Center, and received best paper awards for his publications. His research interests are in the field of surface and polymer physical chemistry.
I studied law for five years and practiced law for another two and a half, but it was not my dream. A Chinese proverb says, “If you want life-long happiness, do what you love.”

My first book was published in June, and I am glad that writing is now more than a hobby to me. Every choice is a renunciation and with every renunciation you gain something new.

Alper Akal’11
School of Law

aim to do work that creates some form of value. Hard work that is not productive does not seem meaningful to me. Some days I am extremely busy, but if my efforts haven’t been productive, I don’t feel happy about having worked hard. I always ask myself what value my work should be creating, and this question lets me make more efficient use of my time. This applies to anything I do, whether it be in research, teaching or administration.

If I look back on my time as dean and director, I could single out two contributions above all: First is my effort in helping convince valuable new faculty members to join Koç University and support them to the best of my abilities. It makes me very happy now to witness how successful they are.

Secondly, I worked hard and with great dedication to help Koç University gain international recognition and improve its international relations. Many of us during the initial years were
Over the years, I have been invited to serve on the advisory boards of several European universities and international organizations. It gives me great satisfaction to know that I am contributing to the development of these institutions by serving on their advisory boards or assessment panels, and that is why I continue to serve in these roles.

Needless to say, all this means that I travel a lot. In the past ten years, I have flown 1.7 million miles to attend conferences, research meetings, advisory board meetings, senate meetings, universities’ external assessment panels, and to make research presentations. I have served on the external assessment boards of ten universities in Australia, aware of the fact that a lot of great things were happening here but that we were not good at communicating this to the outside world. When I became dean, I decided to put serious effort into this task and went to a great many places to talk about all the things we did here at Koç. These efforts during my time as the director of the Graduate School of Business included obtaining EQUIS accreditation in Europe, gaining acceptance into CEMS (Coalition of European Management Schools), increasing the number of exchange colleges and of incoming and outgoing exchange students, and getting into the Financial Times rankings. All of these have paid off and considerably increased the university’s international standing and particularly that of its College of Administrative Sciences and Economics.

Developing these international relations was not always easy. Most faculty here at Koç University hold doctorates from US universities. We, therefore, had strong ties to academic circles in the US but also needed to strengthen our connections in Europe. That is why the EQUIS accreditation was so important. Our application for CEMS membership was initially met with some reluctance because Turkey is not a member of the EU, but sometime later we were invited to join the network, nonetheless. All these efforts have also created strong publicity for Turkey and for Koç University abroad.
Canada, Germany, Denmark, France, Sweden, Japan, Mexico, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, and the UK and have chaired eight of these boards. Last year, I flew to Australia twice and both times was only able to stay for two nights. At the same time, my research activities and projects have also been increasing. This means that I have a hectic schedule, but since I enjoy it, it doesn’t feel like a burden to me.

As vice president for academic affairs, I am also working to improve the university’s analytical capabilities concerning strategy development. We have many exciting plans for the future, but to realize those plans, we must base our decisions on the best possible analysis of available data. Our efforts to create a suitable technology infrastructure for all educational and academic processes continue.

As we look to the future, the issue I would like to focus on in the next five years is what we can do to further improve and advance the university’s international standing. We are still in a growth phase, and it is essential that we continue to attract the best talent among faculty members and help them acclimate and flourish here. It is also important to us that all our students graduate from university with the best possible experience, and this is a process that must be improved continuously. Another subject we have started to work on is how to systemize the university’s quality control processes that were launched a few years ago. Our overall priority, therefore, is to manage our current growth phase in the best and most effective way possible and to ensure the university’s sustainability.

Even as early as my first interview here in 1993, Koç University has always had the lofty aim of becoming an exemplary university in Turkey and the world. We all believe in this vision and have evidently made impressive progress towards this goal. We are far ahead in many regards of what other young universities have been able to accomplish in this time. However, it is also true that there are other universities of comparable age in other countries that have, albeit with the help of state funds, advanced further than us, and looking at their example, it is clear that we still have a long way to go.

Being a senior, I have started to look into career opportunities and doing research on my plans for the future. At the moment, I am most interested in sports psychology and am looking for career opportunities in Turkey and abroad. In the future, I would love to work as a sports psychologist at a football club such as Real Madrid or Barcelona.

Ezgi Ezenci
Senior, Psychology – Sociology

PASSION
The way of science

The core program at Koç University is based on a highly regarded system of education which has been practiced in the US since the 1900s. Many US universities oblige students to take courses from a diverse range of subjects, regardless of students’ majors, during their first two years of study to expand their intellectual horizons.

Koç University has had a Core Program—initially called History of Civilizations—since its foundation in 1993. It has undergone several revisions since then but has always remained a fundamental part of our undergraduate experience.

On the Benefits of Stepping outside Our Intellectual Comfort Zones

The end of man (...) is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole; (and) for this there are two requisites, freedom, and a variety of situations.

—John Stuart Mill (quoting Wilhelm von Humboldt), On Liberty, 1859

Fatoş Gökşen

On the Benefits of Stepping outside Our Intellectual Comfort Zones

Fatoş Gökşen

THE CORE PROGRAM at Koç University is based on a highly regarded system of education which has been practiced in the US since the 1900s. Many US universities oblige students to take courses from a diverse range of subjects, regardless of students' majors, during their first two years of study to expand their intellectual horizons.

Koç University has had a Core Program—initially called History of Civilizations—since its foundation in 1993. It has undergone several revisions since then but has always remained a fundamental part of our undergraduate experience.

On the Benefits of Stepping outside Our Intellectual Comfort Zones

The end of man (...) is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole; (and) for this there are two requisites, freedom, and a variety of situations.

—John Stuart Mill (quoting Wilhelm von Humboldt), On Liberty, 1859

Fatoş Gökşen

On the Benefits of Stepping outside Our Intellectual Comfort Zones

Fatoş Gökşen

THE CORE PROGRAM at Koç University is based on a highly regarded system of education which has been practiced in the US since the 1900s. Many US universities oblige students to take courses from a diverse range of subjects, regardless of students' majors, during their first two years of study to expand their intellectual horizons.

Koç University has had a Core Program—initially called History of Civilizations—since its foundation in 1993. It has undergone several revisions since then but has always remained a fundamental part of our undergraduate experience.

On the Benefits of Stepping outside Our Intellectual Comfort Zones

The end of man (...) is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole; (and) for this there are two requisites, freedom, and a variety of situations.

—John Stuart Mill (quoting Wilhelm von Humboldt), On Liberty, 1859

Fatoş Gökşen

On the Benefits of Stepping outside Our Intellectual Comfort Zones

Fatoş Gökşen

THE CORE PROGRAM at Koç University is based on a highly regarded system of education which has been practiced in the US since the 1900s. Many US universities oblige students to take courses from a diverse range of subjects, regardless of students' majors, during their first two years of study to expand their intellectual horizons.

Koç University has had a Core Program—initially called History of Civilizations—since its foundation in 1993. It has undergone several revisions since then but has always remained a fundamental part of our undergraduate experience.

On the Benefits of Stepping outside Our Intellectual Comfort Zones

The end of man (...) is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole; (and) for this there are two requisites, freedom, and a variety of situations.

—John Stuart Mill (quoting Wilhelm von Humboldt), On Liberty, 1859

Fatoş Gökşen

On the Benefits of Stepping outside Our Intellectual Comfort Zones

Fatoş Gökşen

THE CORE PROGRAM at Koç University is based on a highly regarded system of education which has been practiced in the US since the 1900s. Many US universities oblige students to take courses from a diverse range of subjects, regardless of students' majors, during their first two years of study to expand their intellectual horizons.

Koç University has had a Core Program—initially called History of Civilizations—since its foundation in 1993. It has undergone several revisions since then but has always remained a fundamental part of our undergraduate experience.

On the Benefits of Stepping outside Our Intellectual Comfort Zones

The end of man (...) is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole; (and) for this there are two requisites, freedom, and a variety of situations.

—John Stuart Mill (quoting Wilhelm von Humboldt), On Liberty, 1859

Fatoş Gökşen

On the Benefits of Stepping outside Our Intellectual Comfort Zones

Fatoş Gökşen

THE CORE PROGRAM at Koç University is based on a highly regarded system of education which has been practiced in the US since the 1900s. Many US universities oblige students to take courses from a diverse range of subjects, regardless of students' majors, during their first two years of study to expand their intellectual horizons.

Koç University has had a Core Program—initially called History of Civilizations—since its foundation in 1993. It has undergone several revisions since then but has always remained a fundamental part of our undergraduate experience.

On the Benefits of Stepping outside Our Intellectual Comfort Zones

The end of man (...) is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole; (and) for this there are two requisites, freedom, and a variety of situations.

—John Stuart Mill (quoting Wilhelm von Humboldt), On Liberty, 1859

Fatoş Gökşen

On the Benefits of Stepping outside Our Intellectual Comfort Zones

Fatoş Gökşen

THE CORE PROGRAM at Koç University is based on a highly regarded system of education which has been practiced in the US since the 1900s. Many US universities oblige students to take courses from a diverse range of subjects, regardless of students' majors, during their first two years of study to expand their intellectual horizons.

Koç University has had a Core Program—initially called History of Civilizations—since its foundation in 1993. It has undergone several revisions since then but has always remained a fundamental part of our undergraduate experience.

On the Benefits of Stepping outside Our Intellectual Comfort Zones

The end of man (...) is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole; (and) for this there are two requisites, freedom, and a variety of situations.

—John Stuart Mill (quoting Wilhelm von Humboldt), On Liberty, 1859

Fatoş Gökşen

On the Benefits of Stepping outside Our Intellectual Comfort Zones

Fatoş Gökşen

THE CORE PROGRAM at Koç University is based on a highly regarded system of education which has been practiced in the US since the 1900s. Many US universities oblige students to take courses from a diverse range of subjects, regardless of students' majors, during their first two years of study to expand their intellectual horizons.

Koç University has had a Core Program—initially called History of Civilizations—since its foundation in 1993. It has undergone several revisions since then but has always remained a fundamental part of our undergraduate experience.

On the Benefits of Stepping outside Our Intellectual Comfort Zones

The end of man (...) is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole; (and) for this there are two requisites, freedom, and a variety of situations.

—John Stuart Mill (quoting Wilhelm von Humboldt), On Liberty, 1859

Fatoş Gökşen

On the Benefits of Stepping outside Our Intellectual Comfort Zones

Fatoş Gökşen

THE CORE PROGRAM at Koç University is based on a highly regarded system of education which has been practiced in the US since the 1900s. Many US universities oblige students to take courses from a diverse range of subjects, regardless of students' majors, during their first two years of study to expand their intellectual horizons.

Koç University has had a Core Program—initially called History of Civilizations—since its foundation in 1993. It has undergone several revisions since then but has always remained a fundamental part of our undergraduate experience.

On the Benefits of Stepping outside Our Intellectual Comfort Zones

The end of man (...) is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole; (and) for this there are two requisites, freedom, and a variety of situations.

—John Stuart Mill (quoting Wilhelm von Humboldt), On Liberty, 1859
In a major core curriculum overhaul in 2011, the program was expanded to seven subject areas, which today include the following: Humanities, Social Sciences, Aesthetic and Interpretive Understanding, Economic and Strategic Analysis, Ethics, Empirical and Quantitative Reasoning, and Natural Sciences. Every student attending Koç University must complete one course in each field, regardless of their majors. We encourage students to complete most of these courses in the first two years. Once they have completed their core curriculum requirements, students can continue to take courses from this program as electives. This general structure makes for a flexible curriculum and gives students a wide range of options.

The Core Program is an educational outlook that utilizes humanity’s accumulated body of knowledge to maximize interdisciplinary interaction, cultivate a diversity of ideas among students from different academic backgrounds and thus helps prepare them for life. The curriculum aims to assist in the development of creative and critical individuals. The Core Program’s building blocks consist of an insistence on method, open-minded academic research, critical thinking and solutions-oriented applications. By providing an education that is based on the Core Program, we hope to graduate individuals who have moral and ethical concerns, an attentive approach to their work that is based on critical thinking, the ability to solve problems through creativity, and the power to create change.

The latest review process of the Core Program curriculum began in September 2017 and is still going on under the direction of a large committee, headed by myself and including representatives from each college. At the moment, we offer over seventy courses in a single semester. These courses are not departmental courses; they are courses which have been designed to include as much dialogue as possible between departments and disciplines. Civic agency, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, analytical, critical and holistic thinking are concepts that we value and which we try to stress in the core curriculum.

Higher education in our country and in the world, as a matter of fact, has to contend with two sets of difficulties. Firstly, there is a pressure on vocationalization; students come to university besides my field of work and my study, theater is my biggest passion and has been part of my life for the past 15 years. I have been with the Koç Alumni Theater Company from the start, and we now stage plays in collaboration with the Sadri Alışık Cultural Center. As all our revenues are donated to the Anatolian Scholarship program, not only do I get to realize my biggest passion but also the satisfaction of knowing that I am contributing to a deserving student’s college education.
The world is changing socially, politically, technologically and scientifically. It is now impossible to compartmentalize changes and problems in all these domains. We believe that core education will make students more open to change and more apt to deal with this unprecedented change. We want our students to recognize the interconnectedness of social, economic, scientific and, most importantly, ethical problems this new world order imposes on us. We want our students to see that ethics is not just a matter for philosophical debate; we want them to gain the awareness that everything we do and say has ethical consequences.

In Koç University students, independent of their chosen professions. First of all, it is essential that students get acquainted with various disciplines. They need to understand how different disciplines regard their own fields. They need to be able to go back and forth between different disciplines and look at things from a broader perspective. The world is changing socially, politically, technologically and scientifically. It is now impossible to compartmentalize changes and problems in all these domains. We believe that core education will make students more open to change and more apt to deal with this unprecedented change. We want our students to recognize the interconnectedness of social, economic, scientific and, most importantly, ethical problems this new world order imposes on us. We want our students to see that ethics is not just a matter for philosophical debate; we want them to gain the awareness that everything we do and say has ethical consequences.
Globalization means that our students have to interact with many diverse groups now. They need the skills to meet, understand, accept and communicate with these diverse groups. Students need to develop the skills to understand different cultures and civilizations, to interpret them in terms of one another and to approach these issues from the vantage point of different disciplines. At the center of this openness to diversity is the belief in the principles of democratic discussion, which is one of the most important skills the Core Program wants to install in our students. Similarly, the core curriculum aims at nurturing the idea of civic engagement. We need to teach our students that they have rights, but that they also have obligations and responsibilities.

Students may initially resist taking courses outside their own subjects. Indeed, most of them go to university to acquire a profession. That is how students have been socialized both by family and peers, and the educational system. As soon as they start their university education, they expect to take area courses in their chosen professions. That is how they have imagined university education to be all their lives. They are seriously disappointed when we ask them to take all these core courses from philosophy to history, from economics to statistics. They get frustrated when we teach them about...
rationality and irrationality, about symbolic logic, environmental ethics, or Plato. It takes some time for them to realize the value of this broad range of topics. Only as the curriculum progresses, and especially after graduation, will most of them fully appreciate what the program has given them. A student of economics might notice her interest in philosophy or decide to do a double major. An engineering student may graduate with a certificate in gender studies. Naturally, their awareness will be raised, and I hope that we can show them the benefits of taking intellectual risks; in any case, their worldview will be inevitably affected.

Thanks to the Core Program, students also get the chance to make serious choices about their field of preferred study. One of our computer engineering students, for example, began taking sociology courses after the Core Program and went on to do a master’s degree in sociology in France and later pursued a PhD in history. There are many similar examples.

As I have mentioned before, interdisciplinarity is the only way to stay in the global race today. This is as true for engineering as it is for sociology. One can no longer conduct meaningful research alone, that is, without collaborating with economists or social psychologists or statisticians; working across disciplines is a must. Beyond interdisciplinarity, we are now also talking about transdisciplinarity. Unlike interdisciplinary work, where, say, a researcher in sociology works with an economist and yet another researcher with another set of specific scientific tools, transdisciplinarity means that different disciplines come together to create a new field of research. This applies not just to academia but also to business and industry. For example, Koç University’s Media and Visual Arts Department shares a laboratory with Arçelik. Here, researchers work together to produce creative industrial design, imagining and designing new products.

The Core Program opens up students’ minds to new possibilities, triggers their intellectual curiosity, takes them out of their comfort zones and makes them ask questions. Looking outside one’s own field is a kind of intellectual risk-taking, that is very important in itself. An intellectual person should be feeling a degree of discomfort, a restlessness. Otherwise, one will not ask new questions, will not challenge the status quo. We do not ask questions when we are content, and we do not take on a challenge where we see no problem. The Core Program aims at producing students who are not afraid of asking difficult questions. ◆

On the Benefit of Stepping outside Our Intellectual Comfort Zones
The office of the Dean of Students at Koç University is designed to help students make the best use of their time at the university and to guide them as they shape their future. It provides structure for students’ emerging awareness of themselves and the world. The Office of the Dean of Students at Koç University was the first in Turkey to be set up with such a broad scope. When I started work as dean of students in 2003, we were a five to six-person team; now we number above forty. President İnan’s support has been fundamental in driving this vision. He has been very supportive of the office’s activities and has initiated the creation of several programs.

Currently, our activities are organized under a number of separate divisions. The Student Activities and Volunteer Projects Office enables students to take advantage of all the opportunities that university life has to offer, transforming everyone around them along with themselves. The Office of International Programs is there to help them know the world, experience different programs at universities across the globe, from China to South America, and to get to know different cultures and peoples. Our Career Development Center guides students’ thinking about what they want to do when they graduate and plan their careers, and our Sports Center provides the facilities for healthy living. Our Office of Disability Services is responsible for identifying and removing any accessibility obstacles to ensure that the campus serves all students equally. The Scholarship Office coordinates...
the behavior and responsibilities expected of them. Students meet their mentors during orientation, which kicks off the Newcoming Student Program. All incoming students are also assigned an academic freshman advisor who supports them during the adjustment phase and helps them manage their expectations of university life.

During Orientation Week, new students meet their mentors and get introduced to student clubs. On the second day of orientation, all the various clubs set up stands and present themselves to the incoming students. While the Dance Club may try to attract members with a dance show, the Musical Club may demonstrate samples of past performances. It’s always a wonderfully lively day. Students simply fill out an application form to join a club. Often students will sign up for five or six different clubs but then continue with only one or two, depending on where their interests develop. These activities create a good counterweight and help students better balance their university lives. All of this helps them to do well in class without having to sacrifice all other interests. Over half of all our students are active members of various clubs and societies.

The Office of the Dean of Students has a supporting rather than a managing role in student activities. Students come to us, for instance, with a request to start a new club, telling us about what they want to do, their goals financial support for students’ education, and the Guidance and Psychological Counseling Service provides professional psychological counseling to all students. Finally, ALIS, our Academic and Life Skills course, helps students acquire the fundamental skills that are needed in professional and personal life.

Freshman year is undoubtedly very important for undergraduate students. Our Newcoming Advising Office helps new students make a successful transition to university life. There is a special program designed as a series of events for first-year students that guides them through their first year from the moment they arrive at the university. One of its main components is our mentoring program. Every incoming student is assigned to a group of eight to ten students led by a mentor, who is an upperclassman from their respective departments. The mentors are chosen from among students who have been mentees themselves and are enthusiastic about the process. They receive thorough training and supervision regarding the ways of science.

Thanks to Koç University and the connections I made during my four years at the Entrepreneurship Club, I found myself in the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Meeting with successful entrepreneurs, startups and angel investors has been important for my career and future plans. My work at the club has helped me improve my communication skills, and I have learned to use technology more efficiently to enhance my skills in the future. I’d like to meet people working in education and help develop solutions to some of the problems in this field.

Ulaş Şahinbaş
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION; PRESIDENT, ENTREPRENEURSHIP CLUB
and plans. Usually, they will start off as a branch of an already existing club, and if they have proven to themselves that this activity is sustainable and has potential, they will elect their executive committee and continue as an independent club. There is a performance assessment system in place for student clubs, but in any case, those that don’t perform well usually fall out of the system on their own accord much like dry autumn leaves. New clubs are set up all the time, and the successful ones will keep going and growing. Some of our clubs, such as the Industrial Engineering, Marketing, Debating, Dance, and Theater Clubs, are trying hard to outdo themselves each year. What matters here is that students initiate the action and realize the things that they are passionate about. Our role is to support and help them learn how to do effective project management, find resources and collaborate with others.

Every club has the capacity to do amazing things depending on the talents and enthusiasm of its members, and some have taken on huge tasks. There are over a hundred student clubs across a vast range of interests, but I’d like to mention two examples here that demonstrate just how seriously students can take these activities.

The first example is that of the Debating Club. It was in my second year at the university, in 2004, that students from the Debating Club informed me that they wanted to launch the Vehbi Koç International Debating Tournament. They had already achieved quite successful results at university tournaments, they were hard-working and their success had boosted their self-confidence. They drew up a project outline and estimated costs. It turned out to be quite a success in its first year. Then, they said that they wanted to make a pitch to host the European Universities Debating Championships at Koç University and indeed we hosted the 2007 European Championships. This event was sensationnally successful and received rave reviews in the debating community. I already knew that they weren’t going to stop here. Indeed, the following year, they proposed hosting the World Universities Debating Championships. And we did host the 2010 World Universities Debating Championships, but at a large hotel in Antalya, as the group was far too big to be accommodated on our main campus. Over one thousand participants from universities across the world participated. So, what began as an initiative by a small enthusiastic group of students turned into a highly successful international mega event that was entirely the result of students’ dedicated efforts. They managed all aspects of this project, including communications, organization, financing, finding sponsors, promotions, etc. They planned, managed and executed everything themselves. The Debating Club continues to be one of our most active clubs.

A second example is the KU Volunteers Club, which currently has about 400 members. They are a collection of teams that organize a great many social responsibility and community projects across Istanbul and Turkey. All are genuinely devoted volunteers. One of their projects, for instance, is called Little Hearts, a project that has been going on now for 14 years. It started with a group
What Is a Research University? And Why Does It Matter?

of volunteer students visiting orphans between the ages 0-3 at the Bahçelievler Orphanage every Saturday. Each volunteer forms a one-on-one bond with a specific child; the child knows that the volunteer will come back every week at the same time and that they will spend time and play games together. Personal relationships and bonds are created.

At initial meetings with the Ministry of Labor, Social Services and Family and the management of the Bahçelievler Orphanage, concerns were raised about these young volunteers’ ability to sustain their efforts over time. As it turned out, not only did our students prove their ability to continue the project without fail, but they had also become such experts as to provide supervision and training to others. In fact, they began to popularize the project at other universities as well.

In addition to my administrative duties as dean, I teach a basic science course as part of the university’s Core Program to first-year law, business and social science students. The thing I try to communicate above all to my students, both as a lecturer and as dean, is to keep their perspective on life as wide open as possible and to question everything. I tell them: Only you can decide what to believe, no one can dictate

My greatest passion in life is to somehow touch and add value to people’s lives. To me, one of the best things is to see the smile on a person’s face who has just learned something new. I know that I will always be following my passion in life and try to make people smile.

Berk Özgen
SENIOR, INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING AND ECONOMICS; PRESIDENT, IEEE SOCIETY

...and study needs. KU Volunteers also build and stock one or two village school libraries each year and hold a “Make a Wish” raffle. For the latter project, they invite school principals in poor communities to send them their students’ wishes for small New Year’s presents. Even more importantly, they manage to engage the entire university community in these charitable projects. This allows them to get support from a much wider base while raising awareness of the social issues involved.

Naturally, the more talent and enthusiasm members bring to a student society, the more it will succeed. And, just like in any other institution, this success will only hold if existing management can pass the group’s culture and values on to the next management.

Passion

My greatest passion in life is to somehow touch and add value to people’s lives. To me, one of the best things is to see the smile on a person’s face who has just learned something new. I know that I will always be following my passion in life and try to make people smile.

Berk Özgen
SENIOR, INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING AND ECONOMICS; PRESIDENT, IEEE SOCIETY

...and study needs. KU Volunteers also build and stock one or two village school libraries each year and hold a “Make a Wish” raffle. For the latter project, they invite school principals in poor communities to send them their students’ wishes for small New Year’s presents. Even more importantly, they manage to engage the entire university community in these charitable projects. This allows them to get support from a much wider base while raising awareness of the social issues involved.

Naturally, the more talent and enthusiasm members bring to a student society, the more it will succeed. And, just like in any other institution, this success will only hold if existing management can pass the group’s culture and values on to the next management.

In addition to my administrative duties as dean, I teach a basic science course as part of the university’s Core Program to first-year law, business and social science students. The thing I try to communicate above all to my students, both as a lecturer and as dean, is to keep their perspective on life as wide open as possible and to question everything. I tell them: Only you can decide what to believe, no one can dictate

Passion

My greatest passion in life is to somehow touch and add value to people’s lives. To me, one of the best things is to see the smile on a person’s face who has just learned something new. I know that I will always be following my passion in life and try to make people smile.

Berk Özgen
SENIOR, INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING AND ECONOMICS; PRESIDENT, IEEE SOCIETY

...and study needs. KU Volunteers also build and stock one or two village school libraries each year and hold a “Make a Wish” raffle. For the latter project, they invite school principals in poor communities to send them their students’ wishes for small New Year’s presents. Even more importantly, they manage to engage the entire university community in these charitable projects. This allows them to get support from a much wider base while raising awareness of the social issues involved.

Naturally, the more talent and enthusiasm members bring to a student society, the more it will succeed. And, just like in any other institution, this success will only hold if existing management can pass the group’s culture and values on to the next management.

In addition to my administrative duties as dean, I teach a basic science course as part of the university’s Core Program to first-year law, business and social science students. The thing I try to communicate above all to my students, both as a lecturer and as dean, is to keep their perspective on life as wide open as possible and to question everything. I tell them: Only you can decide what to believe, no one can dictate
it to you. First, question and probe the reasons why you want to believe something. But once you’ve made up your mind, embrace the path, follow it through, experience it, listen to it, understand it, investigate it. If you follow this process, it will be less likely that you will make serious mistakes. Nonetheless, you may still end up making some wrong decision, and that is fine as well. We need to make mistakes because it’s impossible to learn without them.

College years are precious. The things one learns outside the lecture room are just as important and enduring. I believe that we provide an incredibly rich and stimulating environment in both areas. However, it is ultimately always up to each individual to take advantage of these privileges and use them to fuel some passion or other that may last a lifetime.◆
it seems superfluous to talk about the importance of connection as we are now always online and connected. But this can be deceptive. Genuine connection is that which takes us outside of our own “bubbles”, whether they be generational, cultural or academic. Making a real connection means opening ourselves up to different ideas, values and approaches, even when—or especially when—we don’t agree with them.

Learn how to see. Realize that everything connects to everything else.

LEONARDO DA VINCI
Notabooks c. 1499

Connection
As many analysts have pointed out, new technologies are dramatically impacting many aspects of our lives and much more radical change is on the horizon. Furthermore, physical and cultural boundaries have become blurred and waves of migration, both from war zones and weak economies, have created a general atmosphere of social anxiety in many developed and newly developed countries such as Turkey. Nationalistic, “nativist” and protectionist tendencies are on the rise everywhere. The fact, however, is that the global economy is more connected today than ever, and artificial intelligence-driven technologies will continue to draw all of us even closer together and connect us intimately to the rest of the world in a myriad of ways and in a future that is likely to be radically different from the past. To have a sustainable future in this dynamic environment, a business needs to create value not just for the company but for human beings, and for this, it has to really understand its customer base, not just as consumers but as human beings. This means that sustainable development goals must now be a part and parcel of every business strategy.

It is a real challenge to adequately prepare the next generation of business leaders for this hyperconnected and ever-changing world. Agility, that is, the ability to change and adapt quickly and repeatedly to changing circumstances, has become essential for every company and every executive anywhere. However, agility is a mindset that is not teachable as a technical skill. It requires not only a broad knowledge of economic, social and cultural dynamics but also a genuine sense of personal responsibility as an economic actor; especially for anyone who is preparing for a career in business management and leadership.

This is the approach we take not just with our undergraduates but also with our graduate and MBA students. At the executive level, we run special change-management classes that help both junior and senior executives better understand change dynamics, how to adapt to change and how to lead for change. At undergraduate level, the most important thing is to make students aware of the basics. Our Core Program is of great value here; undergraduates, irrespective of their academic background, get a firm grasp of the latest science and technology as well as of history, psychology, and the social sciences.

We believe that people with the ability to ask the right questions and challenge the status quo will be able to better predict change, and prepare their organizations for the future.
Next to agility as a mindset, an understanding and appreciation of different cultures is also essential in this new environment. We try to facilitate this not only with a broad curriculum but also by offering many extra-curricular activities to create an experience-based understanding of cultural diversity. These classes are structured more like workshops where speakers from different professional, geographic and cultural backgrounds engage students in challenging case studies and role play of real-life situations that force them to question their own assumptions and value judgements. We get students to engage in in-depth discussions of future trends and dynamics as well as of the ethical dilemmas that are raised by new technologies such as AI, increased digitalization, and biotechnologies. Business managers must be aware not only of these ethical challenges but also have a basic grasp of the underlying technologies if they are to lead effectively and well.

In this context, “making connections” means two things: Firstly, it means being connected to the future on the basis of a sound knowledge of the historic past and a critical appreciation of the present. Students focusing on administrative sciences and economics at Koç University are fortunate to have access to some of the most outstanding academics in international relations, history, sociology, economics, and psychology, among others, and they have the choice of many thought-stimulating courses.

Secondly, it means being connected geographically across national and cultural divides. Koç University has always had a strong global outlook and actively nurtures internationalization among faculty and students. I am happy to say that our faculty and students are always welcome participants at international academic gatherings, where they represent the potential and aspirations of our country. At the Graduate School of Business, we have several international faculty as well as an increasing number of international full-time graduate students, and I very much hope that their numbers will increase in the coming years. Embracing a truly global outlook and a sincere appreciation both of one’s own and of foreign cultures is the best antidote to superficial prejudice and stereotype. It is also a prerequisite for engaging in effective business relations in the world.

We find that many students today, even in the traditionally success-driven field of administrative sciences and economics, are looking beyond commercial success to engage in meaningful work and to make a positive difference in the world. They care about social impact. This is definitely an increasing...
trend and one that I, personally, find very positive. KUSIF, the Koç University Social Impact Forum, for example, helps companies measure the social impact of their business activities. Consumers, too, are now increasingly looking beyond the performance of a company’s products or services; their purchasing decisions are often influenced by the ethical business practices and sustainable business-development goals that they perceive the company to have or to lack. KUSIF also offers social entrepreneurship and social innovation courses to students. A recent report by the World Sustainability Council shows that social entrepreneurship can provide both meaning and a career through social innovation. That’s an idea that many young people today find very appealing, and at Koç, we actively encourage them in this direction.

The frame of mind that we try to cultivate in our students, therefore, is an ability to act effectively in an environment of constant change and increasing complexity and to have a positive impact on society at large through their work, be it as employees, business executives or entrepreneurs.

Actually, Turkish managers have an advantage in this regard in comparison to many of their European or American counterparts. They are often able to better cope with uncertainty and change due to Turkey’s turbulent economic history and in this regard may have valuable contributions to make to the global body of business knowledge. Many of our students go on to take on leading executive roles in local and multinational companies both in Turkey and abroad.

The Graduate School of Business was the first graduate school established at Koç University, and I am very proud to say that we are now by far the leading graduate school of business in Turkey. We attract both senior and junior executives and offer various programs that cater to different needs, including a Master’s in International Management program that we run in collaboration with CEMS, the world’s leading global alliance in management education. This is a very rigorous, very demanding, multicultural program. Participants must be open to new experiences, new ideas and cultures, and this program is a very good path particularly for executives considering a global expat career.

Another important program at the Graduate School of Business is our doctoral program, and I am delighted to say that several of our graduate students have been hired as assistant professors by some of the best business schools in Europe. I believe that the experience they will bring back to this country will be very valuable and proves that our graduate program helps them become influential research scholars in business studies on a par with the world’s best.

To sum up; the business environment everywhere is now driven by constant change and ever-increasing complexity. At the same time, businesses and their executives, possibly more so than ever, have a great role to play in ensuring sustainable and responsible development. What is good for business will be ultimately judged by what is good for society at large. And that, surely, is a good thing.

Creating Business Leaders for the Future
The School of Medicine complements our university as a whole in many crucial ways. It is generally believed that many of the most influential developments we will be witnessing in medicine in the next 10-20 years will happen at the intersection of medicine with other disciplines; primarily, of course, with engineering and the natural sciences, and here especially with molecular medicine, but also with the social sciences, administrative sciences, philosophy, psychology, ethics, and law. Being flanked by very strong colleges and graduate schools in all of these fields is a very privileged and extraordinarily fortunate position to be in for a medical school in this country. The full integration of our medical school and teaching hospital with all our other colleges and schools has been our most important strategic objective in the past few years. This is an ambitious task and is, of course, going to take some time to be realized fully. Faculty and students at Koç School

Knowing is the enemy of learning.
‒ Tom Chi, Co-founder of Google X, TEDx SemesteratSea, February 2014

On Medical Education and Research as an Engine of the Future
of Medicine are in a uniquely advantageous position in this exceptionally dynamic, multidisciplinary, and research-focused environment, and I am convinced that if we really can achieve the level of integration we aspire to, we will unlock our university’s full research potential, not just for the benefit of Turkey but for humanity as a whole.

Another significant advantage of being a relatively young medical school is that we have been able to design our curriculum from scratch after lengthy analysis of the best practices in medical education, both in Turkey and abroad. The curriculum we use now is both vertically and horizontally integrated and fully accredited by the World Federation for Medical Education, the leading international accreditation body, as well as by the national medical accreditation board. At more conventional medical schools, students will study fundamental science and medical subjects only during their first three years and then move on to clinical training. Our medical students, however, are exposed to clinical practice and patient care almost from day one, take part in social projects and learn to interact and communicate with patients while continuing to take theoretical courses in medical science subjects. In other words, courses in fundamental medical science, research and clinical practice are all interlinked throughout the entire 6-year course of study at Koç School of Medicine.

ŞÜHRÜ DİLEGE Koç University’s research focus is an integral part of our approach to medical education. In traditional medical programs, students will not really do any research until they start to do their specialty training, but our students are involved in serious research projects as early as in their second and third year of medical school. In fact, Koç University School of Medicine has never been about providing “standard” medical training; Turkey has some excellent and well-established medical schools that are training huge numbers of students and therefore neither have the organizational flexibility nor the resources to provide the kind of training we provide as a young and comparatively small medical school. At present, we have 286 students and 123 full-time and 17 visiting faculty at our medical school; in other words, 142 faculty to 286 students, an extraordinary 1:2 faculty-student ratio. This has allowed us to adopt a more “exclusive”, student-centric and research-oriented approach. This does not mean that we expect every student to stay in academia and become another Aziz Sancar, nor that we do not train them for clinical practice, quite the contrary. We expect that most of our students will be serving their communities as outstanding physicians and surgeons. But general practitioners also have to know how to keep themselves up-to-date with the latest medical research and continue their professional development throughout their careers. Similarly, surgeons must have the ability to do further research on a problem they may encounter in clinical practice or share this problem with other researchers. It’s this analytical and inquisitive mental attitude that we value most and that we expect from all of our students, irrespective of their specializations later on.

Another significant advantage of being a relatively young medical school is that we have been able to design our curriculum from scratch after lengthy analysis of the best practices in medical education, both in Turkey and abroad. The curriculum we use now is both vertically and horizontally integrated and fully accredited by the World Federation for Medical Education, the leading international accreditation body, as well as by the national medical accreditation board. At more conventional medical schools, students will study fundamental science and medical subjects only during their first three years and then move on to clinical training. Our medical students, however, are exposed to clinical practice and patient care almost from day one, take part in social projects and learn to interact and communicate with patients while continuing to take theoretical courses in medical science subjects. In other words, courses in fundamental medical science, research and clinical practice are all interlinked throughout the entire 6-year course of study at Koç School of Medicine.
Our curriculum is also exceptionally dynamic as we conduct in-depth reviews, using multiple feedback mechanisms at the end of each year, to include the latest developments in medical science and to fine-tune our teaching efficiency. In addition to that, the Core Program, which is fundamental to Koç University’s educational philosophy, is also vital to our medical students, not just because it provides them with a sound grounding in the humanities but also because it makes them integrated with students from other faculties and disciplines. Medical schools have a tendency to be somewhat insular and inward-looking; the Core Program establishes our medical students’ connections with the rest of the student body and university at large from the first year onward. I believe that this is absolutely crucial for the broad thinking and interdisciplinary frame of mind we want to cultivate.

Last but not least, there is the Koç University Hospital, which is both a fully fledged clinical hospital providing a full range of outpatient and inpatient services to thousands of patients each year as well as a state-of-the-art teaching and research hospital. This provides our students and researchers with a truly privileged position among medical schools at foundation universities in Turkey.

Ihsan Solakoğlu There are a couple of points I’d like to add to what Professors İnan and Dilege said so far. Our students are required to dedicate 20 percent of their time to research from their sophomore year onwards, which translates to about one full day out of five days of theoretical or clinical training. This means that they are able to dedicate a full day to research, during which time they are not required to do anything else. All our students have to participate in some research project. However, they are free to engage in any research project at any of the university’s colleges, not just at the School of Medicine.

If students wish to do their research project with faculty from the College of Engineering, or the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, or the College of Sciences, they are absolutely free to do so. Learning to do research essentially means learning how to frame a question and to choose an appropriate methodology to answer it. A research project, therefore, can be concerned with a strictly medical or physical science subject as it can be related to economy, management, sociology, behavioral psychology or any other field, as all of them will have some relevance to medicine.

When students become apt at formulating good questions and identifying the principles required to answer it, they develop an entirely different attitude to learning, even of subjects that need to be absorbed in a more didactic manner. There is always much to memorize in medicine, but memorization is only useful to the extent to which it assists analytical and critical thinking.

Neuroscience is another critical research subject. I believe that neuroscience might be the most important area of research for the next 50 years, feeding into all other areas of research. Understanding how the human brain works will inform all the developments in artificial intelligence and other technological developments that use decision-making algorithms. For instance, if you want to make self-driving vehicles, you need to understand the human brain—not just to simulate the driver’s brain but also to understand how pedestrians might behave. Degenerative brain diseases such as Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s are also

Cancer is not only a great source of suffering and death throughout the world, second only to stroke. Cancer is also a huge socioeconomic burden on the public healthcare systems of all countries, developed and developing.

In health sciences, our research focus lies in three main areas: cancer, neuroscience, and new infectious diseases. Cancer has become the leading cause of death throughout the world, second only to stroke. Cancer is not only a great source of suffering for millions of patients and their families but also creates a huge socioeconomic burden on the public healthcare systems of all countries, developed and developing.
big subjects for neuroscience research. Neurodegenerative diseases have increased several-fold over the last decades and in parallel with the global increase in life expectancy, especially in developed countries. Forecasts are that at least $15 trillion dollars will be spent on treating Alzheimer’s alone in the next 42 years, a truly staggering figure and a crushing burden for the whole world.

Our third primary research area is in infectious diseases. As we have seen with the rapid spread of the swine flu, the bird flu, Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF), and similar new infectious diseases, these diseases now spread literally like wild-fire across the globe due to global mobility and increased air travel. Istanbul lies at the intersection not just of East and West but also of North and South, making research in this field especially pertinent in Turkey.

Needless to say, molecular research constitutes a significant aspect of all our basic science-related research as genetics have a role in all of these areas. Focusing on cancer, neuroscience and infectious disease does not mean that we are not interested in other areas such as metabolic, endocrinological and auto-immune diseases as they are very common own so that they are in a position to contribute their opinions and questions during lecture. We are also reducing the number of standard examinations that used to be a big part of conventional medical school; instead we use so-called “objective structured clinical examination”, OSCE for short, which provides a live assessment of students’ clinical knowledge as well as of their practical and communication skills in a simulated environment with actors who simulate patient behavior according to scripted scenarios. During exams, students pass through various stations at our Advanced Learning Center, where they are tested for a variety of different skills. The examiners watch the student from behind a glass.

UMRAN İNAN Yes, genetics is still a relatively new science, and there is much opportunity to make significant discoveries and contributions to global medical science. Much of this kind of research used to be conducted only at a handful of research centers, mostly in the US and Europe. In the past, Turkey lacked both the necessary R&D infrastructure as well as a critical mass of world-class researchers, but this is no longer so. With the establishment of KUTTAM, the Koç University Research Center for Translational Medicine, we are now very well placed to do cutting-edge research in all of these areas. I also believe that the combination of these extraordinary investments with the outstanding minds at our university makes it likely that a new world-shattering discovery or the cure of some terrible disease might well come from within the ranks of our distinguished faculty, students, and alumni.

SİHİR DİLEB Let me expand on our teaching approach at the School of Medicine. We use the lecture room more for discussions than for didactic teaching and learning. We expect our students to do all the required reading and studying on their own so that they are in a position to contribute their opinions and questions during lecture. We are also reducing the number of standard examinations that used to be a big part of conventional medical school; instead we use so-called “objective structured clinical examination”, OSCE for short, which provides a live assessment of students’ clinical knowledge as well as of their practical and communication skills in a simulated environment with actors who simulate patient behavior according to scripted scenarios. During exams, students pass through various stations at our Advanced Learning Center, where they are tested for a variety of different skills. The examiners watch the student from behind a glass.

On Medical Education and Research as an Engine of the Future
in internal medicine, is the same for all fourth-year medical students, wherever they may be. If students are taught the required contents, the examination itself can be delegated to a professional examination body. We tried this last year and were initially a little concerned about the outcome as exam questions are usually formulated on the back of lecture material. However, both faculty and students were very positive. Separating the lecturer from the examiner means that they can act as controls on each other, pinpointing areas for further development. We first introduced this exam system last year in gynecology and will expand it this year to general surgery, internal medicine, and pediatrics. Using external exams also allows us to compare our own performance with that of leading universities in other countries.

Another important facet of our approach is to offer our medical students a great variety of electives already in their fifth year so that they can try out various subjects before they embark on their specialization proper after graduation. In fact, the National Medical Education Accreditation Board is citing our program of electives as a best-practice example.

The breaking down of traditional walls and barriers is a key factor here. In Turkey, one will be hard pressed to find a professor with an engineering background teaching and doing research at a medical school. At Koç School of Medicine, we have several faculty with an engineering or science background, and this harmonization trend is certainly one that we are supporting and want to see growing. Some of our faculty have dual appointments at the School of Medicine and the College of Engineering. One of our current research projects on infectious diseases, for instance, requires the analysis of 422 million prescriptions provided by the Turkish Ministry of Health. This research may allow us to reconstruct what exactly happened to each patient and when. This is an important big data project that can only be handled in an environment that combines medical skills with engineering skills.

Another important topic that we need to mention here is that of delegation. We believe that delegation is vital because people will produce their most and best when they are free to do so. We take great care to hire highly qualified faculty of Medicine students are able to do research and work anywhere in the world.

Underlying all of this is that we are modeling our teaching and exams on pre-defined learning objectives. So, rather than just dumping a great load of information onto the students, we provide only the information required for each learning objective. This year, we will introduce a professional examination system in several departments in the fourth year of medical school. Learning objectives are universal and apply equally in the US, in the UK, or in Turkey. The learning objective, say, wall while cameras record the entire student-patient interaction so that students can later also view these recordings to develop themselves.

Students are also subject to a 360-degree assessment process, where their performance and behavior is evaluated by their clinical supervisors, by the nurses with whom they work at the teaching hospital, their peers, their patients, and professors. This is as close to a real-life situation as one can get. Incidentally, all our exams are conducted in English with native English-speaking actors (whom we recruit from among our ELC staff) to ensure that Koç School of Medicine students are able to do research and work anywhere in the world.

we take great care to hire highly qualified faculty
in each field, setting up recruitment committees, conducting worldwide searches and getting independent references. We hire the best and then get out of their way; I don’t look over the shoulders of our deans, just as the board of trustees doesn’t look over my shoulders, and the dean doesn’t look over the shoulders of his faculty. Delegating means trusting that the persons in question are highly capable and will do their job to the absolute best of their capabilities. Professional hierarchies often stifle development. This is especially true in countries like Turkey, where there is a culture of deference to seniority and authority. We hired about thirty new faculty this year. In my welcoming speech during orientation I said, “Please make sure to be rebellious. We don’t expect you to conform but to innovate!” One thing that allows me to say that is that we use external references when deciding on any promotion, rather than academic seniors. We always ask for the advice of trusted external advisors at leading universities abroad for each new appointment or promotion. If we really want to join the top league, as we surely do, we must be prepared to tear down old norms, find new and better ways of achieving excellence in teaching and research. We must be prepared to “put new wine in old bottles” if we want to keep up with the extraordinary pace of change in science, especially in medicine, and make significant and pioneering contributions to its development.

The same holds for intergenerational relations. We expect our students to make a real contribution in the lecture hall, in the lab, in the clinic—not just to absorb and repeat what we teach them. 19 or 22-year old undergraduates may be inexperienced and know next to nothing about a particular subject, but this is exactly why they will be able to ask unconventional, really interesting questions as their understanding is not yet moulded into firm beliefs. One idea I keep voicing at almost every opportunity is that university should be “an intergenerational meeting of minds”. We need their young and flexible intellect, their fresh viewpoints and new questions. This is both a huge opportunity and a responsibility for all our young students. We need everyone to do their best, to put their own unique talent into this collective effort.

The decision to set up a medical school was taken just before I began my tenure as president of Koç University. Although my personal research interests are not related to medicine, I was very excited by the virtually infinite research potential this opened up for us. The establishment of Koç University School of Medicine and the Koç University Hospital has exponentially increased our potential to do original and high-impact research across the entire university. This is the outcome of the vision of the Vehbi Koç Foundation which has been serving our country and humanity by supporting the causes of healthcare, education, and culture for close to 52 years. I believe that the physicians and research insights that this institution is and will be generating are a natural extension of this commitment.
Science and art will abandon the places where they find no respect.

— Avicenna (980-1037)

The Work of Building Bridges between Different Worlds

BURCU SARSILMAZ KOŞAN DIRECTOR, OFFICE

of International Programs

Burcu Sarsılmaz Coşan completed a degree in economics at Koç University and received a master’s degree in international business from Monash University, Australia. Prior to joining Koç University in 2011, she worked at PFI Middle East and Deloitte. Before assuming her current role as director of the Office of International Programs in 2016, Ms Coşan was the coordinator and executive manager for international partnership development, contributing towards Koç University’s international collaborations.

I STUDIED ECONOMICS at Koç University. I remember being very impressed when I first entered campus as a freshman. When I returned to Koç University in 2011, I was a member of staff. Much seemed to have changed in the intervening years. The Office of International
Programs, of which I am now the director, has been part of this change. When I was a student, the exchange program was a small office with only two employees. Very few students would go abroad through exchange programs, and there were very few international students at the campus.

President İnan is a very strong advocate of internationalization, and when he joined the university in 2009, he immediately approved the expansion of the two-person team. Right now, we are a team of ten, working in three groups; namely, Exchange Programs and Partnerships, International Projects, Programs & Marketing, and International Community Office.

The team in Exchange Programs and Partnerships is responsible for developing partnerships with universities abroad, managing existing partnerships and renewing or severing these partnerships, if necessary. We have agreements with over 260 institutions in over 52 countries and offer our students a number of different exchange programs. These include Global Exchange, Erasmus+, Erasmus+ Worldwide and Summer Exchange programs, which allow international students to study at Koç University as exchange students for one semester or one year and facilitate our students going abroad to study at our partner universities for short periods of time.

At the Office of International Programs, our main responsibility is to organize and facilitate student exchanges with universities abroad. However, these discussions frequently lead to other forms of collaboration such as joint/double degree programs. In such cases, we usually initiate the project, do the groundwork and then hand it over to the relevant graduate school to provide support later on if necessary. We also facilitate research agreements for faculty member exchanges. We set up communication between our colleges and their relevant counterparts abroad to establish the conditions for faculty exchange. Administrative staff at Koç University may also take advantage of exchange programs. Our efforts to strengthen internationalization also includes increasing connection...
the number of Koç University students, faculty and staff going to partner universities under exchange programs, hosting of administrative staff from partner institutions at our university, and sharing of best-practice examples for exchange among institutions, departments and individuals.

The International Projects, Programs and Marketing Team keeps track of emerging needs and develops suitable programs. For instance, we noticed that there is a new trend both among incoming and outgoing students to prefer international programs that are shorter than a semester or full academic year. Expenses play a role in this new trend, of course. This team is responsible for developing such short-term programs as well as special short-term programs.
Going forward, our objective here will be to improve awareness of the importance of communication and diversity regarding our international community and to collaborate with various university departments. At Koç University, we place great importance on internationalization and this is reflected also in international university rankings such as the Times Higher Education rankings, where we are in first place among universities in Turkey in terms of “international outlook”.

Our approach to internationalization at Koç University goes beyond traditional approaches, differentiating itself from similar programs in Turkey. We believe that true internationalization has to go beyond international students and exchange programs to also include the internationalization of research, education and services. To this end, several of our administrative departments have worked together to create a common internationalization strategy. We now have a three-year plan, and it is of utmost importance that all colleges and administrative departments contribute to these strategic objectives.

Our goal is clear: increasing the number of student, faculty, and staff exchanges; attracting more international students from a greater number of countries; initiating more effective international collaborations, more joint research projects, more quality joint academic programs as well as supporting a more open and inclusive approach to cultural diversity. At Koç University, comprehensive internationalization is a long-term strategic goal, and we will continue to strive to become a “center of excellence” in this regard.
It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one destiny, affects all indirectly.

—Martin Luther King Jr., December 24, 1967, Atlanta

ONE OF OUR top priorities as a research university is to attract the best students to our university not just among local but also among international students, especially at the postgraduate level. As the university’s Global Recruitment Team, we work to identify and recruit outstanding international talent to come to Turkey and study at Koç University as full-time students. This means that we conduct constant and extensive online and offline promotion and brand awareness activities abroad to make the university well-known across the world and to make sure that we are also associated with excellence globally. This function within the university started in late 2012 under the Office of International Programs and then evolved into today’s team of three staff members that is the Global Recruitment Team under the Office of the Vice President for Research and Development (VPRD).

Koç University has an extensive partnership network which now includes 260 universities all around the world, mostly in Europe and the United States but increasingly also in Asia, specifically in China, Indonesia, Thailand, Korea, India, Pakistan and to a smaller extent in Latin America and the Middle East. These countries

Melissa Abache

On the Importance of International Students for a World-Class Research University

Melissa Abache joined Koç University in 2014, and she works at the Office of the Vice President for Research and Development, managing Koç University’s international marketing and student recruitment activities with her colleagues in the Global Recruitment Team. She supports the development of new international research and joint degree collaborations with partner universities, led the development of the university’s first Strategic Internationalization Plan (SIP 2017-2020) and coordinated the EU-funded HEIDA project at the university between 2012-2016 that aimed to improve the use of data for internationalization of higher education institutions. Together with OIP staff, Ms Abache is one of the founding members of the Internationalization of Turkish Research Universities Group (ITRG), championing initiatives to bring together the best of Turkish research with other world-class universities.

Ms Abache is originally from Caracas, Venezuela, and received her BSc in urban planning at the Universidad Simón Bolívar and her MSc in environment and development studies at the London School of Economics and Political Science.
are now considered strategically important areas because that is where most of the emerging and mobile talent is located. Our exchange students from this network of universities usually have excellent experiences here at Koç University and become our ambassadors in their home countries and universities, recommending us to other students. In other words, our existing university partner network is a significant source of applicants for our graduate programs.

International scholarship programs, also known as sponsored student programs, are another important source for full-time international students. We work to set up these programs with international foundations or governmental educational agencies so that they can send their best students to Koç University. Currently, we have established and manage twelve of these international scholarship programs that bring students from China, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Colombia, Syria and the Middle East region, among others, to our campus. In some cases, they are completely funded by the external organization, meaning that they support all the expenses of their students, including tuition fees, stipends, dormitory costs, etc.; in other cases, we have co-funding agreements where Koç University waives the tuition fee, and the organizations fund the living and accommodation costs. This channel has the added advantage of identifying pre-selected candidates, ensuring that we get the best of the best in each country, as these students have already been vetted by their national scholarship agencies. This is a relatively new process for Turkey amongst higher education institutions but very common for American and European universities on which our own process is modeled.

International admissions at both undergraduate and graduate level are conducted by a committee of faculty members who take a holistic look at each candidate; they look at grades from high school and university degrees, extra-curricular activities, experience, publications, standard international tests and other criteria. After compiling a short list, they then interview some of the candidates and only then decide to offer admission or not. Our admission process is very rigorous and highly selective, and this sets us apart from most other universities in this country and the region.

Turkey has become more attractive to international students in the past five years as an educational destination. In 2013 there were only about ten thousand international students in Turkey; in 2017–18 the official statistic cites approximately 125,000—a significant increase but still relatively low compared to other emerging educational hubs. The Turkish government has set the goal of hosting over two hundred thousand international students by 2023. This is a difficult target, but most universities are working hard to achieve it.
However, for us it is not about growing our international enrollment but first and foremost about quality; rather than recruiting thousands of students, we want to attract the best from each country. In doing so, we are competing with all the globally renowned research universities in the world. Our preferred candidates are the same students that are also able to get offers from Yale, Princeton, Harvard, Oxford, LSE, and so on. Of course, these are big brand names, but what really matters, particularly for doctoral students, is the experience of and fit with the supervising professor as well as the research project they will be working on for four or more years.

This is what we emphasize in all our communications, i.e., the quality of our professors, their research labs, the projects they are working on, and their network and connections. All of these are very important to postgraduate students because what they want is to eventually be placed in good academic positions or to work in strong R&D programs in industry.

Affordability is an important consideration for both undergraduate and graduate candidates in many of our target countries, especially since living costs are significantly lower in Turkey than in the US or the UK. Culture is an additional factor, particularly for countries from the Middle
East and Central Asia, who see Turkey as a safe and welcoming place for their students. And then there is the attraction of Istanbul, of course. The city has a very positive image abroad, and many international students are excited to come and live in this vibrant city of 15 million people and within a world-class campus environment.

Country perception is key, and all kinds of factors weigh in. Turkey is an attractive tourism destination, and even such factors as a new flight destination or a popular Turkish TV series can have a positive impact on international student interest.

The highest demand from international students at the graduate level is for science and technology, especially for our engineering programs. There is also a high level of interest among international students from the US, Europe and Asia for specific social science programs, such as archaeology and international relations, because of the historical and political relevance of studying these subjects here in Turkey. The fact that we provide these programs in English is obviously a big advantage for international students.

At the undergraduate level, there is a huge demand for medicine, particularly from countries in Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa. As there is a gap in provision in their own countries, these students are looking for opportunities to study medicine in English abroad, and Turkey offers this opportunity. However, our medical school is comparatively small and highly selective.

We consider a large number of applicants, but only very few international candidates are admitted. There is also strong interest in our undergraduate programs in the areas of international relations, economics and business administration.

At the PhD level, the percentage of international students at Koç University is now 25 percent. We have had a significant increase in PhD students after 2013. We are now admitting about 115 new PhD students each year, which is an outstanding number for a young Turkish university. At the undergraduate level, the percentage of international students currently stands at 3-5 percent, and we are working very hard since late 2017 to reach 10 percent by 2023.

We use online marketing channels, search portals and social media, to publish information about Koç University and its programs. We create content on a daily basis for our English-only social media channels where we post information and videos about what life at Koç University is like for international students and maintain an active database of individual and institutional contacts for promotional and informational campaigns. We have seen how important it is to provide testimonies by current students, professors, and alumni about their activities, events, research programs, publications, life on campus and more to give a genuine glimpse about what is expected of each student when they join our institution.

On the Importance of International Students for a World-Class Research University

When I came here as a PhD student, I had many questions in my mind and was feeling a little shy. But my advisor was a great help, and I feel really part of the team now.

Sanaz Tahir (Iran)
PhD candidate, Computer Sciences and Engineering
On the Importance of International Students for a World-Class Research University

We also attend over 30 educational fairs each year in target countries—one or two in each country in spring and fall—and they give us an opportunity to have face-to-face conversations with potential students, answering their questions about Turkey and Koç University.

One of the most fulfilling aspects of working in our team is talking to bright, motivated students and being able to tell them that we have scholarships that can support their career and academic aspirations. For example, our three largest scholarship programs (in terms of total funding value) for international students are with the Government of Pakistan, the Victor and William Fung Foundation and, since late 2017, with the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education from the United Arab Emirates. The latter provides scholarships to Arab students—with a focus on Syrian students living in Turkey—in science and technology subjects at undergraduate and master’s level. It has been a very positive development for us, because it has allowed us to bring to our campus brilliant students from countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Palestine and other Arab countries that previously had not had any representation at our university. Every time we present this scholarship to potential students, you can see their excitement at the thought of being able to pursue their curiosity and ambitions at a center of excellence like Koç University.

"brain gain" than "brain drain" are the most successful and competitive. Furthermore, international students are not just key to any world-class research university today but also help create and deepen strong economic, political and cultural ties with their home countries. For many decades, the US and Europe have been at the forefront of recruiting top students worldwide to enrich their talent pools in academia and industry and to foster good-will abroad. But there is now greater mobility of top talent in today’s hyper-connected world, and this has led to increasing competition among traditional destinations and universities to attract them. I believe that our work at Koç University in this respect has been important and will become crucial in the broader national context, and I hope that our example in funding and supporting such a large number of international graduate students will motivate other universities in Turkey, as well.

We have made good progress, but there is still a long way to go. Our focus for the next period is to further improve our admissions and enrollment process and increase the diversity of our student body at both undergraduate and graduate levels, using all the best practices and experience we have gained in these first five years of international marketing and recruitment activities at Koç University.
Beyond Graduation, a New Bond

Güneş İngin

THE OFFICE of alumni relations was founded in 2012 as part of the Corporate Relations and Resource Development Department. We are separate from but work very closely with the Koç University Alumni Association. As the number of alumni increased, the need for a dedicated office for alumni affairs at the university arose in order to provide institutional support. The purpose of the office is three-fold: to cultivate relationships between alumni, between current students and alumni, and between alumni and the university as a whole.

We often like to say that "Our university is our alumni and our alumni are our university." The alumni of a university carry it with them all the time and wherever they go. Our activities, therefore, are designed to emphasize and strengthen this bond. The fact that two of our alumni were appointed this year to the Koç University Board of Trustees is a concrete and meaningful demonstration of this bond, and all our alumni have very much welcomed this step.

We make a special effort to keep in touch with all our alumni, continually updating our database with their most recent contact and professional details. We need this data also for internal analysis as it is used in the development of certain departments, colleges and programs. For example, we conduct surveys and focus groups among our alumni to learn how much their education and training at Koç University has benefitted their professional or academic careers. We then share this information with the relevant departments and colleges.

There are currently close to 14 thousand Koç alumni, and we are able to reach and update the data of about 95 percent of all alumni. It’s

Creativity is just connecting things.
—Steve Jobs, Wired, February 01, 1996

Beyond Graduation, a New Bond

Güneş İngin joined the Office of the Dean of Students in 2004 after having graduated from Koç University’s Department of Psychology. She was appointed alumni relations coordinator in 2010. Previously, Ms İngin held various board positions at the Koç University Alumni Association and is currently a member of the Alumni Association’s Advisory Board.
Currently, there are almost five hundred volunteer alumni registered in the alumni mentoring program. Students can search the system for an alumnus mentor that best fits their area of interest, and they can then set up communications among themselves.

We also regularly organize panel meetings for current students where alumni share their experiences with specific industries, companies or professions. Alumni recount challenges they may have experienced at the beginning of their careers, how they interviewed for jobs or failures they may have had in the past and the lessons they have learned from them. After the panel, students get to meet the alumni for more conversation, and some students take the opportunity to pass on their CVs or apply for an internship.

As for relations between alumni themselves, we try to strengthen this network by getting people together at different events such as social gatherings, campaigns. For instance, a large-scale fundraising campaign is currently underway to raise funds for the university’s Anatolian Scholarship program. In 2018, alumni classes are funding 18 Anatolian Scholars for the duration of their undergraduate study at Koç University.

The alumni-student connection is also very precious. We invite alumni to engage with students to give them guidance, to pass on their knowledge and to share their professional experiences. There is a mentorship program in place, administered via an online platform, where alumni from all over the world can participate.

Currently, there are almost five hundred volunteer alumni registered in the alumni mentoring program. Students can search the system for an alumnus mentor that best fits their area of interest, and they can then set up communications among themselves. We also regularly organize panel meetings for current students where alumni share their experiences with specific industries, companies or professions. Alumni recount challenges they may have experienced at the beginning of their careers, how they interviewed for jobs or failures they may have had in the past and the lessons they have learned from them. After the panel, students get to meet the alumni for more conversation, and some students take the opportunity to pass on their CVs or apply for an internship.

As for relations between alumni themselves, we try to strengthen this network by getting people together at different events such as social gatherings,
parties or trips. All of these are organized in conjunction with the Alumni Association. There are also various social responsibility projects run by volunteers at the Alumni Association. The Alumni Theater Club, for instance, has recently donated its income from ticket sales to the Anatolian Scholarship Program. In addition to all of this, we hold monthly industry-specific business and networking meetings so that alumni can develop professional connections among themselves. Each semester, we also hold college meetings, where alumni, say, from the College of Engineering get together with the engineering faculty. College seniors are also invited so that they can start to forge connections within the community. We also regularly invite faculty members to talk about their current research projects in a presentation that is geared for the general audience, irrespective of academic background.

All of these events are well attended, and we constantly adjust our offering to the changing demands of the growing pool of alumni. Every summer there is one big alumni gathering, and there are special events for classes celebrating their
Beyond Graduation, a New Bond

We also hold meetings in cities such as Zurich, Baku and Dubai, where there are also sizable Koç alumni communities. Our alumni are now well-recognized and appreciated in the business world, and Koç University alumni are now always included in initial recruitment shortlists. According to new graduate data provided by our Career Development Center, the vast majority of our alumni are employed within three months of graduation and ninety percent within the first year. That is an exceptionally high rate for Turkey, considering that university graduates make up almost one-third of all unemployed in the country’s job market.

I, myself, am a Koç University alumna and remember the mixed feelings we all had on graduation day; there’s pride and joy but also a bit of sorrow when turning in one’s Student ID card and thinking, “This is the end of my relationship with this place.” But it is not. This mutual bond only changes form. On the same day that our graduates turn in their student cards, we sign them up for KÜME and hand them their new Koç alumni cards. This card means a great deal to them at that moment because it symbolically marks the beginning of their new relationship with the university, and they know it will always be home to them.

Our website, mezun.ku.edu.tr, is an open platform for all our alumni where they can share information about themselves and the university community. In addition to the site, we have a closed platform, KÜME, that is both a social network and a database. Only alumni can register here and create a profile. This digital platform, which is searchable by city, high school, academic field, company and industry, allows them to keep in touch with or meet other alumni, or even apply for or post a job listing. Here is also where they can follow and sign up for all of our and the Alumni Association’s events.

Quite a few of our alumni live abroad, and we have set up a network of alumni representatives who help us organize events in other countries. There is quite a large Koç alumni community in London, for example, and we hold two or three meetings in London each year. Other alumni meetings are held in the Netherlands, Germany and the USA. Whenever President İnan or one of our deans travel abroad, they will try and meet with the alumni there. We also hold meetings in cities such as Zurich, Baku and Dubai, where there are also sizable Koç alumni communities.

Our alumni are now well-recognized and appreciated in the business world, and Koç University alumni are now always included in initial recruitment shortlists. According to new graduate data provided by our Career Development Center, the vast majority of our alumni are employed within three months of graduation and ninety percent within the first year. That is an exceptionally high rate for Turkey, considering that university graduates make up almost one-third of all unemployed in the country’s job market.

I, myself, am a Koç University alumna and remember the mixed feelings we all had on graduation day; there’s pride and joy but also a bit of sorrow when turning in one’s Student ID card and thinking, “This is the end of my relationship with this place.” But it is not. This mutual bond only changes form. On the same day that our graduates turn in their student cards, we sign them up for KÜME and hand them their new Koç alumni cards. This card means a great deal to them at that moment because it symbolically marks the beginning of their new relationship with the university, and they know it will always be home to them.

12th, 15th or 20th anniversary. All of this means that we run a jam-packed events calendar, and there will be some alumni event or other each week throughout the year.

Our website, mezun.ku.edu.tr, is an open platform for all our alumni where they can share information about themselves and the university community. In addition to the site, we have a closed platform, KÜME, that is both a social network and a database. Only alumni can register here and create a profile. This digital platform, which is searchable by city, high school, academic field, company and industry, allows them to keep in touch with or meet other alumni, or even apply for or post a job listing. Here is also where they can follow and sign up for all of our and the Alumni Association’s events.

Quite a few of our alumni live abroad, and we have set up a network of alumni representatives who help us organize events in other countries. There is quite a large Koç alumni community in London, for example, and we hold two or three meetings in London each year. Other alumni meetings are held in the Netherlands, Germany and the USA. Whenever President İnan or one of our deans travel abroad, they will try and meet with the alumni there. We also hold meetings in cities such as Zurich, Baku and Dubai, where there are also sizable Koç alumni communities.

Our alumni are now well-recognized and appreciated in the business world, and Koç University alumni are now always included in initial recruitment shortlists. According to new graduate data provided by our Career Development Center, the vast majority of our alumni are employed within three months of graduation and ninety percent within the first year. That is an exceptionally high rate for Turkey, considering that university graduates make up almost one-third of all unemployed in the country’s job market.

I, myself, am a Koç University alumna and remember the mixed feelings we all had on graduation day; there’s pride and joy but also a bit of sorrow when turning in one’s Student ID card and thinking, “This is the end of my relationship with this place.” But it is not. This mutual bond only changes form. On the same day that our graduates turn in their student cards, we sign them up for KÜME and hand them their new Koç alumni cards. This card means a great deal to them at that moment because it symbolically marks the beginning of their new relationship with the university, and they know it will always be home to them.
BOB: I can can I I everything else.

ALICE: Balls have zero to me to me to me to me to me to me to me to me to me to me.

THE ULTIMATE AIM OF SCIENTIFIC ENQUIRY IS TO AFFECT CHANGE: WE WANT TO SOLVE HUMAN PROBLEMS AND IMPROVE LIVES JUST AS WE WANT TO EXPAND OUR UNDERSTANDING OF OURSELVES AND THE WORLD. THE MORE WE KNOW, THE MORE EFFECTIVE AGENTS OF CHANGE WE BECOME. THIS REQUIRES THAT WE DEVELOP ETHICAL YARDSTICKS OF WHAT CONSTITUTES “CHANGE FOR THE BETTER”, AND CONSTANTLY REFRESH OUR AWARENESS OF OURSELVES, OUR WIDER COMMUNITIES, AND THE WORLD.
I am an industrial engineer, working in what is called operations research. This field lies at the intersection of applied mathematics and engineering, where we develop mathematical models to help increase the efficiency of various operational processes. My specialization is in applied probability, the modeling of operational systems to increase productivity in production or service systems under conditions of uncertainty, i.e., random processes. I try not to let go of my research interests despite my administrative duties. At present, I am working on several research projects and making progress, if somewhat slowly, and have recently started working in the field of risk management.

When I joined Koç University in 2002, the College of Engineering had just been founded. Before coming here, I had been a faculty member in an old and established engineering school in France. I was excited at the prospect of working in this young, dynamic environment that was more flexible and open to change. Of course, Koç University has now become more established, but it is wonderful to see that the same enthusiasm and excitement still continues. In 2018, Koç University College of Engineering will be 18 years old, but it already counts among the most well-respected engineering schools in Turkey and Europe. A number of factors lies behind this success, and first among these is the vision. Koç University has committed itself to be an excellent research university, selecting world-class research faculty, attracting high-potential young researchers and providing an environment where this talent can flourish. It has chosen from the very beginning to work with young faculty members, encouraging them to follow their passion and providing them with the support structures to do so. We now have a system in place that serves present needs while being open to interdisciplinary collaboration. And it is this vision in conjunction with our gains so far that makes it very exciting to think about the next ten to twenty years.

Koç University was established with the objective of making world-class contributions to the body of science, and this is how we, as its College of Engineering, ultimately measure our own success. Our research is internationally acclaimed, published in reputable journals and has made a significant scientific impact.

Our senior and junior faculty members have been presented with awards from organizations such as TÜBİTAK (Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) and TÜBA (Turkish Academy of Sciences). Almost every one of our faculty members and graduate students has been presented with awards from organizations such as TÜBİTAK (Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) and TÜBA (Turkish Academy of Sciences).

Some Thoughts on the Need for a Broader View of Engineering

The humanities and the classics are now more relevant than ever before. A lot of questions are going to migrate from the department of philosophy to the department of engineering and the department of economics. Questions like, “What do you want to do with your life?” are going to become far more practical than ever before, given the immense powers that technology is giving us.

—Yoram Noah Harari, Times Talk, streamed live September 4, 2018

Fikri Karaesmen

Some Thoughts on the Need for a Broader View of Engineering
has received one or more of these awards at some stage. The sizable and prestigious funds granted to individual researchers by the European Research Council (ERC) are also considered an important indicator of our international reputation. At the moment, we host four ERC grants at our college; there are a total of 16 ERC grants in all of Turkey and eight of those are here, at Koç University. What I find even more exciting is that we have about 25–25 faculty members who have the potential of winning ERC grants and many others who are equally qualified. The first female engineering faculty member to have received an ERC grant in Turkey, Assoc. Prof. Seda Keskin, is also a member of our college.

As our college’s priority is to do research with global impact, we encourage quality over quantity in academic publications, measuring success not by the number of articles published but by where they are published. We want to see our research represented in the most influential international journals.

At present, there is highly successful interdisciplinary work being done at the College of Engineering, Engineering is an applied science; its aim, by definition, is to create useful products or processes. We are therefore involved in meaningful collaborations with various branches of engineering, both within our college as well as outside, co-developing products and processes. The College of Sciences is, of course, a natural partner, but we are also engaged in interesting collaborations with the School of Medicine as well as the College of Administrative Sciences and Economics. We have also done some joint projects with the College of Social Sciences and Humanities and hope to see more of them.

Take, for instance, the artificial heart pump project that Professor İsmail Lazoğlu, a faculty member in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, has been working on for some time. The design, production, and automation of this artificial heart pump were conducted at Professor Lazoğlu’s laboratory. But better and faster results were achieved once a cardiologist got involved. Fine-tuning the pump’s settings, say, for increased blood density, needs the expertise of someone who knows about the dynamics of blood flow. After a concerted team effort that included medical doctors, medical researchers and mechanical engineers, experiments were concluded successfully and produced an artificial heart pump that functioned as planned.

Here is another example: artificial intelligence and artificial learning tools are very useful, particularly when there is a large amount of data from which one could not readily extrapolate conclusions. One of our faculty members at the Department of Industrial Engineering, Dr. Mehmet Gönen, is currently using these tools to develop computational methods that will improve personalized treatment options for breast cancer. In doing so, he is, of course, collaborating with the university’s molecular biologists and medical doctors.

In this context, KUTTAM, Koç University’s Research Center for Translational Medicine, is a very exciting development, as it will accelerate cooperation and interaction between researchers across the life sciences, medicine, and engineering. Here, our aim is to develop medical equipment that will not stay in some engineering laboratory...
The way of science

but actually make it all the way to patients’ bedsides. This requires the collaboration of researchers from multiple disciplines. KUTTAM is currently operational at the Koç University Hospital, but we will start experiencing its full benefit to research in engineering at its facilities in the Semahat Dr. Nüse Arsel Science and Technology Building, opened for research at Rumelifeneri Campus in 2018. The new Technology Building is hugely exciting in itself. It hosts valuable, state-of-the-art equipment and facilities that are necessary for cutting-edge nanotechnology research, an area that will likely see much progress in the next few years. The laboratories at the new Technology Building are well-equipped to meet the demands of researchers in this field. Moreover, it creates a fertile environment for interdisciplinary work as well as enable new research that cannot currently be conducted at our university. All this means that many more researchers will be able to work in these areas and that Koç University will be able to make important new contributions in all of these fields.

Today, we have about 1,550 undergraduate students at the College of Engineering and approximately 325 graduate and postgraduate students. Postgraduate students are vital for every research university, directly impacting the quality and quantity of its research output. While our present number of postgraduates is quite good, our number of research faculty and projects suggests that it could be higher. We are in competition for the best students not only with universities in Turkey but also with renowned universities across the world. The fact that Koç University is pursuing this objective is also evidenced by the number of our international students, which now constitute about half of all postgraduate students. Many of those will have applied not only to Koç University or other universities in Turkey but will also have considered opportunities abroad. Our college is doing quite well in this global race at the moment, and I believe that we will get better still.

Engineering education at Koç University is predicated on the principle of always developing in line with changing technologies. Being a good researcher is sometimes believed to be different from being a good educator, but being a good researcher actually nurtures education. Being enthusiastic, meticulous and taking one’s work seriously are fundamental traits for every researcher, and these traits will naturally be reflected also in the educational setting. But like everything else, how education is conducted will also change in the coming years, and we are always trying to find new ways to improve our educational abilities.

Some Thoughts on the Need for a Broader View of Engineering
One thing is clear; it has become impossible to predict the type of knowledge engineering will require in twenty years or what will be expected from our alumni in academia or industry. Everything is changing so fast that the best thing to do under these circumstances is to provide students with the best fundamentals, because these fundamental principles will not change, no matter what. To understand the physical world properly and to look at it from an engineering perspective by creating mathematical models and analysis; this is what students need to learn as best and as broadly as they can. It is also important that students realize that rather than getting vocational training they are being taught how to learn difficult subjects. In other words, if they study well, they should be able to absorb and process any difficult new subject they encounter by using their fundamental knowledge, even in twenty years’ time.

An engineering student today needs two things: Really sound knowledge of basic science and mathematics and a much broader vision than that held by older generations of engineers. The educational system provided at Koç University does, in some measure, support this. However, nurturing creativity also means taking an interest in art, reading poetry, going to concerts, watching theater. There is now a broad consensus that most routine work will be done by artificial intelligence within a number of years. This means that students need to develop skills that will allow them to do non-routine work. Some of these skills will, of course, be based on scientific and mathematical knowledge but others will be based on creativity, comprehensive understanding, communication and social relations. Other changes are also happening; engineering, particularly mechanical or civil engineering, used to be regarded as a “man’s job”. I think that these kinds of attitudes will soon disappear altogether. At our college, for example, the percentage of female students is much higher than the global average, and we also have quite a high number of female faculty members.

I am convinced that the increase in the number of women among students and faculty in the various engineering disciplines will also help foster new perspectives.

In conclusion, I can clearly surmise the following: In order to succeed in the science of engineering from this point onwards, we, that is all of us teaching and studying in this field, must step out of the confines of our traditional ways of doing things; we must be open to constantly review and renew our outlook and to continuously develop our professional competencies by tapping into as many different resources as possible. ◆
The principal goal of education is to create men and women who are capable of doing new things, not just of repeating what other generations have done.


**MY RESEARCH** interest is in the development of language and communication skills in very young children. It is a well-documented fact now that strong communication skills, as early as at the age of three or four, are a strong predictor for future academic success, even for long-term happiness. My specific area of research is to find out what helps predict language competence in early childhood and to develop ways and means to support this development.

We now know that language development needs the communicative context or so-called “dialogic input”, which means listening and paying attention to the child, observing what the child responds to with interest. Child-centric and conversational action by the adults in the infant’s life is absolutely necessary for these critical language and communication skills to develop. Unfortunately, not every adult is equally good at providing this “dialogic interaction” and neither are many.

Aylin Künatay

On Becoming Our Best Selves
However, many families and social settings today are not conducive to language development in a communicative environment, as many children are left in front of TV, computer or mobile phone screens for hours on end. This means that some children will be disadvantaged in their overall academic success because they grow up in a social setting where their interest is not stimulated and engaged through language and communication. There is inequality also in access to quality foreign language instruction, which can add another layer of disadvantage to children from lower-income family backgrounds. Inequality is a fact of life, and social inequality is what we want to better understand as social scientists—and that not just for academic reasons. A scientific understanding of the objective reasons for and dynamics of social inequality may help us create tools and methods to dampen the effect of these sources of inequality and thereby improve the life chances of disadvantaged people. These interventions can be especially beneficial to children and youngsters, helping them develop not only their own well-being to the fullest but also contribute to the well-being of their communities and society as a whole.

One of our current research projects at Koç University, for example, is called L2TOR, an applied psychology project to develop and facilitate second-language learning with so-called “social robots”. Second-language teaching is tricky for teachers because there are kids at different ability levels, migrant kids with little exposure to the school language, more competent kids, etc. in a classroom. L2TOR is funded under the European Commission’s Horizon 2020 program, and we are preparing tutoring lessons that the kids will like and find interesting. We believe that social robots will provide better results than ordinary digital devices because kids like embodied action, they like them and learn better from them; they are more engaged, and their learning outcomes are better. In our project, children are learning math and spatial skills in a second language with the help of a social robot.

As a general approach, the importance of personalized, interactive tutoring, which takes into account the child’s interests, stimulates and engages them in developing their skills, applies equally to the learning environment in general. Speaking of learning in general; multi-disciplinary work has been getting much attention in academia and beyond. After years of greater and greater specialization in increasingly narrow fields, there is now a strong emphasis on multi and interdisciplinary work across the board, and rightly so. With so much narrow specialization, the solution to any major question needs the contribution of many different specialists from different fields. In addition, a diversity of viewpoints can lead to more innovative social settings, where TV or electronic devices have taken the place of play, interaction and person-to-person communication.

The ability to learn any language, not just a second language, predicts success. Even if the child is monolingual, that is, if it is only Turkish-speaking or German-speaking or Arabic-speaking, but is ahead of its peers in this capacity in comparison to other kids, this child will do better in elementary school, even in college. Besides, there is a correlation between skill in the first and second language; if children are skilled in their first language they will also tend to learn a second language easier. Multilingualism is obviously important in today’s connected world and good second language skills will give the student a significant academic advantage as well as better life and career choices.
People flourish best when their abilities best match their interests. I have been at Koç University since 1999, and over the years I have seen many students who flourished here beyond their own highest expectations, some finding their true passion in their original field of choice, others in a field that they had never even considered. One of my students, for example, with a degree in psychology became a successful chef as well as a media-savvy, inspiring communicator. Others, who would never have thought about an academic career with no academics in their families, went on to become highly successful research scientists with prestigious appointments abroad. Yet others may discover that their true passion lies in a totally different field. There are so many examples…

Koç University very much supports this kind of personal flourishing; watching all these bright young people really transform and become their best selves is the greatest reward for all of us here in teaching and administration.◆

Looking back now, I realize that Koç University helped me develop essential skills such as teamwork, project development, critical thinking, project development, taking initiative and responsibility, being practical and acting fast. But joining Koç Actors and performing at the Sevgi Gönül Theater Days festival has been the most transformative experience for me.

Enver Murat Güçlü ‘08
Sociology, voice actor, effective communications trainer, and contents director

On Becoming Our Best Selves

People flourish best when their abilities best match their interests. I have been at Koç University since 1999, and over the years I have seen many students who flourished here beyond their own highest expectations, some finding their true passion in their original field of choice, others in a field that they had never even considered. One of my students, for example, with a degree in psychology became a successful chef as well as a media-savvy, inspiring communicator. Others, who would never have thought about an academic career with no academics in their families, went on to become highly successful research scientists with prestigious appointments abroad. Yet others may discover that their true passion lies in a totally different field. There are so many examples… Koç University very much supports this kind of personal flourishing; watching all these bright
KOÇ-KAM, the Gender Studies Center at Koç University, was founded in 2010 under the directorship of the late Professor Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı. Professor Kağıtçıbaşı received broad, international recognition for her studies on the changing family structure in Turkey, which constituted the main area of KOÇ-KAM’s research under her leadership. Research at KOÇ-KAM is broadly concerned with patterns of cultural and social prejudice in gender-based inequalities.

Aside from its academic dimension, gender and women’s studies is an area of research that also has concrete policy impact. At KOÇ-KAM, we conduct “policy-focused research” that has contributed to the work of international organizations, national NGOs, other universities and especially that of the Turkish Parliament. For instance, our efforts have contributed from the perspective of gender and women’s studies:

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF GENDER AND WOMEN’S STUDIES: Research That Impacts Lives

—Suna Kıraç, Ömrümden Uzun İdeallerim Var (I Have Ideals Longer Than My Life)

Bertil Emrah Oder

BERTİL EMRAH ODER PROFESSOR OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAW / DEAN, LAW SCHOOL / DIRECTOR, KOÇ UNIVERSITY GENDER STUDIES CENTER (KOÇ-KAM). Prof. Bertil Emrah Oder holds an LLB from Istanbul University, an LLM from Marmara University European Union Institute, and a doctorate in law from the University of Cologne. Her research interests include comparative constitutionalism, comparative constitutional review, EU law, international human rights law, and gender equality. She has authored or co-authored six books and published a great number of articles. Prior to joining Koç University in 2007, Prof. Oder served as full-time faculty at Istanbul University and Galatasaray University. She has been a visiting researcher and lecturer at the Universities of Zurich, Cologne and California (UCLA) and was appointed the Henry C. Morris Lecturer of International and Comparative Law at Chicago Kent College of Law in 2012. Prof. Oder is currently UNESCO Chair on Gender Equality and Sustainable Development and director of the Center for Gender and Women’s Studies at Koç University.
to the projects of UN Women in Turkey, the women’s rights unit of the United Nations. UN Women Turkey is also a regional center and conducts research pertaining not only to Turkey but also Central Asia, Southern Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. The Turkey office is, in fact, a main hub that works with UN Women in all of these regions.

KOÇ-KAM has had a particularly strong impact at UN Women with its studies on comparative experiences and achievements in the context of UN conventions on women’s rights. One of these studies was a major project that reviewed all relevant legislation. We looked at all core legislation on subjects through the lens of gender equality. These included laws pertaining to women’s status in the family and domestic violence, on the one hand, and laws concerning women’s participation in politics, in the media, in education and within corporate structures, on the other. In fact, women’s lack of sufficient political participation in Turkey is one of the main problems addressed by the reports of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Women are severely underrepresented in politics not only at the level of the national parliament but also in government. We scanned the entire body of basic legislation concerning the issue of participation, particularly the Political Parties Law, in relation to international standards and comparative gender equality. Another problematic issue in Turkey is the schooling of women and girls. Here, we scanned the entire legal infrastructure safeguarding women’s and girls’ access to education and other dimensions of their right to education, including school dropouts. We also looked at women and the media, a problematic issue worldwide, scanning legislation to see what level of gender equality exists in basic legislation regulating the media, particularly for whether there are any basic safeguards, accelerating measures or positive regulations to enable greater gender equality.

The most fundamental international convention we look to in these matters is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination...
Against Women, or CEDAW, also known as the International Bill of Women’s Rights. CEDAW is both the name of the convention and also a quasi-judicial committee that monitors the implementation processes of CEDAW through periodic reports submitted to the committee by all signatory states. As a CEDAW-signatory, Turkey is also responsible for periodically reporting to the committee on both achievements and shortcomings. However, besides these governmental reports, the CEDAW committee also receives shadow reports from NGOs working in the field of women’s rights in the respective countries, and we took these into consideration as well for our review.

Another important KOÇ-KAM study we conducted has been in relation to the Istanbul Convention, the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, submitted for signature in 2011. It is the most significant international convention on this subject at the pan-European level. Turkey was quick to adopt the Istanbul Convention and even greatly contributed to its development. Since then, KOÇ-KAM has provided significant feedback on the implementation and monitoring of this landmark treaty as well as its transposition into domestic law.

Even though Turkey has adopted a more egalitarian stance on crimes against bodily integrity and especially on the issue of sexual assault and sexual harassment by reforming the Turkish Criminal Code in 2005, it still lags behind the provisions of the Istanbul Convention, especially in legal practice. In our research, we focused on the problem of serious judicial inequalities frequently encountered in cases involving violence against women, such as sentence reductions for perpetrators of so-called honor killings, for unjust provocation, or for good behavior. KOÇ-KAM has contributed a Gender Equality Certificate Program to the university’s curriculum. Koç University students have to complete six courses within the framework of the program to earn the certificate. Koç University has created a best practice example with this certificate program, and we have shared this experience with other universities in Turkey. We also frequently organize various seminars, panels and discussions at the university to raise awareness of gender equality issues and to keep the subject in the spotlight throughout the university.

KOÇ-KAM also initiated Koç University’s training program on the critical issue of sexual harassment. We worked for over a year on its development and put a lot of thought into it. It is adapted to the relevant legislation and represents a significant first among universities in Turkey. This online training program, which is now mandatory for every Koç University student, faculty, administrative staff and contractor personnel, is designed to help prevent sexual harassment by increasing awareness of the issue. We have also created an efficient sexual harassment complaint procedure in parallel to this training program. For these procedures to work, the persons lodging a complaint must know that they will not be subjected to secondary victimization during the investigation process. Plaintiffs do not have to worry about whether their complaint will be effectively investigated, whether they will be treated unfairly or devalued during this process, or whether they will be exposed. In other words, we have created an institutional process that prevents victimization. Our sexual harassment complaint procedures have been in place since 2016 and are also in line with EU directives that protect the rights of victims of violence.

Another current KOÇ-KAM project runs in concurrence with the Kingdom of Netherlands Matra Program and highlights women’s leadership role in the struggle against sexist stereotypes. This project, which holds that true leaders must help create other leaders, involves nearly one hundred participants from a wide range of different industries, from agriculture to education. Participating women are being mentored by leader women, who act as role models to other women in their respective fields.
In addition to the work of our own researchers at KOÇ-KAM, we have also set up—with the help of the Vehbi Koç Foundation—the KOÇ-KAM Research Awards program, a program that brings together researchers from all across Turkey and supports young researchers in the field of women’s studies. Since this award program supports forthcoming instead of completed research, it stimulates new research potential in Turkey and helps publicize this research data to the wider public.

When we look at the issue of gender equality at Koç University in relation to this larger picture, the results are very encouraging. In many of our colleges, including the Law School which only accepts students with extremely high scores, the number of female students now exceeds that of male students. It is also very gratifying to see that the rate of women’s representation in the College of Engineering is high, particularly among faculty members, given that women’s representation in engineering is usually low across the world.

At the administrative level, the female ratio is also unusually high at Koç University. Currently, four of the university’s seven colleges have female deans, and three of its four graduate schools have female directors. I believe that this puts Koç University among leading pioneers for gender equality and the empowerment of women in academia, not only in Turkey but also in the world.

Looking at the issue from a national and historical perspective, we must emphasize the pivotal role played by the establishment of the Turkish Republic, which led to the country’s modernization and launched a major social transformation, especially by drawing women into nontraditional fields of employment. Policies were put into effect that encouraged women to seek careers in areas such as engineering, medicine, natural sciences, and law, all of which require the use of authority and were therefore regarded as male professions. As a matter of fact, the presence of women in academia in Turkey, particularly in the fields of engineering, medicine and the sciences, is generally ahead of that in EU countries.

Yet, here too, a problem persists where we see the rate of women drop dramatically in higher positions, and most directors, deans and presidents in academia in Turkey are male. The same holds for industry, where women’s representation is concentrated in middle management. In fact, we could say the same about political participation. Regarding the number of women members of parliament, Turkey has not been able to come close to the 35-42 percent threshold that has been determined as the critical mass in UN reports. Another problem in Turkey is the very low number of women mayors, particularly in local government. We see that women leadership is not satisfactory in many areas. That is why the Matra Project, which focuses on women’s leadership, is extremely important.

In addition to the work of our own researchers at KOÇ-KAM, we have also set up—with the help of the Vehbi Koç Foundation—the KOÇ-KAM Research Awards program, a program that brings together researchers from all across Turkey and supports young researchers in the field of women’s studies. Since this award program supports forthcoming instead of completed research, it stimulates new research potential in Turkey and helps publicize this research data to the wider public.

When we look at the issue of gender equality at Koç University in relation to this larger picture, the results are very encouraging. In many
Learning is ever young, even in old age.

—Aeschylus, Orestia, 458 BCE

KOLT, Koç University Office of Learning and Teaching, was founded in 2009 on the initiative of President İnan and with the objective of making Koç University a center of excellence not just in research but also in learning and teaching. First, a committee was set up with a representative from each college. I joined this committee on behalf of the College of Engineering, and we set out on our task by first researching what the contents and processes of KOLT should look like. We visited various best-practice examples of similar programs abroad and shared our experiences. We looked especially closely at similar models at leading American universities. As we embarked on this path, we had clear objectives on what we wanted to do and achieve.

I was appointed the second director of this center in 2012 with the fundamental duty of realizing KOLT’s mission to create an environment of continuous learning and teaching based on students’ needs. Our main activity at KOLT is to provide support for faculty members, students and graduate students. We organize workshops on learning and teaching, support faculty members with teaching innovation grants to help them improve their courses, conduct mid-term evaluations, organize peer support groups for courses, English conversation groups and assist students who feel the need to develop their academic skills with our KOLT101 course.

In recent years, KOLT has also assumed a growing role in the development of educational technologies and the strengthening of academic programs. It played an essential role in the establishment of Blackboard, a university-wide learning management system tools throughout the university.

How to Change the “How” in Learning and Teaching

E. Murat Sözer

E. Murat Sözer is an associate professor of mechanical engineering and director of the Koç University Office of Learning and Teaching (KOLT). Sözer earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees at Middle East Technical University, and received a PhD in the same field from the University of Delaware. As an associate professor, Sözer specializes in the modeling and control of composite material manufacturing processes, such as resin transfer molding and vacuum infusion, material characterization experiments, fluid mechanics, and flows through porous media. He is the co-author of a book on manufacturing processes of composite materials and has written many articles and book chapters. As an associate professor, Sözer joined Koç University in 2000 and was appointed director of the Koç University Office of Learning and Teaching in 2012. In this role, Sözer has initiated the establishment and development of learner-centric innovative approaches to learning and teaching, education technologies and learning management system tools throughout the university.
The way of science

The mission as teaching staff is not to transfer the knowledge in our heads into those of our students but rather to trigger students’ curiosity, getting them to think less about the “what” and more about the “why and how” of answers. Every piece of new knowledge should open doors to other questions in students’ minds, not close them.

I believe that as the skills propagated at our workshops are applied across lecture rooms, students will participate more in discussions and engage actively in activities where they need to approach problems as a team and solve them step by step; they will make learning more attractive and help students better retain what they have learned. Studies have shown that traditional educational methods where students just sit passively to listen to lectures are good at creating short-term learning but that this knowledge is lost before it gets a chance to be used. Nowadays, students can, from a very young age onwards, quickly access a wealth of information online. The issue today is not to transmit knowledge to students’ minds but to show them how to access the right sources, sort through, synthesize and apply that information to the question at hand.

I would like to present a few examples of our student-centered and educational technology-based work:

Imagine a typical lecture. When I was a university student, most lecturers would stand at the blackboard, talking and writing constantly, and we would participate, at best, by asking some questions. We would usually take copious notes and try to understand the subject by going over these notes later on. Now, we try to add different learning environments to this standard, where the learner is at the center of the interaction and engaged in it. For instance, we make use of Clickers, which allows the lecturer to ask a direct question to more...
Even if their material is very strong in the traditional sense, they must still find ways to engage their students, arouse their interest, motivate them to interact, and possibly blend in some new teaching technology. So-called "flipped learning" is one of the concepts that exemplifies this approach very well. In the traditional model, the lecturer delivers her lecture in front of the class and then gives students a list of things to work on before the next lecture or the following week. Students are required to do this work by themselves. In the flipped learning model, the lecturer first prepares an engaging and interesting lecture video, sometimes supported by simulations, animations or interactive applications. Students watch this video before coming to the lecture. This means that they already have a basic grasp of the topic before coming to the lecture, where time is then spent not on lecturing but on making use of this knowledge, on its application. Depending on the topic, teams may work to solve various problems, analyze data, or do advanced-level application projects that require design or interpretation. In flipped learning, the student plays the active part while the lecturer acts as a moderator, intervening only when discussions get stuck, pointing out or drawing attention to problems and facilitating the group's conversation.

The "active learning lecture hall" is a dedicated, 45-person space, the first of which was set up at the Rumelifeneri main campus and is being used for over 10 courses each semester. We are planning to set up an active learning lecture hall at each college and increase their number over the years. The active learning lecture hall

Lecturers today must design their lectures very well.
The mentors and advisors play a key role in helping new students adapt to university and achieve academic success. At KOLT, we believe it is vital that students help each other succeed and therefore greatly value peer-support programs as effective learning tools. This is why we have expanded the scope of our peer support program (peer-tutoring) in recent years. Currently, 112 students serve as peer mentors at eighty courses. Peer mentors are students who have very successfully completed that particular course in previous semesters. Mentors are recommended by their lecturers and are then selected through interviews. These students hold office hours to answer the questions of current course students and organize problem-solving or pre-exam review sessions. The system benefits the peer mentors as well since most of them are planning for a future as academics or are students who have leadership potential and enjoy sharing their knowledge with others.

Most of our graduate students serve as teaching assistants, and KOLT offers university-wide regular workshops to help them enhance their teaching skills. These workshops provide suggestions on topics such as effective teaching, useful best-practices, grading and use of the Blackboard system.

Another service we are very proud of at KOLT is our support for “internal program evaluation”, where we gather feedback from students, alumni, employers and faculty to evaluate existing course programs of various academic units. We ask students and alumni, through surveys and focus groups, which skills they believe they have learned during their course program at a particular department and how they were taught. We also ask them which areas they feel to be lacking, and report their feedback to the relevant department. This system provides valuable suggestions from a user perspective and helps us to renew and improve course programs constantly.

The question of “how” in the design of our learning and teaching processes here at Koç University is not so much a search for a single answer as a search for an optimum under continually changing conditions. In this context, the continuous feedback we get from all of our stakeholders in education helps us better understand and promote the most beneficial and effective teaching and learning methods.

Koç University has made me a team player. High school was all about individual effort, but here I learned what it means to be part of a team and how one can be successful as a team member, both in lectures and during social activities.

Ece Eylül Yılmaz
SENIOR, BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION; PRESIDENT, MUSICAL SOCIETY

Koç University has made me a team player. High school was all about individual effort, but here I learned what it means to be part of a team and how one can be successful as a team member, both in lectures and during social activities.

Ece Eylül Yılmaz
SENIOR, BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION; PRESIDENT, MUSICAL SOCIETY
IT IS ONE THING to be well-educated and highly intelligent but another thing to have life skills and be an effective, productive, free and authentic person. I founded ALIS, the Academic and Life Skills program, in 2010 to help transmit some of the insights necessary for a successful life. As we all know, Turkey’s educational system relies heavily on multiple-choice testing. To be admitted to an institution like Koç University, students must devote a few years of their lives to getting really good at solving these tests. As a result, their vision and their lives become terribly constricted. I, therefore, consider the ALIS program as a kind of “back to life” operation that puts students who have made it into university back in touch with themselves and with life. Furthermore, educational systems—here in Turkey as elsewhere in the world—do not focus on developing life skills. School doesn’t offer lessons on how to manage one’s life or on how to conduct oneself and one’s relationships. Students repeatedly experience the trauma of fierce competition to get into schools, both in junior high to get into high school and in high school to get into university. Families expect young people to do nothing

It is one thing to be well-educated and highly intelligent but another thing to have life skills and be an effective, productive, free and authentic person. I founded ALIS, the Academic and Life Skills program, in 2010 to help transmit some of the insights necessary for a successful life. As we all know, Turkey’s educational system relies heavily on multiple-choice testing. To be admitted to an institution like Koç University, students must devote a few years of their lives to getting really good at solving these tests. As a result, their vision and their lives become terribly constricted. I, therefore, consider the ALIS program as a kind of “back to life” operation that puts students who have made it into university back in touch with themselves and with life. Furthermore, educational systems—here in Turkey as elsewhere in the world—do not focus on developing life skills. School doesn’t offer lessons on how to manage one’s life or on how to conduct oneself and one’s relationships. Students repeatedly experience the trauma of fierce competition to get into schools, both in junior high to get into high school and in high school to get into university. Families expect young people to do nothing.
but study. They miss out on life and fail to develop survival skills. So, what mattered to us was to equip students with skills that contribute to success in life, to raise their awareness and to help them regain the life skills that they lost on their way here.

The Academic and Life Skills program is a student-centered program that aims at helping students become more successful and productive during their time at university and to give them the basic skills that they might need in both their professional and private lives. ALIS courses are based on research insights and adapted to students’ maturity level. The first course, ALIS100, is a pass/fail graded, skills acquisition course that students are required to take during their freshman year. This class is taught to approximately 1,000 new students each year. Over time, and following demand from students who had taken the first course, a follow-up course, ALIS200, was developed as an elective. Next, students wanted to take a more advanced version of this course in their junior year. So, we developed ALIS300 and 310: Moving into Professional Life, designed to help them prepare for life after graduation and acquire necessary workplace skills. After that, we noticed the need for a similar course for our graduate students, so we created ALIS GRAD. We operate like a department now, with six faculty members and a set curriculum. Courses are focused mostly on various aspects of life skills. More technical academic skills, such as note-taking, listening to lectures and making presentations, are provided by KOLT, Koç University’s Teaching and Learning Office, and these two university-wide programs complement each other very well.

ALIS courses are conducted in Turkish and with the use of experiential techniques. The first module starts off by confronting students with the question “Who am I?”, which explores their notion of self. It is a question that we all tend to overlook; no matter what age a person may be, answers to this question are usually confused and not sufficiently examined. That’s where we start: “What are my values, my goals, my red lines?” We conduct various inventories and use exercises designed to explore these questions. We use videos and films as projective techniques. We do not, of course, use these inventories to label people; we have a much more open-ended, dynamic and intuitive approach. We thereby encourage students to reflect on the question of “Who am I?” throughout their lives, rather than trying to find an answer and holding on to it, because the answer to this question is forever changing. For instance, it changes when we embark on a career or when we become parents. Our aim is to get them to consider and re-consider this question continuously.

After students have completed the first module, we tell them: “You pretty much know what life is about and what expectations there are out there. There is you and this world outside. How should you manage the interface where these two meet?” It is precisely at this point that life skills come into the equation: time management, stress management, relationship management, communication skills, goal-setting, teamwork and collaboration. We also teach them about leadership to a certain extent: leading themselves and others. Here, too, we apply experiential learning methods and use many games, role-play and simulations. Thus, they start to understand, in theory and in practice, how they can apply the insights acquired at this course to the rest of their lives. Students really enjoy...
these lectures because we do not just teach theory but try to give them a first-hand understanding of all the dimensions of the phenomenon.

Students soon come to apply these insights in real life situations and often come back to tell us that they and others saw a real difference. In fact, we regularly measure the effectiveness of this course, but while tests before and after the course show dramatic differences, I believe that the real gains exceed those that can be measured and that they can only be fully acknowledged after graduation.

As ALIS instructors, we all believe that the course program needs to be updated every two to three years to adapt it to the changing conditions of our times. Currently, we are considering adding such important subjects as how to conduct oneself in online relationships, how to handle social media communications and how to better manage diversity of culture and opinions, among others. We normally conduct these program review meetings among our lecturers, but going forward, I think that we should also turn to alumni and current students for their input, because we don’t know their world and their environments as well as they do.
We want to take the ideas of the ALIS program beyond Koç University, and a few years ago, we put together a book comprised of all the materials we use for the ALIS course. The book, titled Üniversite ve Öncesi: Genç Yenüklendir İçin Hayat Becerileri (University and Beyond: Life Skills for ‘Young Adults’), was published by Koç University Press in 2015. Our greatest dream is for this book to circulate throughout all universities, and even high schools, in Turkey. Recently, we organized a conference around this vision at Koç University—the first of its kind in Turkey—and were thrilled to see 158 delegates from 44 different universities. We presented the ALIS program, and delegates told us about programs they run at their universities. Everyone was immensely impressed by ALIS, and we were asked to conduct train-the-trainer sessions and to set up a certification program.

Access to information is extremely easy nowadays, and although I am a scientist and deeply appreciate science and intellectual achievement, I also recognize that social skills are what make a difference in people’s lives. If only we could start teaching our children about time management, relationship management, communication skills, and so on, already in elementary school!

ALIS lectures bring together twenty-five students from various departments per class, and each group is, therefore, highly heterogeneous. Sometimes, the conversations we have during these lectures make some students uncomfortable, and then we have a conversation about the reasons for that as well. This is incredibly valuable. As a society, we need not only to develop our academic skills but also these kinds of social skills if we want to live together harmoniously. To me, this program is a “hope project”, because these are the kinds of skills that are needed for humanity to keep advancing.

Personally, my research interests are in a great many subjects, but for the past few years, I have mostly been working on the subject of how to transform the culture of power into a culture of empowerment, both on the societal and the individual levels. I developed a leadership and cultural transformation program based on which I offer training courses and consult various organizations, both profit and non-profit. I believe that the ALIS program is directly related to this subject since everything we teach is geared towards empowerment.

It is especially critical that individuals are empowered in places where allegiance or dependency on a leader is very prominent, sometimes dangerously so. Three years ago, I established a leadership laboratory. My main research questions were the following: “Why don’t more people want to become leaders and why do we relegate leadership to a single (or the same kind of) person?” I work on shared leadership models and try to encourage more people to take personal responsibility and step up as leaders. I have a new theory about a concept called “leadership anxiety”. In the lab, we measure people’s physiological anxiety levels while they are engaged in leadership roles. I am trying to find the reasons for their anxiety and their unwillingness to lead. Why are so many people, especially women, reluctant to come forward and share the responsibility of leadership? I believe that one reason for this is the existing power culture where power is concentrated in the hands of a single person or a small group. As long as this power culture persists, many people will not want to step into that arena. If, on the other hand, we can create a culture of empowerment, more people will be motivated to share the responsibility of leadership. This is, in fact, one of the main objectives of the ALIS program. We want students who have taken the course to feel more empowered and more willing to step up and take on leadership responsibility.

In fact, the ALIS 350 course focuses on teaching “next-generation leadership”, i.e. leadership that transforms the pervasive culture of power into one of empowerment.
New knowledge has not diminished our sense of awe but increased it immeasurably.

—Francis Crick, The Astonishing Hypothesis, 1994
said in jest, I also believe that a university library must be more than a repository of books, it should be the heart of the university campus.

We want the library to also serve as a social center for the university community. We host several classical music concerts each semester and regularly welcome student activities. We also host special events on librarianship. In March 2018, for instance, we welcomed 25 librarians from 17 countries from across the world for the International Library Week.

Our other libraries have a somewhat different focus. The Koç University Hospital Library can seat 92 students, however, it also caters to hospital patients and visitors and thus serves all of the Hospital community.

The ANAMED Library in Beyoğlu is a true research library with about 25 thousand titles. While it primarily serves the research needs of ANAMED fellows, we have a membership system in place that allows all local and foreign researchers working on history, archaeology and art history to access our collections. Once a month the ANAMED Library is transformed into a venue, and evening seminars on a variety of topics are held there among the books. The VEKAM Library in Ankara is unique, both for its building and its library collection. It is the largest collection of books by far on Ankara studies and also houses the Vehbi Koç archives. The AKMED Library in Antalya holds about 25 thousand titles on Mediterranean civilizations and serves researchers both in Antalya and the wider region. The AKMED Library also welcomes many local and foreign archaeologists during excavation season.

Koç University Library is unique in Turkey for its geographical diversity. The main change of the past 25 years has been this expansion in scope. In other words, our library has grown from being a basic university library to a full-grown research library, supporting researchers across different locations in Turkey.

As of June 2018, we have a total of 250 thousand titles on our bookshelves. 250 thousand books in 25 years is a significant achievement by our country’s standards. In addition to that, about 252 thousand electronic...
books are accessible online from all our campuses, and researchers can access about 72 thousand journals, searching 122 databases. Such a rich resource is essential for a true research library.

There is another contribution we make as a research library in that we host various cultural heritage projects, all of which are being digitized since 2011. And although we are not a rare books library, we have about two thousand rare books and about five hundred manuscripts. At present, we are working to publish the first volume of a catalog of these manuscripts. These collections have come to us from various donors. We undertake their restoration and thereby try to slow their aging. All of these manuscripts have been digitized and researchers can study them through our open access digital archives. Researchers may also apply to us to study the originals if they wish to do so.

We have a total of 23 digital collections of various cultural archives. For instance, the personal collection of Sedat Hakki Eldem, one of this country’s foremost architects, will soon be available in digital format. Other digitized archives include the unique collections of the famous ethnographer Josephine Powell, who spent over thirty years in Anatolia, collecting carpets, kilims and hand-woven fabrics from the 1950s to the 1980s. She collected not only woven articles but also various weaving instruments and a large number of publications on this topic as well as slides, photographs and books.

We are very proud of the fact that Koç University Library is now widely considered to be a trustworthy host for precious archives of books, ephemera and photography collections. Donors trust that their collections will be properly protected and passed on to future generations, and we now host several such significant collections. One of these is the collection of Fuat Bayramoğlu, one of our university’s donors and an important book collector, who donated his entire library of about 12 thousand books, as well as about one-third of our total manuscripts. The late Anthony Blyer, one of the world’s leading Byzantinists, also bequeathed about two thousand books to our library, which were shipped to us from the United States in 2016. One of our faculty, Adrian Saunders, who passed away in 2017, also donated his personal library of about 1200 books, consisting mostly of Latin and Ancient Greek titles.

A research library has to serve the university’s research objectives, closely follow the latest scientific developments and help to trigger research. Basic library service, that is, the procurement, cataloging, displaying and lending of books, remains an essential duty in which we excel. However, as Koç University Library we take our duty to go beyond this essential service. For instance, in 2016, we completed the BiblioPera project, which, with funding support by the Istanbul Development Agency, made the catalogs of several research institutes located in Istanbul’s Beyoğlu district accessible on a single digital platform. The project was led by Koç University Sema Kıraç Library and brought together the libraries of Koç University ANAMED, SALT Research, the German Archaeological Institute, the Netherlands Institute in Turkey, the Institut Français d’Études Anatoliennes, the Orient-Institut Istanbul, the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, the Greek Consulate Sismanoglio Megaro and the Foundation for the Protection and Promotion of the Environment and Cultural Heritage (ÇEKÜL). This digital platform enables a union catalog of these libraries, while also making their digital collections accessible and collating all their events in a single calendar.

I’ve already made many gains in my new life, here at Koç University. I’ve learned how to respond to different opinions, my communication skills have improved, and I’ve learned to better manage my time.

Asya Almina Can
FRESHMAN, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
There are also great changes underway in the publishing of scientific literature, where the topic of “open access” is being debated. In the traditional closed access publishing process, faculty and researchers need to waive their copyrights in order to get their papers published in scientific journals. This means that access to scientific work that was financed by and produced within universities has to be purchased against a fee by universities and researchers. There is now a broad consensus that the entire process should be open access. Faculty needs to be informed about copyrights, and academic libraries have a role to play here. At present, we are trying to complete our own learning on this subject and will then hold seminars to brief our faculty accordingly.

Change is happening fast, and the question of whether or not printed books have a future at all has been widely debated. Many believed that e-books would take over completely, but this assumption turned out to be wrong. In 2018, Library Journal conducted a survey among university students in the United States, the “Academic Student E-book Experience Survey”, and found that when reading for pleasure, 74 percent of students preferred printed books while only 14 percent preferred e-books. However, about 75 percent of students said they preferred e-books when doing research. Students seem to prefer to hold a real book when reading at the beach but an e-book when doing research. This indicates that we are likely to see many more e-books in academic publishing, but printed books will continue to be part of our lives for the foreseeable future.

This change in the traditional cycle of the production, publication and sharing of academic knowledge among researchers and students also shows that future-oriented libraries need more than just librarians. They will also need field specialists, IT specialists, data librarians, communications and marketing specialists. As the skill set required expands, so will library science itself change and expand. We, too, are preparing to renew our organizational structures in line with these changes, especially in branches such as academic communication librarianship and data librarianship.

Throughout the world, university libraries are working hard to adapt to changing demands and needs. And despite expectations to the contrary, the libraries that succeed will be the rising star of university life, steering and triggering research. I can say with confidence that Koç University Library is not only a best practice example among its peers but also plays an active role in shaping the cultural life of our community and that of the region.
Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe.


ANY BRIGHT university-aged student today who wishes to realize her full potential wants to study in an environment like that of Koç University. Unfortunately, Turkish high school education provides unequal conditions to students preparing for university. This means that students with limited financial means have fewer opportunities when preparing for the university exams. But despite this, there are plenty of students who still succeed brilliantly and manage to make it into the top one percentile in the university entrance exams. However, Koç University can only provide full scholarships to the top students within that one percentile, and some of our colleges have even higher admission criteria. For instance, all full-scholarship students at the Koç School of Medicine are recruited from among Turkey’s top one hundred students, while the Law School, the College of Engineering and the College of Administrative Sciences and Economics admit students only from among the top five hundred to top one thousand students nationwide. Many students miss the chance to enroll in one of our colleges with full scholarships by a mere fraction. Take, for instance, a student that makes it to the top 2,520-bracket in an exam that is taken by over two million students across the country. This student will rank above even the first percentile, but despite such a wildly successful result, he or she may still miss the chance of getting a full scholarship at Koç University, sometimes by the thinnest of margins.

Our goal is to equalize the playing field for these brilliant students from disadvantaged backgrounds by enabling them to study at Koç University with the support of donors who share our vision. This is the idea behind the Anatolian Scholarship Program, launched in 2011 with the encouragement and vision of President İnan. The program started off with 14 students, and now that number has reached almost 500, or roughly 10 percent of our total student body. About 1,000 freshmen are admitted to our university each year, and bright university-aged student today who wishes to realize her full potential wants to study in an environment like that of Koç University. Unfortunately, Turkish high school education provides unequal conditions to students preparing for university. This means that students with limited financial means have fewer opportunities when preparing for the university exams. But despite this, there are plenty of students who still succeed brilliantly and manage to make it into the top one percentile in the university entrance exams. However, Koç University can only provide full scholarships to the top students within that one percentile, and some of our colleges have even higher admission criteria. For instance, all full-scholarship students at the Koç School of Medicine are recruited from among Turkey’s top one hundred students, while the Law School, the College of Engineering and the College of Administrative Sciences and Economics admit students only from among the top five hundred to top one thousand students nationwide. Many students miss the chance to enroll in one of our colleges with full scholarships by a mere fraction. Take, for instance, a student that makes it to the top 2,520-bracket in an exam that is taken by over two million students across the country. This student will rank above even the first percentile, but despite such a wildly successful result, he or she may still miss the chance of getting a full scholarship at Koç University, sometimes by the thinnest of margins.

Our goal is to equalize the playing field for these brilliant students from disadvantaged backgrounds by enabling them to study at Koç University with the support of donors who share our vision. This is the idea behind the Anatolian Scholarship Program, launched in 2011 with the encouragement and vision of President İnan. The program started off with 14 students, and now that number has reached almost 500, or roughly 10 percent of our total student body. About 1,000 freshmen are admitted to our university each year, and

Zeynep Başak Çivi

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION: Lessons from a Pioneering Program

Zeynep Başak Çivi

Director, Corporate Relations and Resource Development

Zeynep Başak Çivi earned a BA in both history and psychology at the University of Virginia, an MA in Near Eastern studies at New York University and an MA in public administration at Columbia University. Ms Çivi started her professional career at the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in New York City, where she worked on an array of development projects, particularly in the areas of gender, energy and environment. Prior to joining UNDP, she worked as a researcher in various international organizations, including Amnesty International USA, the Human Rights Watch, and the EastWest Institute. Upon her return to Turkey in 2007, she joined IBM Global Business Services as a management consultant. Since 2009, Ms Çivi has been the director of Koç University’s Corporate Relations and Development Office, focusing her efforts on creating fundraising opportunities for the university, where she is also heading its Anatolian Scholarship Program.
to Koç University every year; 123 of those freshmen were Anatolian Scholars in 2018, and they were selected from among 4,200 applicants! The need for better opportunities in higher education in Turkey is truly overwhelming.

We choose our scholars from among students who are academically successful. Some of them come from the most economically disadvantaged parts of Turkey, while others’ parents are civil servants or teachers. The criteria we take into account is whether or not the student could attend Koç University without financial assistance, and if they share the enthusiasm and will to serve society by developing their potential with the opportunities provided by our university.

For example, one of our first scholars, Buğra Can, came from Sivas to study electrical and electronics engineering. He discovered that he was also interested in computer engineering and continued to do a double major. Throughout his time at the university, Buğra Can was in the rowing team and an active member of various student clubs. Last year, he completed his studies with honors and graduated as an Arçelik Scholar. He is currently pursuing a master’s degree at Koç University while also working as an engineer in industry.

Another scholar, Ahmet, is the oldest of seven children from a village between Diyarbakır and Batman. He was an outstanding student and graduated early. His scholarship was supported by funds from Eti. Despite having received competitive job offers, upon his graduation Ahmet chose to move back to his hometown in Batman, where he is now a financial expert at Tüpraş. As in this example, our scholars also contribute to their home communities. Everyone in his hometown knows Ahmet and regards him as a role model. He has become a guiding light to other young people with his exemplary accomplishments.

Our 2018 fundraising campaign aimed to get each alumni class to support one Anatolian Scholar. As a result of our rigorous campaign, we are grateful to our alumni classes who support 18 of this year’s incoming Anatolian Scholars. The fact that our alumni want to donate towards this program is particularly important; it means that our graduates would like to help other young people receive the high-quality education provided at Koç University so that they can also embark on successful careers that are useful to themselves and their communities. We celebrated our 25th anniversary with an ambitious fundraising campaign and this year provided support for an even greater number of brilliant young people. Some of our existing donors have decided to support new scholars, and others are taking on additional scholars. We are, of course, also continuing to recruit new donors into the program.

Equal Opportunity in Education: Lessons from a Pioneering Program

Koç University has given me the courage to set up the Ravendo Racing Team together with a number of my friends from different departments, encouraging us to become productive, creative and good team workers even as freshmen. My childhood dream of making electrical cars is no longer just a dream. Instead of putting obstacles in our way, the university has helped us gain useful experiences. Being an Anatolian Scholar has proven to me once again that dreams can become a reality and that goals are reachable.

Anıl Şen
Sophomore, Economics
Ravendo Racing Team Leader
When we first started out, there were only seven donors in the Anatolian Scholarship Program, and five of those were Koç Holding companies. Today, there are over 220 donors with only 15 Koç Holding companies. All of our donors share a sincere concern for Turkey’s welfare and a belief that education is key to an enlightened society. What they all have in common is that they recognize the need for equal access to high-quality education, value the educational environment at Koç University, and know that all of their donations directly benefit the students. The financial support we receive from our donors goes entirely towards financing the scholars’ costs. In fact, Koç University shares the financial commitment of our donors. While two-thirds of the cost of each student is covered by his/her respective donor, Koç University covers the remaining one-third of the expenses.

The Anatolian Scholarship Program is not just about providing scholarships. President İnan hosts an annual reception for all donors and scholars, and some of our donors go out of their way to help and mentor their scholars. All of them are influential business leaders and many support numerous social responsibility projects. The students much appreciate the opportunity to make the personal acquaintance of these experienced business people and they, in turn, are also positively affected by this interaction.

Many charitable people in Turkey give stipends to students; however, usually these are in the form of small monthly allowances. This type of support is also valuable, but what differentiates the Anatolian Scholarship Program is that it is truly life-changing. We believe in our scholars’ potential and want to support them to become leaders in their respective fields. It is this vision of making a real impact on society that our donors also embrace. Both our donors and our scholars have made this program their own and have become true stakeholders. It has been wonderful to see their numbers increasing each year.

Another aspect that differentiates the Anatolian Scholarship Program is its rigorous selection process. We have personally visited a great many high schools in every province throughout Anatolia, meeting with principals, teachers and counselors. As a result, we have established strong relationships and connections with all of them. Candidates go through a very meticulous and rigorous application process that also includes their schools, teachers and parents. We all share a common concern for the student’s welfare and potential. Our current scholars and their families are more than ambassadors for the Anatolian Scholarship Program; they represent the importance of equal opportunity in education and the values that this program upholds.

In recent years, other foundation universities have also embraced the same model and launched similarly-funded scholarship programs. We are happy to see this happening, as the Anatolian Scholarship Program’s expansion has always been part of its original vision. The more we can all work together to help an ever greater number of gifted students with the Anatolian Scholarship model, the greater will be its benefit to society.
If you would not be forgotten, either write things worth reading or do things worth writing.

Benjamin Franklin
Poor Richard’s Almanack
1738

KOÇ University was established as a philanthropic legacy project with the aim of serving the Turkish nation and humanity as a world-class institution of learning and research, and through the advancement of science. As such, the visionary ideals of the university’s founders constitute an inextricable part of our identity. We must be aware of our history and the accumulated wisdom of past generations, appreciate the kindness, sincerity and generosity of others, and let it inspire us to do likewise. So that we, too, may look beyond the horizon of our immediate concerns to ask the greater question, which problem am I solving? How am I serving the world?
Having witnessed this situation, Vehbi Koç thought, “What can I do to help ensure quality education for these students?” Under the government of the late Turgut Özal, the establishment of foundation universities was permitted, and the state provided 60 percent of the costs for students at these universities. This was a big step towards change. Compared to the 100 percent that the state paid for low-quality education at public universities,

IN THE 1970s, educational institutions, especially universities, were dominated by strikes, sit-ins and conflict; students graduated without having received much education.

In addition, various left-wing governments refused to renew the residence permits of foreign teaching faculty and prevented educational institutions providing instruction in foreign languages to repair or restore their buildings.

If you want to have a tree, you need to plant a seed.

—Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273)
Indeed, educational institutions in many countries, especially in the oil-rich Middle East, now have elegant and very modern educational institutions but they still have to import the necessary “software” from the West.

Well-qualified people are the most valuable resource not just in education but also in industry, in commerce and in politics. All advanced nations are distinguished by their well-qualified people. The fact that America holds its present position is due to the world’s most talented and entrepreneurial people that have flocked towards it.

I have been working in the financial industry since my graduation and have met many people from different countries, collaborating and sometimes competing with them. I find that the analytical approach that is so fundamental to education at Koç University has given me a broader perspective, enabled me to analyze the consequences of my choices, helped me solve problems by breaking them into smaller pieces, and prepared me to present my results in the best way possible. All of this has contributed greatly to my career at every step.

We, the Koç family, derive an exceptional joy every time we witness another class of graduates toss their caps high into the air. We are all mere mortals, but Koç University will live on forever. It is with the greatest affection that I embrace all who have contributed their efforts so far and wish you all continued success in the future.

The People Factor

I have been working in the financial industry since my graduation and have met many people from different countries, collaborating and sometimes competing with them. I find that the analytical approach that is so fundamental to education at Koç University has given me a broader perspective, enabled me to analyze the consequences of my choices, helped me solve problems by breaking them into smaller pieces, and prepared me to present my results in the best way possible. All of this has contributed greatly to my career at every step.

We, the Koç family, derive an exceptional joy every time we witness another class of graduates toss their caps high into the air. We are all mere mortals, but Koç University will live on forever. It is with the greatest affection that I embrace all who have contributed their efforts so far and wish you all continued success in the future.

The People Factor

I have been working in the financial industry since my graduation and have met many people from different countries, collaborating and sometimes competing with them. I find that the analytical approach that is so fundamental to education at Koç University has given me a broader perspective, enabled me to analyze the consequences of my choices, helped me solve problems by breaking them into smaller pieces, and prepared me to present my results in the best way possible. All of this has contributed greatly to my career at every step.

We, the Koç family, derive an exceptional joy every time we witness another class of graduates toss their caps high into the air. We are all mere mortals, but Koç University will live on forever. It is with the greatest affection that I embrace all who have contributed their efforts so far and wish you all continued success in the future.
Not to know what happened before you were born is to remain forever a child.
—Cicero, Orator Ad M. Brutum, 46 BC

Looking Back and Looking Ahead

WHEN THE LATE VEHBI KOÇ, founder of Koç Group and of Koç University, addressed students and guests during his first lecture on October 4, 1993, he said: “The objective of Koç University is to provide an education that will produce highly qualified, exceptional young people. Their numbers and their leadership will help secure our country’s future. The more qualified people we can train, the more we will be serving the country.” And with this mission in mind, which is as pertinent and as inspiring today as it was 25 years ago, Koç University set itself the highest aim possible from the very beginning.

Why did Koç University aspire towards the very highest global standards in higher education and why does it continue to do so today? Considering that even as recently as the 1960s basic literacy in Turkey was just below 40 percent, this is a valid question to ask. I think that the insistence on excellence stems from the same set of values that underpin Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s notion that “Mediocrity is the worst of all evils.” (Ehven-i şer şerlerin en kötüsüdür.) Striving for excellence is a civic obligation, because this striving alone will ensure the humility that is necessary for continuous self-improvement. Striving for excellence is also a civic right, a sense of entitlement to the best there is.

Moreover, setting ourselves global standards of excellence does not only mean aspiring to the best-practice examples of renowned universities across the world. It also means ensuring that Turkey will contribute to these standards. Koç University is already making such contributions to the global body of science across a broad spectrum of academic subjects. Turkey is a young republic but heir to an ancient and very diverse cultural heritage. I believe that there is still much the world will learn from the knowledge traditions of this geography.

It is with great satisfaction that we have been witnessing the university’s success in attracting the best...
and brightest of students as well as the most highly accomplished academics. Our students and faculty have received many scientific and other awards. The university has been granted significant research funds from national and international institutions. The achievements of our thirteen thousand alumni in the nation’s academic and social life are growing each year. Our graduate and postgraduate programs, our research centers and forums are now cited among the very best. All these are concrete expressions of our university’s success. But now is the time to look ahead to all that we want to accomplish in the future and set our eyes on higher goals. We are all privileged to have inherited Atatürk’s legacy, who said: “The Republic demands that each generation be free in thought, free in conscience and free in knowledge!” Let us now work and strive even harder, learn even more. What better challenge than to add through science and enquiry to the global body of knowledge and the welfare of all.
It is good to tame the mind, which is difficult to hold in and flighty, rushing wherever it lists; a tamed mind brings happiness.

—Siddharta Gautama, Dhammapada, c. 500 BC

THE FOUNDER of the Vehbi Koç Foundation, Vehbi Koç, deeply believed in the importance and priority of quality education. He had visited all of Turkey’s provinces and observed that education was critical for the country’s development. He would always tell us, his children, “Do you think that Turkey is just Istanbul and Ankara? What have you seen of Anatolia? Learn first about Turkey before you go abroad.” The question of how Turkey’s underdeveloped provinces could be helped was always on his mind. As he prospered in business, he started to receive many requests for charity, but even back then Vehbi Koç, aware of the importance of “quality education” would insist that creating schools and supporting education would be the greatest charity and greatest service to the nation.

He was a very frugal man, even getting angry when someone used electricity or the telephone unnecessarily. But he would spare no expense when he believed in something, especially if it had to do with education, for which he provided generous funds. He was a good observer and would make careful inspections everywhere he went. He had visited Hungary and Germany in his youth and America in subsequent years, where he was much inspired and convinced that “well-educated people” were key to the country’s development.

Semahat Arsel

My Father, Vehbi Koç
His first major philanthropic project in education were the student residences in Maltepe, Ankara, in the late 1950s. They served students from low-income backgrounds who had come to study in Ankara from various Anatolian provinces. After the establishment of the Vehbi Koç Foundation in 1969, these contributions grew substantially and also became continuous. Our foundation’s work focuses on three main areas, namely education, culture and healthcare. However, education always has had first place, and to this day, by far the largest part of the Vehbi Koç Foundation’s budget is dedicated to educational projects.

Vehbi Koç did not only establish several philanthropic foundations himself but also helped bring together other prominent businessmen of his time to collaborate in charitable work. Vehbi Koç was instrumental in the setting up of the Turkish Educational Foundation, the TEMA Foundation (The Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats), and the Turkish Educational Volunteers Foundation.

Among other family members, my sister Suna Kıraç, who was at the time chairing the Vehbi Koç Foundation’s Executive Committee, was the one who spearheaded the foundation’s work in education. She made tremendous efforts towards the setting up of both the Koç School and Koç University. Unfortunately, we met with unbelievable bureaucratic obstacles in the initial phases of our educational projects, and overcoming them was extremely challenging to all of us. This was also when Suna’s illness began, and we were all demoralized and disheartened. Many tears were shed in those years, and our pain was great. So much so that if it had been up to me, I would have given up, but Vehbi Koç never wavered. The university project absolutely had to go ahead! He really felt in his heart that only a better educated new generation would help Turkey develop.
My father was extremely disciplined and very much disliked showing off, refusing to commit time or resources to a fleeting fancy. Before embarking on a project, he would first conduct a very detailed analysis and ask for input from people he trusted. But once the decision was made and plans drawn up, he would do his utmost to see it realized, despite all obstacles. Also, whatever it was, it had to be the best, he would never settle for anything that was medium grade. He believed that everything should be considered for its long-term implications and developed patiently, step by step.

Personally, I had fallen ill in my youth in the 1950s and was sick for many years, undergoing many operations with prolonged stays in hospital. In those years imports were very restricted, and there was a severe shortage of supplies in Turkey. As I didn’t get better, I went abroad and had other operations with long stays at various hospitals in Switzerland, Germany, England and the United States. I was much impressed by the nurses at these hospitals, and I may not be alive today, were it not for the nurses at the Houston Methodist Hospital. I started to ask why we didn’t have such well-trained and experienced intensive care nurses in Turkey, and this motivated me to help develop the nursing profession in Turkey.

With my father’s help, I set up the Nursing Fund in 1974 within the Vehbi Koç Foundation. We gathered a committee, invited leading nurses and asked them for their views and ideas on how things could be improved. Unfortunately, there was almost no nursing education to speak of during those years, neither proper instruction nor books. So, we began by importing foreign language nursing books and having them translated and printed and gave them to any nursing school that wanted them. There were also several books by Turkish nurses that had not been published for lack of resources; we also printed and distributed those. That’s how we started. We eventually set up SANERC, the Semahat Arsel Nursing Education and Research Center, for the further training and research needs of professional nurses. Then, a nursing program was established by Koç University, which has now grown into the fully fledged School of Nursing that also provides master’s and PhD programs in nursing. It’s been almost 45 years since that initial Nursing Fund, and I’m glad to say that we have made a big difference in nursing education.

Vehbi Koç would be very happy if he saw how successful Koç University has become today. He would be especially pleased by its Anatolian Scholarship program that supports talented but underprivileged youngsters from all over Turkey. Koç University reflects Vehbi Koç’s dreams and has been progressing superbly. I am also sure that he would have taken a great liking to its president, Professor İnan, and would have called upon him frequently with enquiries. On the other hand, he would also have closely observed the university’s spendings and said, “Don’t go over budget, money doesn’t fall from the sky.”

Legacy

I believe that a university’s most important legacy is the different perspectives and worldviews that it brings to its students. I’m an Anatolian Scholar, and this program is proof to me that nothing is impossible. Knowing that there are people out there who work with great commitment and make donations to provide equal opportunities for young people such as myself, boosted my belief in myself and my future. The Anatolian Scholarship program is a form of intergenerational solidarity; I am very proud to be part of it.

Selin Sağım
Junior, industrial engineering
The scientific man does not aim at an immediate result. He does not expect that his advanced ideas will be readily taken up. His duty is to lay the foundation for those who are to come, and point the way. He lives and labors and hopes.


25 YEARS may not be a long time in the history of a university, especially when we compare it to that of the world’s most venerable old universities. Having said that, what really matters in education and science is the quality of education and of the environment provided; furthermore, how many young people's lives are transformed, and the overall societal benefit created. Koç University has made tremendous efforts on all of these fronts and succeeded in a very short period in joining the ranks of Turkey's foremost universities to represent our country in the global academic community. The credit for these achievements must go first and foremost to our brilliant students and faculty.

This reminds me of something the late Vehbi Koç, our university’s founder, used to say: “People are the most important resource.” Indeed, no matter how much money you spend, what great buildings you have,

Ali Y. Koç

“The Young Are My Greatest Hope”
A university’s most important legacy is to create individuals who are aware of social issues and are willing to do something to solve them. This means that whatever work you may be doing, you will always have the welfare of your country on your mind.

Ezgi Çalış
International Relations and Economics Graduate Student, Groningen University

or whatever high-tech equipment you may provide; none of this would be of any value unless you also have the people who can make the best use of them. I believe that every single person who has set foot on the university’s campus since its establishment has been of this great calibre. This wealth in human talent, combined not only with the physical environment but also, and more importantly, with a culture that promotes the free flow of ideas, is, in my opinion, the driving force that will continue to carry our university towards excellence on a global scale. The fact that everyone here has a real sense of belonging and that they set forth into the world carrying with them this culture and experience, continues to be a great source of happiness to everyone who has been contributing to the university from its beginnings.

Atatürk said, "The young are my greatest hope." I, too, believe that well-educated young people who are equipped to keep up with the demands of global competition are our country’s most important asset. I am convinced that everyone who has worked and studied here at Koç University will produce some benefit or other to increase our country’s welfare and even that of humanity at large. The young people educated at Koç University are well prepared to become the leaders of the future in all walks of life as well as safeguard our country’s future. And they, in turn, will soon pass the baton to the next generation of young leaders they helped raise and thus ensure that this legacy is passed from one generation to the next. We are all immensely proud of all our alumni of these past 25 years, of all our engineers, our scientists, physicians, lawyers, and managers. It has been a privilege to get to know all the esteemed academics and staff of Koç University who are working hard to contribute through science and research to improving living standards and ensuring a better future.
THE IDEA that Koç University should be a “center of excellence” dates all the way back to the Koç family’s initial idea of creating an institute of higher education. Its establishment in 1993 was underpinned by Koç Group’s culture of excellence, of “striving to do one’s very best”. This culture was also at the forefront of discussions about what kind of a university it should be and what the public’s expectations were. There was a consensus around the idea to start small but aim for the best. We started with the minimum requirement of two colleges, and that one of those should be a college for arts and sciences and the other a business school, with the addition of an MBA program. Starring small was the best option for a center of excellence, because it would allow us to grow as we assessed the requirements to do so.

The late Vehbi Koç would never make any important decision, particularly in areas outside his expertise, without consulting first with experts in the field. All of these decisions were taken over time, following extensive debate and with the consideration of certain standards. Many of these discussions took place among Koç Group’s senior executives. Once budgets started to become part of these discussions, the finance group also became involved. The first person with whom Vehbi Koç consulted with was Professor İhsan Doğramaci, whose opinion he valued greatly due to his achievements at Hacettepe and at Bilkent Universities. Professor Doğramaci was keen to see the establishment of other foundation universities and therefore gave him positive encouragement, such that when Vehbi Koç asked him, “Well, how much would it cost?”, he provided the very modest figure of 15 million dollars to motivate him. Both Suna Kıraç and Fahir İlkel found this figure to be overly optimistic. Fahir İlkel then calculated that a university with 1,000 students and similar to the Bilkent example would require an investment of at least 35 million dollars. Vehbi Koç then decided to ask Ali Eğler, an experienced finance specialist, to do another study. The figure forecast in Eğler’s report was “50 million dollars, more than half of which should be allocated to its operational fund.” These initial budgets of the founding years were, of course, dwarfed in subsequent years as Koç University developed and became a world-class research institution. At present, the Vehbi Koç Foundation contributes about 32 million dollars annually towards the university’s operational deficit—and that is exclusive of construction costs or other large-scale investments. I believe that total expenditures so far must be in the region of a billion dollars.

There was always a strong consensus that quality should not be sacrificed to financial concerns. How should this project then be realized, how should

Demanding Excellence

Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that? We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something, and that this thing, at whatever cost, must be attained.

—Maria Skłodowska-Curie, as quoted in Eve Curie Labouisse, Madame Curie: A Biography, 1937

Tamer Şahinbaş
KOÇ UNIVERSITY FOUNDING PRESIDENT AND MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Tamer Şahinbaş completed his undergraduate and graduate studies at Middle East Technical University Department of Civil Engineering. He returned to Turkey to do his military service after having worked as an engineer in Denmark for three years. He worked for two years at the State Planning Organization and went on to join Aygaz, a Koç Group company, in 1972. He served as Koç Holding Planning Coordinator and General Manager of Koza Construction. Starting in 1990, he assumed several responsibilities during the establishment of Koç University, where he was first appointed its director and then its founding president. Tamer Şahinbaş has been a member of the Koç University Board of Trustees since 1993. He was also chairman of the Board of Trustees of SEV (Health and Education Foundation) from 1991 to 1996 and continues to serve on the SEV Board of Trustees.
it be financed? First, a feasibility report was prepared and submitted in July 1989. The authors of this report were Assoc Prof Bülent Gültekin, who has been on our Board of Trustees ever since; Professor Seha Tiniç, the university’s appointed president; Professor Özer Ertuna, and Professor İsk activités Inselbağ. When I was appointed director in 1990, this report recommended that we should start off as a “small-scale and high-quality institution”, and indeed, these recommendations have been followed for many more years. The report focused on three main objectives: Firstly, the implementation of a two-year liberal arts program (Core Program) that would be obligatory to all students irrespective of their field of study, so that they would have the general knowledge base to become not only highly qualified experts but also well-rounded individuals; secondly, the allocation of the majority of resources to teaching and to scientific research and development; and thirdly, training young people with leadership skills and the ability to find creative solutions. These objectives continue to form Koç University’s vision and mission to this day.

The period between 1992 and 1993 was marked by many uncertainties, particularly concerning the regulatory procedures around foundation universities. Gültekin was still the only foundation university at the time and watched Koç Group’s endeavors to establish a university with keen interest. The Gültekin team and Professor İhsan Doğramacı believed that we would be stronger together, and this was, indeed, the case. We expended a great deal of effort during those years as the legal procedures and authorization process since setting up a foundation university was not as clearly defined as it is today. For instance, we had to get permission even from the State Planning Organization at the time. Other foundation universities were, of course, also following our progress with interest.

Thanks to Vehbi Koç and the Koç family, we could consult with a very wide circle of distinguished people and so we started to climb the learning curve. Among those were several who could tell us about the example of similar universities in the West. These universities had operational funds, and we decided to follow their example and also set up two separate funds to finance the university project, namely an investment fund and an operational fund. Koç University is the only foundation university in Turkey to date to have such an operational fund. For a university to stand on its own feet, it must have a good financing model. The most significant characteristic of a foundation university is that it is a not-for-profit organization; the university’s funds can never be channeled back into the foundation. If the operational fund is not sufficient to pay for the university’s expenses, the foundation will have to continue to give the university new funding support each year. While we are making attempts to make the university more financially independent, the foundation will continue to support the university until it can be done without making concessions from our objective of being a center of excellence. Making a university financially independent is not something that can be achieved in a short period of time.

An important facet of the feasibility report and a significant aspect of our vision to become a center of excellence was the desire to compensate for the lack of a sufficiently strong general knowledge base in most high school graduates. We were very much aware of this problem and considered what we could do to make up for this. In North America, some universities provide a liberal arts education to answer this need. New students are required to take liberal arts courses for a certain period of time, which both changes their general outlook as well as their perspective on their own chosen field of study. We, therefore, looked specifically at “liberal arts colleges” in the US. I, for instance, examined the example of Swarthmore College, consistently top-ranked among such colleges. It has only undergraduate courses, and even though it does not offer any graduate courses, it has a research faculty and a college of engineering. Swarthmore alumni are regularly accepted into graduate courses at the very best American universities. At the time, this model seemed quite attractive to us, but because there is an understanding in Turkey that university students should graduate with some kind of profession, this was not found acceptable by YÖK, Turkey’s Council for Higher Education. At present,
one-third of all courses that Koç University students have to take are liberal arts courses, i.e., Core Program courses, one-third of which are in their own field of study, and one-third are electives. The Core Program still constitutes an intrinsic part of education at Koç University, and we will discuss and update its curriculum when necessary.

Being a “center of excellence” means that output from each department of the university should be excellent. However, it is not possible to achieve the highest standards everywhere simultaneously, and just as everywhere else, some will be advancing faster than others. Some hills are easy to climb; others feel like great mountains. The best way of measuring this is through external assessments which help us understand where we fall short or where we need to develop faster. We submit our university’s programs periodically to such assessment by an external group of world-class academics.

Next to this, we also consult with Koç University’s Board of Overseers on critical issues. This board is composed of very distinguished members such as professors from Columbia, UPenn, New York, Stanford, and Leiden Universities, and administrators from Siemens, a world renowned company. One of our overseers, Walter Gilbert, is a Nobel laureate. One such critical decision was the establishment of a medical school. The consensus among our overseers was that it would overwhelm the rest of the university. We followed their recommendation and only went ahead with the establishment of the Koç University School of Medicine when we felt confident that the university was mature enough to carry its weight. In hindsight, the timing turned out to be just right.

It is critical to get these external objective assessments, because one can easily grow blind to things when one is on the inside. Given the objective of becoming a center of excellence, not just in this geography but worldwide, development can never stop. This objective of excellence will exist as long as the university does, and it will continue to shine a light along our way.

Any discussion of the university’s efforts to become a center of excellence has to pay tribute, first and foremost, to the tremendous will and perseverance of Suna Kıraç. It was she who showed us the way and insisted that we keep this objective alive at all times.

We must also remember with great gratitude the esteemed members of the Board of Overseers who have sadly passed away: Sir Raymond Rickett, Martin Meyerson, Nobel laureate Merton Miller, and Rodney Wagner. We shall be always indebted also to the services of the late members of the Board of Trustees, Fahir Ilkel, Yıksel Pultat, Güven Erkaya, Yavuz Alangoya and İnal Avcı, whose contributions to our objective of becoming a center of excellence have been invaluable. We will also never forget Hüseyin Öztürk and architect Fahrettin Ayanlar, our companions in the founding years. May God rest their souls in peace. ◆
When Koç University was in the process of being established, Princeton University may have referred my name to Tamer Şahinbaş, at the time Koç University’s president and a member of the Board of Trustees. I was both working at Boğaziçi University and conducting a project sponsored by the National Science Foundation at Princeton. I first met with Tamer Şahinbaş and then with Koç University’s newly-appointed president, Seha Tiniç. President Tiniç and I shared the same outlook and developed a warm relationship. He recommended me to the board, and I was appointed in April 1993 as the founding dean of what was then called the College of Arts and Sciences. It consisted of the Departments of Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry, on the one hand, and the Departments of Sociology, Psychology, and History, on the other. The only other college at the time was the College of Administrative Sciences and Economics, with the Departments of International Relations, Economics, and Business Administration. Soon afterwards, an MBA program was also launched.

When I first visited the İstinye Campus, a former match factory, the old building had been partly demolished, and there was mud everywhere on rainy days. I remember wondering how on earth this place would be fixed and prepared in time for the opening. The university had decided to start accepting students in September 1993 and according to the national university entry exam results. Although the place had still been a muddy construction site in April, it had turned into a functioning and charming campus in the intervening few months. We accepted 200 students in our first year and 240 the following year, in response to strong demand. However, we realized that this number was too high since we only had a small number of departments. In the following years, therefore, we accepted only 200 new students each year until we moved to the Rumelifeneri Campus. This period was defined by the thrill of being part of a new project as well as the frenzy of racing against time to get everything done.

—I tell you: one must still have chaos within oneself to give birth to a dancing star.

—Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 1883

Istinye to Rumelifeneri: A Brief Journey through the History of the University

Attila Aşkar

Professor of Mathematics / President (2001–2009)

Attila Aşkar received a degree in engineering from Istanbul Technical University in 1966 and his PhD from Princeton University in 1969. Prior to his current appointment, he served Koç University as founding dean of the College of Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities (1993–1998), provost (1998–2001) and as president (2001–2009). His previous academic appointments included positions at Boğaziçi University, Brown University, Princeton University, Paris University VI, Max-Planck Institute, and the Royal Institute of Technology. The recognitions he has received include TÜBİTAK’s Encouragement Award and Science Award as well as the Information Age Award of the Turkish Ministry of Culture. His recent research interests include differential equations, numerical solutions to differential equations in molecular dynamics, and solutions to time-dependent quantum mechanics. Prof. Aşkar is the author of over sixty refereed research journal articles and of two books. He has been a pioneer in Turkey in developing Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) for Coursera. His math courses, in Turkish with English subtitles, are currently taken by around 15,000 learners from over 120 countries.
Experts have been predicting that future generations will have to change jobs and professions several times during their lifetimes. There are also predictions that 35 percent of current jobs will become obsolete and that 4.455 million people will become unemployed. These people will have to move towards different professions. All this means that current education must be capable of responding to this change. As it is, 72 percent of college graduates today do not work in their field of study, worldwide. That is why we have insisted from the very beginning that we should provide students with a general understanding of the world, the universe, and the social sciences. And given that they will be working in different industries, we needed to teach the subject material not in a highly specialized standard form but as part of a broad knowledge base. With this foundational knowledge, which we call “the common core,” students can then go on to take elective courses according to their interests. This is personalized education as well as a requirement of the information age.

What truly needs to be learned today is how to use information because accessing it is so easy now. Many practices and processes change over time. However, fundamental knowledge remains almost unchanged. This approach also gives students some degree of freedom over their degree programs. For instance, students who want to specialize early on can choose their electives from their own areas of study. Others may continue to explore fields that are of use for their professional interests.

A former president of Cornell University once said that the new university should “have the heart of a college and the mind of a research university.” This is also the principle that Koç University adopted. It provides a college environment where students and colleagues can develop close relationships while also producing the analytical, innovative and inquisitive minds that Turkey and the world need to leap forward and keep up with the information age.

This is the vision we have had since the very beginning. Naturally, becoming a fully-fledged research university needs time. Not only was the İstinye Campus physically restricted but there was also much to discuss about what kind of research university we wanted to become. One could say that the university was trying to find its true identity during that time. We considered, for instance, if it should be a highly specialized small research university or offer a broad range of programs.
This strategic plan also foresaw the establishment of the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering within the College of Engineering and that of the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics within the College of Sciences. The College of Arts and Sciences was split into two components: the College of Sciences and the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, which was greatly expanded with the inclusion of the Departments of Philosophy, Archeology & Art History, and English Language & Comparative Literature, and later on, the Department of Media and Visual Arts. We also started to develop the teaching program for what is now the School of Nursing, which was affiliated to Koç University in 1998. To this end, we visited the nursing schools of universities like Johns Hopkins, Cornell and Columbia, which inspired the development of our own nursing program.

The next important college that was part of the strategic plan was the Law School. Since law schools are usually large colleges, we had extensive discussions on whether or not to establish a law school within Koç University, which was designed to be a relatively small university. In Turkey, law as a profession has among the lowest numbers of foreign language speakers. Turkey had been a somewhat inward-looking country for many decades but was on its way to becoming one of the world’s largest economies. There was an urgent need to produce lawyers who would have good foreign language skills and a proficient understanding of the legal systems of other countries. In addition to that, many legal experts we spoke to at the time told us that law education in Turkey would also

Would it be better to have a strong focus on a narrow range of subjects like Caltech, the California Institute of Technology, or have a more generalist approach? In the end, we decided that a general, interdisciplinary research university would serve Turkey’s needs better, both from a practical as well as a philosophical point of view.

In September 2002, we moved from the İstinye Campus, which had been our home for seven years, to the new Rumelifeneri Campus. At the time, construction work was still underway on the new main campus although enough of the facilities were completed to start education. The College of Engineering was also founded the same year. I had been dean for six years and provost for two, when Mr Rahmi Koç, then chairman of the university’s board of trustees, asked to speak with me in May 2001. Professor Tiniç was leaving his post as president for personal reasons, and I was asked to serve as an interim president for six months to allow for a worldwide search. I was also asked to prepare a strategic plan during this period.

The Rumelifeneri Campus was much admired but lacked sufficient student accommodation. After a prolonged search, a piece of land was found where the West Campus was built. Its 1,552 bed-capacity and recreational and sports facilities have served our students well since 2009.

As part of this strategic plan for 2002–2007, we calculated how many students the campus could accommodate comfortably. The number was 6,552. We also analyzed what faculty would be required and estimated its costs. New programs needed to be established to form a comprehensive university.

We also determined which graduate programs would be easy to set up immediately and which would have the greatest impact.

One of the things we also considered in this strategic plan was the structure of the newly founded Koç University Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations, ANAMED. We decided that, rather than employing full-time faculty, we would be able to attract world-class researchers under a fellowship system, so that is the model we adopted. After evaluating various locations, the Merkez Han building in Istanbul’s Beyoğlu district—a building that had housed the personal office of the late Vehbi Koç—seemed to be the best choice. After extensive renovations were completed, ANAMED started to host its first fellows in 2005. The building, which accommodates living quarters, a library, and working areas, provides a very attractive environment for researchers. We could only accept 13 fellows in the first year, although we received over eighty applications from excellent candidates from all over the world.

I’ve met many people through Koç University who were not conforming to the mould, who were pushing their limits or setting sail for new horizons, and this has helped me advance my own development.

Ahmet Saffet Alpan’14
ECONOMICS
JUNIOR TRADER, LOUIS DREYFUS COMPANY

From İstinye to Rumelifeneri: A Brief Journey through the History of the University
have to go through a transformation. The late Prof. Erdoğan Teziç, former director of the Turkish Council for Higher Education, once said in a meeting: “We now need to separate the teaching of law into private law and public law; the fields have become so complex that when we try to teach students everything, we fail short everywhere.” Law school graduates don’t just become judges, prosecutors or lawyers; they also work in the corporate world. We, therefore, designed a curriculum that also included the university’s Core Program to support Law School graduates in all professional environments. Some courses are in English and also provide an understanding of different legal systems. All of this has made our Law School very attractive to the best and the brightest.

There was a small note in the 2002 – 2007 strategic plan, saying that, “Koç University should also consider setting up a medical school.” The establishment of both the Law School and the School of Medicine would simultaneously be important leaps forward and would differentiate Koç University. Indeed, that is what happened. We decided to establish the School of Medicine in the second strategic plan drawn up for 2008 – 2012. We got the go-ahead for the medical school in 2009, during my last year as president, and we started accepting students the following year.

Most medical schools are completely separate from the rest of the university. However, at Koç University, students stay on the main campus during the first three years of study for basic science courses in biology, physics, statistics and the Core Program, as well as for basic medical science courses for which they don’t need to be constantly in a hospital environment. They spend only their last three years at the Koç University Hospital and the Health Sciences Campus in Topkapı. This means that our medical students get to interact with the rest of the student body and with different scientific disciplines—which is good for them and good for all the other students.

In short, Koç University went through its establishment period at the İstinye Campus and its expansion and maturity period at the Rumelifeneri Campus, taking only twenty-five years to get to its present position. When the Rockefeller family established the University of Chicago in the 1890s, they asked the president of Harvard University at the time, Charles Eliot, “What would be the cost of establishing a world-class university?” Eliot replied: “Fifty million dollars and two hundred years.” It turns out, as recounted often, that Eliot was half right: fifty million dollars were indeed spent, but he was wrong in the other half of his estimate as it only took twenty years, not two hundred, to become a world-class university. I would sometimes mention this anecdote at our commencement ceremonies, adding that if the University of Chicago managed to become a world-class university in twenty years, we should also be able to do it! We have come a long way in a rather short period. Together with our faculty, we can all be proud of this accomplishment, which we gained through our enthusiasm, creativity and hard work.

I am confident that we will see our dreams come true in the near future, and that we will even go beyond them.
As far as we can tell, the sole meaning of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being.

—Carl Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, 1963

On the Vehbi Koç Foundation and Its Passion for Sustainability and Principled Representation

THE ESTABLISHMENT of the Vehbi Koç Foundation predates that of its institutions, but their stories are intimately intertwined. The foundation itself was officially set up in 1969. However, initial attempts date back to 1951, when Hulki Alisbah presented the first draft of its official deed of trust during a trip to the Black Sea to Vehbi Koç, whose primary aim was to institutionalize his existing charitable work and ensure that it would continue in perpetuity. This was the principle on which he established the Vehbi Koç Foundation, donating 8 percent of his shares in Koç Holding, followed by another 2 percent later on as part of his will. Due to subsequent mergers between affiliates, this 10 percent share today corresponds to 7.15 percent of Koç Holding shares. Although the idea of setting up an educational institution had been around for a long time, it was only realized with

ERDAL YILDIRIM

President, Vehbi Koç Foundation
I think that this notion of education as an equalizing force, coupled with the spirit of the Republican era, deeply affected all family members. They saw very clearly that education was the single most important area that needed to be supported, both because there was a huge need and because social development just would not be possible without it. Today, the Vehbi Koç Foundation concentrates all its efforts in three main fields, namely education, culture and healthcare. However, among these three, education has always been primus inter pares, first among equals. The Koç family is very patriotic, and it is important to them that this achievement should belong to a Turkish foundation. Why should all the country’s best schools be foreign schools? Why should a Turkish school not be in the same league? Suna Kıraç, especially, felt very strongly about this.

Until the end of the 1980s, the foundation’s income was derived exclusively from the dividends of Koç Holding shares. However, it became clear that this would not be enough to finance large-scale investments, such as would be required by a school or university. At that point, Vehbi Koç made a large donation and also encouraged his children to make donations to the foundation. It is these donations that made the establishment of Koç School and Koç University as well as the acquisition of the American Hospital possible at the time. And this is also how the Vehbi Koç Foundation transformed itself from a foundation that gave financial support to small and medium-scale charitable projects to a philanthropic foundation that is represented through its institutions.

The foundation’s essential objective now is to foster the development and growth of these institutions and to finance their operations, which are usually expected to run a deficit. Koç University has excelled
In relation to the establishment of the Koç University School of Medicine, we have been able to transfer profits generated by the American Hospital to the School of Medicine and the Koç University Hospital, thereby financing their costs without having to use the university’s existing financial resources. Not counting the initial establishment costs, the School of Medicine and Koç University Hospital together run an operational deficit in the order of 15-16 million dollars per year, which is financed exclusively by profits from the American Hospital. This financing model has created a multifaceted and long-term synergy between these two institutions of the Vehbi Koç Foundation.

Another topic that lies close to my heart is that of independent governance. We have a governance system, or rather a system of “principled representation”, that applies to all of our institutions. In the case of Koç University, its relationship with our foundation is defined in detail also by law. According to the law pertaining to foundation universities, the foundation (or, where applicable, family members) can only have a certain number of representatives on the university’s board of trustees. The foundation’s primary responsibility is to appoint the university’s governing body, that is, its board of trustees, and to provide financial support when necessary. In the case of a university, that support will always be necessary. Furthermore, this financial transaction must always be one-directional, i.e., funds can only flow from the foundation towards the university and never from the university to the foundation or family members. And this is how it should be; even if it were not prescribed by law, this is the model that we would have adopted ourselves.

At Koç University, the chairman of the Board of Trustees has no office; only the board itself does. The president governs the university according to the authority invested in him by the board of trustees. The board appoints the president and evaluates his performance, but it is important that it stays clear of management. This model derives its strength both from the law as well as from the principles and values of the Koç family and the Koç Group.

It is a widely recognized fact that Koç Group’s standards of corporate governance are higher than most in Turkey. This insistence on good governance holds equally for the Koç family, the Koç Group, the Vehbi Koç Foundation and all its institutions. The fact that the Koç family believes so strongly in good governance (or what I have been referring to as “principled representation”) has been a valuable asset in delineating Koç University’s relationship with the Koç family and the Koç Group. Furthermore, this governance model has also ensured that the distribution of management roles and responsibilities at the various institutions of the Vehbi Koç Foundation have developed properly.

I have been following the Anatolian Scholarship program from the very beginning and have also made a donation towards it. I’m convinced that these smart and determined young people will make good use of this wonderful opportunity by developing themselves to the fullest and contributing positively to our country in the medium and long term.

İbrahim Güldiken '01
Business Administration and Economics; North America Investments Coordinator, Koç Holding

On the Vehbi Koç Foundation and its Passion for Sustainability and Principled Representation
as these institutions have grown. We have also made a considerable effort to put these principles in writing to ensure that this governance tradition is truly institutionalized. We are also working on the question of what the relationship between the foundation and its institutions should ideally look like and what their future should be. People come and go, but the Vehbi Koç Foundation and Koç University were set up in perpetuity. The Vehbi Koç Foundation’s essential role is to allocate its resources properly, to strike a good balance between the priorities of its various institutions, and to act fairly.

Vehbi Koç’s most important legacy is his notion of sustainability, or rather, his great passion for sustainability. At the beginning of each new project, he would set up two separate funds. The first of these would be a capital investment fund, which would consist of his personal donations as well as that of his children and that of Koç Group companies to finance infrastructural investments. The second fund would be an operational fund, the incomes of which would be used to finance the operational losses foreseen for the institution in question. Both Koç School and Koç University were set up on the basis of this funding model. Some of these funds have been merged over time, but we continue to value the thinking and principles underlying this model to this day. This notion of sustainability is also reflected in the plans of the Vehbi Koç Foundation’s executive committee and board of directors, who base their decisions on detailed forecasts and projections of a period of at least ten years. How long will our resources last? What investments need to be made? Which risk factors are there, and what can be done to minimize them? All of these questions are evaluated for the long-term.

Looking ahead, our greatest duty is to ensure that these institutions, primarily the university, become more of a public asset; they should not just be privately funded institutions supported by the Koç family, the Vehbi Koç Foundation and the Koç Group. The Anatolian Scholarship program, which President İnan has launched through tremendous personal effort and turned into an outstanding success story, has set a notable example in this regard. The program continues to develop and has already become a role model to other universities as well.

Another aspect of good governance is the involvement of alumni in the shaping of the university’s future. I have strongly advocated for alumni to be included in Koç University’s Board of Trustees and am delighted that the Vehbi Koç Foundation Board of Directors has approved the latest Principled Representation Guidelines that require at least one alumni on the university’s board of trustees. I believe that we are the first foundation university in Turkey to adopt this rule. In May 2018, two alumnae, Banu Vargı Tümay and Nathalie Stoyanof Suda, joined the Koç University Board of Trustees and attended its meetings for the first time. We are all very proud of this significant development.

As we celebrate Koç University’s 25th anniversary, I believe that the Vehbi Koç Foundation’s insistence on education, sustainability and principled representation will prove even more critical in the future. It has been wonderful to witness that our success, achieved on the back of these values and principles, has inspired so many among the young generation to share the vision of our founders and trustees, and I am confident that they will take this vision into the future. ◆
I believe it was 1989 when Suna Kıraç first called me and asked, “We are thinking of establishing a university, would you like to help us?” At the time, she was on the board of Koç Holding and working closely with her father Vehbi Koç while also presiding over the Vehbi Koç Foundation and driving the foundation’s educational projects. So it was Suna Kıraç who had taken a leading role in the establishment of Koç School some years earlier. It may be useful at this point to remember some of the backstory: Turkey had had two decades of severe economic and political troubles; there had been a military coup in 1980, and the universities had taken a particularly hard hit. For instance, 386 faculty members at Middle East Technical University alone resigned in 1986. On the other hand, there was an urgent need in the educational sector, especially in higher education, as the Özal government’s liberalization policies attempted to integrate Turkey with the rest of the world and to stimulate economic growth—all of which desperately required well-trained young leadership cadres throughout all strata of society.

Ensuring that the university had a sustainable financial structure was, of course, important. However, even more significant was the task of choosing the right model for the university, one that would not turn into a straitjacket and constrain its future development but allow it to evolve and grow over time. This meant that we had to identify an appropriate set of principles first. So we, a small group that included Professors Seha Tiniç, Işık İnselbağ, Özer Ertuna, and myself, set out to produce a feasibility report. The principles laid out in this short report, which is only about 19-20 pages long, hold true in large part to this day. Typed out in Turkish with English letters on Professor Tiniç’s type-writer, our report, titled “Vehbi Koç University Initial Feasibility Report”, was submitted to Ms Kıraç in July of 1989.

We never envisaged a university that would churn out the highest number of graduates against the lowest possible costs but one that would reach for the highest goal and work towards realizing it step by step. We believed that if the university was to make a real contribution to this country, it must try and do what others cannot or will not.
not do. Maybe it would take a long time to get there, but one day Koç University’s name should be counted among the world’s very best. At the time, this seemed to be a hugely idealistic vision, an ambitious dream, quixotic even. Imagine that we were postulating a university that would start off with only about 1200 students, 70-100 faculty, and two colleges and yet assume global ambitions... We knew it would be very difficult to achieve but not impossible. We trusted that if the university managed to bring together brilliant academics and students in the right environment, the rest would follow. And this is indeed what happened. In fact, it happened sooner than we had dared imagine.

Next to becoming a “center of excellence” on a global scale, there were two further important principles that our report put forward: Firstly, there was a broad consensus that the university’s governance should be independent of the Koç family and Koç Holding. Secondly, for Koç University to become a truly “national” institution, it would have to give scholarships to at least one-third of its student body. This was important, as YÖK, the Turkish Higher Educational Council, had not yet defined its guideline for scholarship conditions. The Koç family, particularly Suna Kıraç and Vehbi Koç, as well as Koç Holding management, approved the scholarship principle. Vehbi Koç had already been funding a large-scale scholarship scheme for many years, and even though he was a very frugal man, he was exceedingly generous in supporting the cause of education.

One of the reasons why the actual establishment of the university was completed quite rapidly was because Suna Kıraç very much wanted her father to witness its opening. Her desire to present him with this precious prize was realized in 1993, and Mr Vehbi Koç, 89 years old at the time, delivered Koç University’s opening lecture. Sadly, Mr Koç passed away a mere three years later in 1996, the same year that Suna Kıraç fell ill and was soon confined to bed. She had worked extraordinarily hard to enable the establishment of Koç University, taking a direct personal interest in almost every single detail. I think it is fair to say that Koç University would not have happened without Suna Kıraç, and all of us will be forever indebted to her indefatigable energy, drive and passion.

Universities must be established with a centenary vision, which is how the Rumelifeneri Campus was designed. Today, Koç University is indeed a center of attraction for the best and brightest of students and faculty. But accomplishments are fragile. We must not become complacent; we must remain open to criticism and always compare ourselves to the very best. As the university’s trustees, it is our primary duty to always ask, “What do we need to do in order to make a unique contribution to our country and to science?” However, some things just will take time and cannot be rushed, even if one would like to. 25 years is a short period in the life of a university; infancy, really. We must be patient. There will be cycles of growth and consolidation and of renewed growth. May our energies never flag, our passions never diminish, and, as Suna Kıraç would say, may our ideals always be larger than our lives… ◆
MILESTONES
During a visit to the US, Vehbi Koç is inspired by the impact of private foundations, especially those in education and healthcare. In 1969, he establishes the Vehbi Koç Foundation, which focuses on healthcare, culture, and education. Having witnessed the founding of the Republic, Vehbi Koç believed expressly that a civilized future depends on a well-educated and skilled youth, was laying the groundwork for Koç University.

**1969**

The Vehbi Koç Foundation Executive Committee appoints Tamer Şahinbaş to be Koç University's founding president.

1992

The College of Science, Social Sciences and Humanities, the College of Administrative Sciences and Economics, and the Graduate School of Business are established.

The Koç University Board of Trustees holds its inaugural meeting on the same day it is elected by the Vehbi Koç Foundation Board of Directors. Chaired by Rahmi M. Koç, the first Board of Trustees consists of Suna Kıraç, Can Kıraç, M. Fahir İlkel, Ömer M. Koç, Yavuz Alangoya, Bülent Gültekin, and Tamer Şahinbaş.

The Grand National Assembly of Turkey passes Law 3785, which ratifies Koç University as a legal entity.

**1990**

The Vehbi Koç Foundation Executive Committee appoints Tamer Şahinbaş to be Koç University's founding president.

**1992**

The College of Science, Social Sciences and Humanities, the College of Administrative Sciences and Economics, and the Graduate School of Business are established.

The Koç University Board of Trustees holds its inaugural meeting on the same day it is elected by the Vehbi Koç Foundation Board of Directors. Chaired by Rahmi M. Koç, the first Board of Trustees consists of Suna Kıraç, Can Kıraç, M. Fahir İlkel, Ömer M. Koç, Yavuz Alangoya, Bülent Gültekin, and Tamer Şahinbaş.

The Grand National Assembly of Turkey passes Law 3785, which ratifies Koç University as a legal entity.

**1990**

The Vehbi Koç Foundation Executive Committee appoints Tamer Şahinbaş to be Koç University's founding president.

**1992**

The College of Science, Social Sciences and Humanities, the College of Administrative Sciences and Economics, and the Graduate School of Business are established.

The Koç University Board of Trustees holds its inaugural meeting on the same day it is elected by the Vehbi Koç Foundation Board of Directors. Chaired by Rahmi M. Koç, the first Board of Trustees consists of Suna Kıraç, Can Kıraç, M. Fahir İlkel, Ömer M. Koç, Yavuz Alangoya, Bülent Gültekin, and Tamer Şahinbaş.

The Grand National Assembly of Turkey passes Law 3785, which ratifies Koç University as a legal entity.
The Board of Overseers and Board of Trustees hold their first joint press conference.

Professor İrşadi Aksun receives the TÜBİTAK Incentive Award.

Professor Ali Ülger receives the TÜBİTAK Science Award.

Professor Tekin Dereli is awarded the TÜBİTAK Science Award.

The Koç University Board of Overseers convenes at the new Rumelifeneri Campus, which is at the time still under construction.

Professor Alphan Sennaroğlu is awarded the TÜBİTAK Incentive Award in Physics.

Professor A. Levent Demirel receives the TÜBİTAK Incentive Award in Physics.

Professor Tekeş Dereli is awarded the TÜBİTAK Science Award.

 Universities “are the custodians not only of the many cultures of man, but of the rational process itself” (Edward Levi). The commitment to, and practice of, reasoning clearly and thinking critically is what we must uphold. It also is why, in the modern university, education and research have gone together in the form of teaching by means of scholarship and science. In only 25 years, Koç University has done an astounding job in bringing together teaching, learning and research at a very high level and to develop a culture that rests on such values as respect for rational inquiry, evidence, and argumentation; respect for the autonomy, integrity, and contributions of the individual; freedom of thought and expression. These ideals are important to anyone who participates in the life of learning, debate, scholarship and investigation – whether fundamental or applied. In the next 25 years, Koç University will face many calls to address domestic and global challenges. In responding, the university must guard against the risk of losing its distinct ways that combine the rigorous tradition of knowledge and the rigorous search for truth with the excitement of frequently serendipitous discovery in a setting of institutional autonomy.

**1994**

The Board of Overseers and Board of Trustees hold their first joint press conference.

**1995**

The first class of Koç University MBA students graduate.

Professor İrşadi Aksun receives the TÜBİTAK Incentive Award.

Professor Ali Ülger receives the TÜBİTAK Science Award.

Professor Tekeş Dereli is awarded the TÜBİTAK Science Award.

**1996**

The first class of Koç University MBA students graduate.

Koç University Alumni Association is formed.

Koç University Spring Festival is held for the first time.

**1997**

The first class of Koç University undergraduate students graduate.

Koç University launches its first international exchange programs.

**1998**

The School of Health Sciences, later renamed School of Nursing, is established.

**1999**

The Graduate School of Sciences is established.

**2000**

Koç University moves to its new Rumelifeneri Campus.
Koç University College of Engineering is founded with the following departments:

- Computer Engineering
- Industrial Engineering
- Electrical and Electronics Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering

The Koç University Awareness Group organizes the first "Rehavet Panayırı" cultural festival, now a twice annual event.

2001

Professor Atilla Aşkar is appointed president of Koç University.

The Sevgi Gönül Cultural Center opens, featuring a fully-equipped auditorium with seating for 376 people, state-of-the-art acoustics, and a Steinway grand piano.

2002

Professor Ekrem Akurgal is awarded an honorary doctorate for his contributions to archaeology, while Richard Holbrooke, former US ambassador to the United Nations, is awarded an honorary doctorate for his contributions to world peace. Richard Holbrooke is also the keynote speaker at the 8th Commencement Ceremony.

Publication of the first edition of Koç University's inhouse magazine Kule.

2003

Koç University’s 10th anniversary celebrations take place and are attended by the 9th president of Turkey, Süleyman Demirel.

The Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering is founded under the College of Engineering.

Anthony E. Siegeman, Stanford University professor and former president of the Optical Society of America, visits Koç University to lead a series of seminars.

The Law School is founded.

The Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities opens, admitting its first students to the psychology master’s program.

2004

Koç University is awarded the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education and immediately begins international exchange programs with leading universities across Europe.

Koç University’s radio broadcast, KU Radyo, is founded.

Koç University launches its Master’s in International Relations program.

Like many great world universities, Koç University has paired its emphasis on science and technology with a strong commitment to the humanities and social sciences, ensuring that scientific innovation will be accompanied by ongoing ethical reflection, philosophical wisdom, civic engagement, and artistic inspiration. This will promote wisdom and reflection in the use of fast-changing technology, as well as a student body with the vision to shape our global future with courage and creativity.

Another accomplishment is Koç’s commitment to the socioeconomic diversity of its students. The continuity of the Koç family’s support and growth of the Anatolian Scholars Program, supported increasingly by corporate investors, extends Koç University’s education across a broad spectrum of Turkish society. This is a major accomplishment that will profoundly affect the nation’s future and its potential contributions to a changing world.
Prime Minister of Georgia, Zurab Noghaideli, visits Koç University to deliver a speech. The event is organized by the Department of International Relations as part of its Diplomat Speaker Series.

**MILESTONES**

Former president of Mexico Ernesto Zedillo visits Koç University to deliver a speech at a meeting of the International Task Force on Global Public Goods.

GLODEM, the Koç University Center for Research on Globalization, Peace, and Democratic Governance, is established.

Honorary doctorates are presented to Shirin Ebadi, Iran’s first female judge and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, to Amartya Sen, Harvard University professor and Nobel laureate in Economics, and to Peter Sutherland, founding director-general of the World Trade Organization, at the 10th Commencement Ceremony, where they were guest speakers.

SANERC, the Semahat Arsel Nursing Education and Research Center, is established at Koç University in collaboration with the American Hospital.

Koç University is invited into the EU’s Network of Excellence.

Koç University launches the Master of Arts in Anatolian Civilizations and Cultural Heritage Management program, the first academic program in Turkey to connect the fields of archaeology and cultural heritage management.

Marketing theorist Jack Trout delivers the opening speech “The Road to Differentiation”, at a seminar organized by the Koç University Marketing Club.

The School of Health Sciences is renamed as the School of Nursing.

**AWARDS**

Professor Özdin Keskin wins the L’Oréal-UNESCO for Women in Science International Fellowship Award in Life Sciences at a ceremony in Paris.

Professors Barış Tan, Utku Ünver and Teğza Etgeli receive the TÜBİTAK GEBİP Outstanding Young Scientists Award.

Koç University Launches the Master of Arts in Anatolian Civilizations and Cultural Heritage Management Program, the First Academic Program in Turkey to Connect the Field of Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Management.

The Koç University Tiny Hearts Project (KÜMYÜP) is launched by Koç University Volunteers.

The Koç University Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations opens (initially under the name “Institute for Anatolian Civilizations”) and begins activities with thirteen fellows.

Marketing theorist Jack Trout delivers the opening speech “The Road to Differentiation”, at a seminar organized by the Koç University Marketing Club.

The School of Health Sciences is renamed as the School of Nursing.

Prime Minister of Georgia, Zurab Noghaideli, visits Koç University to deliver a speech. The event is organized by the Department of International Relations as part of its Diplomat Speaker Series.

An opening ceremony is held for ANAMED, the Koç University Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations, which was launched in 2005. ANAMED Library opens within the Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations. The library’s collections focus on the art, architecture and archaeology of the Greco-Roman, Byzantine, Seljuk and Ottoman periods.

Pakistan’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Khurshid M. Kasuri visits Koç University and delivers a speech.

The first edition of Frontier/Fener magazine is published. The magazine aims to publicize research conducted at Koç University from all branches of science.
Professor Halil İnalcık is awarded an honorary doctorate in social sciences and history.

New Zealand Minister of Trade, Defense and Disarmament Philip Goff addresses a conference at Koç University.

The first PhD students graduate from the Graduate School of Sciences.

At the 12th Commencement Ceremony, commencement speaker William C. Ford Jr., executive chairman of the Ford Motor Company, is bestowed with an honorary doctorate for his work on environmental protection.

The Koç University Dr. Nüsret-Semahat Arsel International Business Law Implementation and Research Center is founded within the School of Law.

The Departments of Archaeology and History of Art, English Language and Comparative Literature, and Philosophy open within the College of Social Sciences and Humanities.

Former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder is awarded an honorary doctorate in law for his contributions to the formation of a strong Europe and for promoting the importance of Turkey to the European Union.

Koç University signs the United Nations Global Compact.

Koç University’s 13th Commencement Ceremony is held. Sir John Bond, president of Vodafone Group, is invited to present the commencement address.

The one thing that Koç University must embrace going forward is quality. The absolutely highest possible quality and imagination and creativity in all that we do. In the faculty and professional support people who we engage. In the leadership potential and creativity of our students. And in the boldness of our research and teaching activities. All of this should rank with the best one can find anywhere. In our teaching programs, our research activities, and our faculty development commitments we must not simply tread down the same old worn out paths that characterize so much of what is going on in higher education across the globe. What we are doing in all of these domains should help shape the agenda of higher education and practice everywhere around us.

The absolutely highest possible quality and imagination and creativity in all that we do. In the faculty and professional support people who we engage. In the leadership potential and creativity of our students. And in the boldness of our research and teaching activities. All of this should rank with the best one can find anywhere. In our teaching programs, our research activities, and our faculty development commitments we must not simply tread down the same old worn out paths that characterize so much of what is going on in higher education across the globe. What we are doing in all of these domains should help shape the agenda of higher education and practice everywhere around us.
The "University Student for a Day" program is launched to give prospective students a taste of campus life. As part of the 24-hour program, students attend classes and have access to all campus facilities, including an overnight stay in dormitories.

Following extensive renovation work, the İstinye Campus reopens to host the Koç University Graduate School of Business.

Professor Özlem Keskin receives the TÜBİTAK - TWAS Incentive Award.

Professor Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı is awarded the Ankara University Center for the Study of Child Culture (ÇOKAUM) Science Award for her research on the interactions between children, family and culture. Awarded for the first time, the award recognizes 25 years of contributions by Professor Kağıtçıbaşı to the research and theory of human development, family, and culture in Turkey and around the world.

The College of Administrative Sciences and Economics becomes a signatory to the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), a United Nations initiative, thereby committing Koç University to teach students the principles of sustainability and responsible management.

Professor Tülgü Ansay is awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany for his contributions to Turkish-German relations in the field of law.

Profs Hakan Urey and Fikri Karaaslan receive the TÜBA GEİBİP Outstanding Young Scientists Award.

The 14th Commencement Ceremony takes place. An honorary doctorate is presented to William R. Brody, president of Johns Hopkins University and a leading medical imaging researcher.

Koç University Volunteers organizes the first ever Children’s Festival, now an annual event.

The Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics opens within the College of Sciences.

Koç University Volunteers Awareness Group initiates a project to establish libraries at under-resourced schools in Anatolian cities. Money for the project is raised through donation boxes on campus and fundraising activities at the twice annual Rehavet Panayırı cultural festival.

Professor Tülgü Ansay, is awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany for his contributions to Turkish-German relations in the field of law.

Professor Zeynep Aycan is selected Outstanding Young Scientist by the World Economic Forum in recognition of her work in industrial and organizational psychology.

Professor Alper Erdoğan and Emre Alkan, and Associate Professors Selva Demiralp Cuda, Sardar Tasran and Sühnez Yılmaz receive the TÜBA GEİBİP Outstanding Young Scientists Award.

Professor Alper Kınaz and Associate Professor Selva Demiralp Cuda receive the TÜBİTAK Incentive Award.

The College of Administrative Sciences and Economics becomes a signatory to the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), a United Nations initiative, thereby committing Koç University to teach students the principles of sustainability and responsible management.

Cambridge University Press publishes Perspectives on Human Development Family and Culture, a collection of essays by Professor Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı, published in commemoration of her 40-year career.

Professor Tülgü Ansay is awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany for his contributions to Turkish-German relations in the field of law.

Profs Hakan Urey and Fikri Karaaslan receive the TÜBA GEİBİP Outstanding Young Scientists Award.

Professor Zeynep Aycan is selected Outstanding Young Scientist by the World Economic Forum in recognition of her work in industrial and organizational psychology.

Professor Alper Erdoğan and Emre Alkan, and Associate Professors Selva Demiralp Cuda, Sardar Tasran and Sühnez Yılmaz receive the TÜBA GEİBİP Outstanding Young Scientists Award.

Professor Alper Kınaz and Associate Professor Selva Demiralp Cuda receive the TÜBİTAK Incentive Award.

Koç University's success is built on two essential pillars: outstanding human qualities and a fortunate combination of soft factors. Thus the leadership of the presidents, an excellent management, a superbly selected faculty committed to the mission of the University, instructing highly motivated students, together with Koç University’s open, multicultural atmosphere, the fascinating campus with its excellent infrastructure and—last but not least—the exemplary commitment of the Koç family have in a synergetic manner contributed to raising the bar for higher education in Turkey.

To remain competitive in the future, I believe that Koç University should focus on what it would like to call a well-balanced portfolio: On the one hand, it is focusing both on excellent research and on first-class teaching which constitute the two sides of the same medal of excellence. On the other hand, research has to find a proper balance between fundamental and applied research. Moreover, the research portfolio of the University should also be balanced with regard to cooperation with the international scientific community and with industry, both Turkish and international.
Koç University has many priorities if it is to continue into the future in building its legacy as a leader in higher education. But foremost among them is the necessity of encouraging in its student body a strong sense of—indeed passion for—civic engagement, by which I mean a commitment to doing as much as an individual can do by way of contributing to a just and humane society operating in accordance with the rule of law.

The rapid pace of change powered by science and technology makes more things possible than ever before. To that extent, it is enabling. At the same time, however, it can lessen society’s sense of individuals’ potential for taking responsibility to build a world in which human rights and human dignity are deeply valued.

To function effectively in the technologically complex world in which we live, students must learn to navigate among the competing demands to which they are subject.

Imbuing students with a commitment to civic engagement and a sense of individual responsibility for the kind of society in which we live is the single greatest contemporary challenge in higher education and on which Koç needs to continue focusing to strengthen and consolidate its legacy as a leader in higher education.

Koç University Salts his first Birlikte Varız (We Exist Together) campaign, a fundraiser campaign to offer scholarships to promising students and contribute to various social responsibility projects.

Koç University joins the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Research Network, becoming the only university from Turkey among the network’s 12 universities.

Koç University joins the CEMS Global Alliance in Management Education. At the same time, Koç University Graduate School of Business becomes the first and only institution in Turkey to offer the CEMS Master’s in International Management degree.

Koç University Graduate School of Business becomes first and only business school in Turkey to be EFMD EQUIS accredited.

The School of Medicine is founded.

The Koç University Graduation Ring is designed and enters production.

Kolt, the Koç University Office of Learning and Teaching, is established.

Professor Sami Gülgöz becomes a full member of TÜBA, the Turkish Academy of Sciences.

MAVA, the Department of Media and Visual Arts, is established.

KUMP, the Koç University Press, is founded. Its first publication is Benlik, Aile ve İnsan Gelişimi: Kültürel Psikoloji (Family, Self, and Human Development: Cultural Psychology), a collection of Professor Çiğdem Kağıtçibay’s work over twenty years.

Koç University’s 16th Commencement Ceremony is addressed by Brian Mulroney, Canada’s 18th prime minister.

Koç University School of Medicine opens, and the first class of freshmen is admitted at the start of the 2010-2011 academic year.

The Koç University Social Policy Center opens.

Professor İskender Yılgör is elected to the TÜBİTAK Science Board.

ALIS, Koç University’s Academic and Life Skills program is officially introduced into the university curriculum after a successful trial during the 2010 spring term.

Professors Fikri Karaesmen, Hakan Ürey and Tolga Etili receive the TÜBİTAK Incentive Award.

Koç University School of Medicine opens, and the first class of freshmen is admitted at the start of the 2010-2011 academic year.

The Koç University Social Policy Center opens.

Professor İskender Yılgör is elected to the TÜBİTAK Science Board.

ALIS, Koç University’s Academic and Life Skills program is officially introduced into the university curriculum after a successful trial during the 2010 spring term.

Professors Fikri Karaesmen, Hakan Ürey and Tolga Etili receive the TÜBİTAK Incentive Award.

Koç University has many priorities if it is to continue into the future in building its legacy as a leader in higher education. But foremost among them is the necessity of encouraging in its student body a strong sense of—indeed passion for—civic engagement, by which I mean a commitment to doing as much as an individual can do by way of contributing to a just and humane society operating in accordance with the rule of law.

The rapid pace of change powered by science and technology makes more things possible than ever before. To that extent, it is enabling. At the same time, however, it can lessen society’s sense of individuals’ potential for taking responsibility to build a world in which human rights and human dignity are deeply valued.

To function effectively in the technologically complex world in which we live, students must learn to navigate among the competing demands to which they are subject.

Imbuing students with a commitment to civic engagement and a sense of individual responsibility for the kind of society in which we live is the single greatest contemporary challenge in higher education and on which Koç needs to continue focusing to strengthen and consolidate its legacy as a leader in higher education.

Koç University has many priorities if it is to continue into the future in building its legacy as a leader in higher education. But foremost among them is the necessity of encouraging in its student body a strong sense of—indeed passion for—civic engagement, by which I mean a commitment to doing as much as an individual can do by way of contributing to a just and humane society operating in accordance with the rule of law.

The rapid pace of change powered by science and technology makes more things possible than ever before. To that extent, it is enabling. At the same time, however, it can lessen society’s sense of individuals’ potential for taking responsibility to build a world in which human rights and human dignity are deeply valued.

To function effectively in the technologically complex world in which we live, students must learn to navigate among the competing demands to which they are subject.

Imbuing students with a commitment to civic engagement and a sense of individual responsibility for the kind of society in which we live is the single greatest contemporary challenge in higher education and on which Koç needs to continue focusing to strengthen and consolidate its legacy as a leader in higher education.

Koç University has many priorities if it is to continue into the future in building its legacy as a leader in higher education. But foremost among them is the necessity of encouraging in its student body a strong sense of—indeed passion for—civic engagement, by which I mean a commitment to doing as much as an individual can do by way of contributing to a just and humane society operating in accordance with the rule of law.

The rapid pace of change powered by science and technology makes more things possible than ever before. To that extent, it is enabling. At the same time, however, it can lessen society’s sense of individuals’ potential for taking responsibility to build a world in which human rights and human dignity are deeply valued.

To function effectively in the technologically complex world in which we live, students must learn to navigate among the competing demands to which they are subject.

Imbuing students with a commitment to civic engagement and a sense of individual responsibility for the kind of society in which we live is the single greatest contemporary challenge in higher education and on which Koç needs to continue focusing to strengthen and consolidate its legacy as a leader in higher education.

Koç University has many priorities if it is to continue into the future in building its legacy as a leader in higher education. But foremost among them is the necessity of encouraging in its student body a strong sense of—indeed passion for—civic engagement, by which I mean a commitment to doing as much as an individual can do by way of contributing to a just and humane society operating in accordance with the rule of law.

The rapid pace of change powered by science and technology makes more things possible than ever before. To that extent, it is enabling. At the same time, however, it can lessen society’s sense of individuals’ potential for taking responsibility to build a world in which human rights and human dignity are deeply valued.

To function effectively in the technologically complex world in which we live, students must learn to navigate among the competing demands to which they are subject.

Imbuing students with a commitment to civic engagement and a sense of individual responsibility for the kind of society in which we live is the single greatest contemporary challenge in higher education and on which Koç needs to continue focusing to strengthen and consolidate its legacy as a leader in higher education.
2011

The Anatolian Scholarship Program is established to help financially underprivileged students from across Turkey to study at Koç University. The program offers financial support for high-achieving students who would otherwise be unable to study at Koç University, allowing students from all backgrounds to receive the best education possible.

MAVA, the Media and Visual Arts Department, begins exhibiting works by students at the RAMP[A] exhibition space, which is situated along a passage connecting the Student Center with the college building.

The Koç University Graduate School of Health Sciences is created to introduce a different and innovative approach to graduate health sciences education in Turkey.

SANERC, Koç University’s Semahat Arsel Nursing Education and Research Center, is accredited by the American Nurses Credentialing Center, thereby becoming Turkey’s first internationally accredited center for the education of professional nurses.

The Koç University-Microsoft Research Center opens.

Professor Cüneyt Kağıtçıbaşı receives the TÜBİTAK Science Award.

Associate Professor Kaan Güven receives the TÜBİTAK - TWAS Incentive Award.

Assistant Professor Serdar Kozal and Associate Professor Tarcan Kumkaie receive the Mustafa Parlar Award.

Associate Professor Lemli Baruh, Menderes Iskın, Sinan Unver and Professor Emre Alper Yıldırım receive the TÜBA-GEIBIP Outstanding Young Scientist Award.

Associate Professor Seda Keskin and Assistant Professor Gülşey İnce Dunn receive the L’Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Turkey National Fellowship Award.

Koç University’s 17th Commencement Ceremony takes place. The commencement address is given by Dr. Victor K. Fung, chairman of Hong Kong-based Li & Fung Group.

Professor Yaman Arkun is elected to the TÜBİTAK Science Board.

2012

Professors Ziya Öniş, İrşadi Aksun and Oğuz Kerim Başkurt are elected to TÜBA, the Turkish Academy of Sciences.

The Design Lab opens within the Media and Visual Arts Department to develop future-oriented media, products and spaces.

Professor Mine Çalılar is elected to ISI, the International Statistical Institute.

Professor Bertil Emrah Oder is appointed Henry Morris Lecturer of International and Comparative Law at Chicago-Kent College of Law.

The first Rowing Golden Horn Cup takes place, organized jointly by Koç University and Kadir Has University.

Professor İsmail Lazoğlu and his research team work with Professor Suha Küçükaksu of the Florence Nightingale Hospital Department of Cardiovascular Surgery to develop the prototype for Turkey’s first “Implantable Miniature Artificial Blood Pump System”. The project receives awards and commendations by the Turkish Machinery Exporters Association, TÜBİTAK, KOŞGEB, Turkish Exporters Assembly, and the Ministry of Economy.

Associate Professor Kerem Pekkan is awarded an ERC Starting Grant.

The first International Summer Course on Research Methodology and Ethics in Health Sciences takes place at Koç University’s Rumelifeneri Campus. The program is organized jointly by Koç University School of Medicine and Harvard University School of Medicine with support from the Health Directorate of Istanbul.

Associate Professor Ziya Öniş and Professor İrem Keskin Özkaya receive the TÜBİTAK Science Award.
KUYTAM, the Koç University Surface Science and Technology Research Center, is established.

Associate Professor Kaan Güven is elected an associate member of TÜBA, the Turkish Academy of Sciences.

Koç University's 18th Commencement Ceremony takes place. Dora Bakoyannis, former minister for foreign affairs of Greece and mayor of Athens, addresses the ceremony.

2013

Official opening of KUTEM, the Koç University Tüpraş Energy Center, Turkey's first private-industry supported energy research center. The center is established at Koç University with funds from Tüpraş.

Associate Professor Şener Aktürk is awarded the Joseph Rothschild Prize in Nationalism and Ethnic Studies for his book Regimes of Ethnicity and Nationhood in Germany, Russia and Turkey.

Assistant Professor Tuğba Bağcı Önder receives the 2013 UNESCO-L’Oréal For Women in Science Turkey National Fellowship.

Professor Zeynep Aycan receives the Gordon Allport Intergroup Relations Prize for psychological research on social issues. Professor Aycan also receives the Koç Holding Professorship Award in Management and Strategy.

Associate Professor Nurhan Öztürk receives the TÜBİTAK Incentive Award in Physics.

Professor Güln Şemih is awarded the position of Officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau (Officier in de Orde van Oranje-Nassau) by the Netherlands.

Professor Aylin Küntay is appointed the Prince Claus Chair in Development and Equity, Netherlands.

2013

Koç University's 19th Commencement Ceremony takes place. The ceremony is addressed by Amr Moussa, outspoken defender of democratic change and a former minister of foreign affairs of Egypt.

Associate Professors Fuat Balç and İlna Öztekín receive the Science Academy's Young Scientist Award (BAGEP).

Associate Professor Sinan Ümür receives the Masatoshii Gündüz Ikeda Research Award in recognition of his work on the “Theory of motives in arithmetic geometry”.

Professor Alphan Sennaroğlu receives the TÜBİTAK Science Award.

Associate Professor Seda Keskin Arı receives the TÜBİTAK Incentive Award.

Associate Professor Mendes İskın receives the Mustafa Parlar Research Incentive Award.

Professor Mine Çağlar receives the Hayri Körezlioğlu Research Award.

Associate Professors Seda Keskin Arı, Bayat Beyaz, Öğür Bırın, Nazım Bıyıklıboduk, Fevza Esraf, Nurhan Öztürk, Mehmet Sayao, Tavfik Metin Sargin and Assistant Professor Cüllaye İnci Durn receive the TÜBA GEBİP Outstanding Young Scientists Award.

Professor Hakan Ürey and Öğür Barış Akan are awarded an ERC Consolidator Grant.

KWORKS, the Koç University Entrepreneurship Research Center opens.

Professor Zeynep Aycan receives the Gordon Allport Intergroup Relations Prize for psychological research on social issues. Professor Aycan also receives the Koç Holding Professorship Award in Management and Strategy.

Associate Professor Nurhan Öztürk receives the UNESCO-L’Oréal For Women in Science Turkey National Award in Life Sciences.

Associate Professor Professor Wrocław Işın receives the TÜBİTAK Incentive Award in Physics.

Professor Güln Şemih is awarded the position of Officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau (Officier in de Orde van Oranje-Nassau) by the Netherlands.

Professor Aylin Küntay is appointed the Prince Claus Chair in Development and Equity, Netherlands.

Dr. Ernest Moniz, United States secretary of energy, visits KUTEM and addresses a conference at Koç University on US efforts to develop alternative energy sources.

Professors Ahmet Içduygu, Ali Çarkoğlu, Zeynep Aycan, Gün Şemih and Hakan Ürey are elected to the Science Academy.

Associate Professors Seda Keskin Arı, Reşat Bayer, Özgür Bırın, Nazım Bıyıklıboduk, Fevza Esraf, Nurhan Öztürk, Mehmet Sayao, Tavfik Metin Sargin and Assistant Professor Cüllaye İnci Durn receive the TÜBA GEBİP Outstanding Young Scientists Award.

Professor Hakan Ürey and Öğür Barış Akan are awarded an ERC Consolidator Grant.

Koç University has always been distinguished by its ability to recognize that we live in a globalized world, the so-called “global village”, and has acted with the awareness that communication and integration in science raise the bar for all. The dynamic renewal of infrastructure and human talent that this requires will continue to be reflected in its services and overall success. Koç University’s commitment to conduct science and research will also play a significant role in our nation’s further development.
Professor Attila Gürsoy is elected to the Science Academy.

Associate Professor Menderes İpken is awarded the FABED Eser Tümen Outstanding Achievement Award.

Professor Zeynep Aycan receives a TÜBİTAK Science Award.

Professor Özgür Barsan, and Associate Professors Bahar Runel and Fuat Balco receive the TÜBİTAK Incentive Award.

Professor Özgür Barsan, Associate Professors Sinem Çöleri Ergen, Seda Keskin-Avcı, Emre Mengi, Özdem Altan Oktay, Asha Hijazioglu, and Assistant Professor Tuğba Bayır-Önder receive the Science Academy’s Young Scientist Award (BAGEP).

Professor Özgür Barsan Akan receives the Kadir Has Promising Scholar Award.

Professor Özgür Barsan Akan and Associate Professor Seda Keskin Avcı receive the Science Heroes Association Young Scientist Award.

Associate Professor Menderes İpken is awarded the FABED Eser Tümen Outstanding Achievement Award.

Professor Zeynep Aycan receives a TÜBİTAK Science Award.

Professor Özgür Barsan, and Associate Professors Bahar Runel and Fuat Balco receive the TÜBİTAK Incentive Award.

Professor Özgür Barsan, Associate Professors Sinem Çöleri Ergen, Seda Keskin-Avcı, Emre Mengi, Özdem Altan Oktay, Asha Hijazioglu, and Assistant Professor Tuğba Bayır-Önder receive the Science Academy’s Young Scientist Award (BAGEP).

Professor Özgür Barsan Akan receives the Kadir Has Promising Scholar Award.

Professor Özgür Barsan Akan and Associate Professor Seda Keskin Avcı receive the Science Heroes Association Young Scientist Award.
Koç University’s 21st Commencement Ceremony takes place. Journalist Christiane Amanpour addresses the ceremony.

GABAM, the Koç University Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for Late Antique and Byzantine Studies, officially opens. Specializing in Byzantine art history and archaeology, GABAM is the first research center of its kind in Turkey.

KOÇ-KAM, the Center for Gender Studies at Koç University, presents the Semahat Arsel Distinguished Honorary Fellow Award to UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova. The award recognizes leading women from around the world who have made important contributions to the study of women and gender.

First founded in 1996 by the Vehbi Koç Foundation, the Suna & İnan Kıraç Research Institute on Mediterranean Civilizations becomes part of Koç University and is renamed AKMED, Suna & İnan Kıraç Research Center for Mediterranean Civilizations.

Koç University has demonstrated in a mere quarter century that it can deliver outstanding undergraduate education of the quality found in the world’s best research universities. That is an achievement that has most definitely contributed to raising the bar for higher education in Turkey. Moreover, it has built its reputation for excellence on a foundation of fairness, integrity, and intellectual curiosity. This is a remarkable accomplishment by any measure. So far Koç University has the makings of a world-class research faculty but to ensure its sustainability it must also figure out how to recruit and retain an equally talented graduate student body, especially at the PhD level. Moreover, it must do so without diminishing the quality of its undergraduate student body and program. Today the world’s top-ranked research universities can be distinguished from all others by their uniformly high-quality undergraduate and PhD students and the rigorous programs they pursue. And these top-ranked universities have been successful in doing so by recruiting significant numbers of international graduate students, not to mention foreign-born faculty. To join their ranks, Koç University may well have to do the same.

Associate Professor Evliyâ Metin Sezgin receives a Science Heroes Association Young Scientist Award.

Associate Professor Seda Keskin Avcı receives the Mustafa Parlar Foundation Award 2015.

 Emerging Infectious Diseases: Clinical Case Studies by Professor Önder Ergünü and Professor Füsun Caan wins first prize in the Public Health category of the British Medical Association book awards.

Associate Professor Kerem Pekkan is awarded an ERC Proof of Concept Grant.

Associate Professor Cory Dunn is awarded an ERC Starting Grant.

Associate Professor İlke Öztekin Gilliam receives the TÜBİTAK Incentive Award.

Emerging Infectious Diseases: Clinical Case Studies by Professor Önder Ergünü and Professor Füsun Caan wins first prize in the Public Health category of the British Medical Association book awards.

Associate Professor Kerem Pekkan is awarded an ERC Proof of Concept Grant.

Associate Professor Cory Dunn is awarded an ERC Starting Grant.

KUASIA, the Koç University Center for Asian Studies, is established with the aim of encouraging the research, study and teaching of all topics related to Asia. KUASIA also aims to produce high quality, comparative and interdisciplinary academic and policy-focused publications.

ERC Starting Grants are awarded to Assistant Professor Elif Nur Fırat Karalar and Dr. Erdem Kabadayi. An ERC Consolidator Grant is awarded to Associate Professor Alp Atakan.

Associate Professor Seda Keskin Avcı receives the FABED Eser Tümen Outstanding Achievement Award.

Koç University is named Turkey’s most successful research institution by TÜBİTAK under the EU’s Horizon 2020 program.

Associate Professors Öğür Birer, Barış Çoşkunuz, Mendres İskın, and Assistant Professors Sarp Kayas, Ayıpın Kocaâbaş, Alptekin Küpçü, Selin Erdem Aytaç and Ayşe Gülbey Bugra receive the Science Academy’s Young Scientist Award (BAGEP).

Assistant Professor Elif Nur Fırat Karalar receives an EMBO Installation Grant and a Royal Society Newton Advanced fellowship.

Professor Aziz Sancar, winner of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, visits Koç University to give a seminar on “Mechanisms of DNA Repair by Photolyase and Excision Nuclease”.

Ömer M. Koç becomes chairman of the Koç University Board of Trustees.

Associate Professor T evfik Metin Sezgin receives a Science Heroes Association Young Scientist Award.

Associate Professor Seda Keskin Avcı receives the Mustafa Parlar Foundation Award 2015.

Emerging Infectious Diseases: Clinical Case Studies by Professor Önder Ergünü and Professor Füsun Caan wins first prize in the Public Health category of the British Medical Association book awards.

Associate Professor Kerem Pekkan is awarded an ERC Proof of Concept Grant.

Associate Professor Cory Dunn is awarded an ERC Starting Grant.

Associate Professor İlke Öztekin Gilliam receives the TÜBİTAK Incentive Award.

Associate Professor Öğür Birer, Barış Çoşkunuz, Mendres İskın, and Assistant Professors Sarp Kayas, Ayıpın Kocaâbaş, Alptekin Küpçü, Selin Erdem Aytaç and Ayşe Gülbey Bugra receive the Science Academy’s Young Scientist Award (BAGEP).

Assistant Professor Elif Nur Fırat Karalar receives an EMBO Installation Grant and a Royal Society Newton Advanced fellowship.

ERC Starting Grants are awarded to Assistant Professor Elif Nur Fırat Karalar and Dr. Erdem Kabadayi. An ERC Consolidator Grant is awarded to Associate Professor Alp Atakan.

Associate Professor Seda Keskin Avcı receives the FABED Eser Tümen Outstanding Achievement Award.

Koç University is named Turkey’s most successful research institution by TÜBİTAK under the EU’s Horizon 2020 program.

Associate Professors Öğür Birer, Barış Çoşkunuz, Mendres İskın, and Assistant Professors Sarp Kayas, Ayıpın Kocaâbaş, Alptekin Küpçü, Selin Erdem Aytaç and Ayşe Gülbey Bugra receive the Science Academy’s Young Scientist Award (BAGEP).

Assistant Professor Elif Nur Fırat Karalar receives an EMBO Installation Grant and a Royal Society Newton Advanced fellowship.

ERC Starting Grants are awarded to Assistant Professor Elif Nur Fırat Karalar and Dr. Erdem Kabadayi. An ERC Consolidator Grant is awarded to Associate Professor Alp Atakan.

Associate Professor Seda Keskin Avcı receives the FABED Eser Tümen Outstanding Achievement Award.

Koç University is named Turkey’s most successful research institution by TÜBİTAK under the EU’s Horizon 2020 program.
The Fourth International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium is held at ANAMED, the Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations.

Koç University’s 22nd Commencement Ceremony takes place. Commencement speaker Muhtar Kent, chairman and CEO of The Coca-Cola Company, receives an honorary doctorate.

The Koç University Rahmi M. Koç Medal of Science award program is created to encourage the advancement of science by recognizing and rewarding successful, pioneering, young scientists of Turkish background who have contributed to the universal body of knowledge. The first Medal of Science is presented in the “Science, Engineering and Medicine” category and awarded to Professor Aydoğan Özcan for his outstanding fundamental scientific contributions in computational imaging, microscopy and photonics, and for the development of innovative mobile technologies for medical sensing and diagnosis.

KUTTAM, the Koç University Research Center for Translational Medicine opens. The center is founded to provide infrastructure for translational research in healthcare, to encourage and support researchers in the field, and to promote university–industry cooperation.

The first Anatolian Scholarship Program senior class graduates. Koç University School of Nursing attains the status of a full college.

2017

To commemorate Koç University’s upcoming 25th anniversary, a new tradition is born with Koç University’s first ever “Time Capsule”. Each year, the graduating class selects items symbolic of their time at university to be placed in a “Time Capsule” and sealed beneath a commemorative stone slab along Alumni Path on campus.

KUTEM Energy Day, a conference organized by KUTEM, the Koç University Tüpraş Energy Center, takes place for the first time. The event includes presentations and workshops discussing solar energy and innovative energy technologies.

The Al Ghurair STEM Scholars Program is instituted in collaboration with the Abdullah Al Ghurair Foundation for Education.

Associate Professors Atilla Yılmaz, Belgin Şan Akça, Cory David Dunn, Kazım Büyükboduk, Lemi Baruh, Nurhan Özlü, Seda Ertuç, Şener Aktürk, and Assistant Professors Mehmet Gönen, Mehmet C. Onbaşlı, Yasemin Kisu Sakarya, and Dr. İknur Sur all receive the Science Academy’s Young Scientist Award (BAGEP).

Associate Professor Cem Albayrak and Dr. Ayda Kebapçı receive the MSCA Seal of Excellence Award.

Associate Professors Seda Ertuç Güler and Reşat Bayer receive TÜBİTAK Incentive Award.
Koç University School of Nursing becomes the first nursing school in Turkey to be accredited by ACEN, the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing.

Assistant Professor Erdem Yörük becomes the first member from Turkey to join the Young Academy of Europe.

Professor İsmail Lazoğlu is elected to CIRP, the International Academy of Production Engineering.

23rd Commencement Ceremony takes place. Professor Steven Chu, co-winner of the Nobel Prize for Physics and former US Secretary of Energy, delivers the commencement address and is awarded an honorary doctorate.

The 2017 Koç University Rahmi M. Koç Medal of Science is presented in the "Administrative Sciences, Social Sciences, Humanities and Law" category to Professor Daron Acemoğlu for his groundbreaking contributions to the macroeconomics of growth and development as well as to labor and political economics.

2018 Koç University celebrates its 25th anniversary on October 4, the day when the late Vehbi Koç delivered the first opening lecture. Rahmi Koç, Honorary Chairman of the Koç University Boards of Trustees and Overseers, gives a lecture on dignity. At night, following a movie screening with point cloud, an audio-visual performance representing Koç University's progress since its establishment is projected on the walls of the Suna Kıraç Library, the Tower and Portal of Knowledge.

Associate Professors Motin Sezgin, Demircan Canadinç, Cem Demirolu, Zeynep Derya Tamran, and Assistant Professors Elif Nur Firat Karalar, Ceyda Acıcan Ayan, Emir Salih Magden, Sedat Nizamoglu, Umut Aydemir, and Barış Büyükokutan receive the Science Academy's Young Scientist Award.

What Koç University has accomplished in its first 25 years is truly extraordinary. At its exceptionally well-resourced home campus and at the School of Medicine, the academic achievements of faculty and students have risen to the highest ranks in higher education in Turkey and beyond. This is a tribute to the quality of the faculty who have been recruited during the past quarter century as well as to the excellence of the undergraduate and, increasingly, graduate and professional schools.

The physical environments for science, technology, innovation and medicine are outstanding and have expanded considerably with the new on-campus science building and the continued development of the hospital and medical center.

While facilities are essential to enable faculty and students to carry out research and education, it is the human capital that is most important and in this regard, Koç University has been exceptional. However, its accomplishments to date will require continued efforts to foster faculty development and support, to retain excellence and to recruit with uncompromising standards of excellence. Similarly, the need to support excellence in student admissions, likely with continued financial aid given the economic landscape, will be necessary to assure that student quality remains at the highest levels possible. This triad of learning and research facilities, coupled with outstanding faculty and students, will enable Koç University to become ever better.

PHILIP A. PIZZO
Member, Koç University Board of Overseers
Former Dean, David and Susan Holmesman Professor of Pediatrics, Stanford University School of Medicine

Dr. Philip A. Pizzo, a member of the Koç University Board of Overseers, delivers the commencement address and is awarded an honorary doctorate.

Assistant Professor Sedat Nizamoglu receives TÜBİTAK Incentive Award.
The 2018 Koç University Rahmi M. Koç Medal of Science is presented to Professor Metin Sitti in the “Engineering” category for his outstanding and pioneering contributions to micro and nanoscale robotics for biomedical applications.

Koç University’s 24th Commencement Ceremony takes place. Professor Andrew Hamilton, president of New York University and member of the Koç University Board of Overseers, delivers the commencement address and is awarded an honorary doctorate.

The first Koç University Publications (KUP) bookstore opens at Merkez Han on İstiklal Avenue.

Associate Professor Seda Keskin Avcı becomes the first female Turkish academic to be elected to the Global Young Academy in the field of engineering.

The anniversary activities of the year were designed meticulously and incorporated all the stakeholders of the university. Titled “25 years in 25 projects”, the year-long anniversary program marked a remarkable year in Koç University’s history.

Commemorative postage stamps are issued and distributed on the occasion of Koç University’s 25th anniversary. The stamps feature various photographs of the university’s Rumelifeneri Campus.

Associate Professor Nilüfer Zümrüt Aydınoğlu and Assistant Professor Tilbe Gökşun Yörik receive the TÜBA GEBİP Outstanding Young Scientists Award (BAGEP).