

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

2022-2027

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INTRODUCTION

In general, within the Albanian community in Kosovo during last two decades, women increased their share of employment in range of occupations, particularly in the traditional female occupations such as in the education and health sector but also in the more male-dominated managerial occupations. Side by side with this shift in range of occupations, however, is a continuing high value placed on the role of equal treatment as a driving factor in rising female employment levels over the same period.

“Universum” College recognizes the fact that women are still underrepresented in leadership and decision making and based on this fact it has identified gender mainstreaming as a key approach for addressing gender equality and the empowerment of women in all decision-makings, education, research, and innovation to enable women to reach their full potential. According to the Council of Europe requirements on gender mainstreaming, our institution understands the importance of the (re)organization, improvement, development, and evaluation of its internal policy, so that a gender equality perspective and attention to the goal of gender equality is incorporated in all policies and activities at all levels and at all stages. Hence, the goal is to ensure that all staff understand the importance of gender issues in relation to their work and understand the connections between education and other societal sectors in building better capacities within individual, institutional and organizational level.

“Universum” College aims to have a work-life balance as a state of equilibrium where all members equally prioritize the demands of their careers and the demands of the personal life. Although increased responsibilities at work or home, working longer hours and working hard might have some benefits in the short term, we as an institution are concerned for the long-term consequences of “produce and move faster” behaviors. In this regard, the first objective is to take care of basic needs of all our members through balance and harmony in the work life as core of the institution’s culture. The target is community within the institution.

The third objective is to improve the representation of women on Committees and managerial positions at “Universum” College because aims to improve the quality of the future decision-

making. The Executive Managerial Office shall determine criteria on who should occupy such roles and draft competency and merit-based matrix. In addition, the appointments shall be made on merit.

The third objective of our institution is to become gender inclusive and give an opportunity to underrepresented candidates to grow in career. In preventing discrimination on gender bias during the hiring and selection process, we shall take precaution measures through amendments in our hiring process instruction and appointment of new Gender Equality Officer who will be in charge to investigate, search, and recommend the potential candidates to the recruiting team. The targets are new potential candidates seeking employment within “Universum” College.

As an education institution, we aim to achieve the fourth objective of the plan which is to include research on gender empowerment dimension in research and teaching. That shall be done in two directions. The first direction shall be managed by academic staff and researchers who shall develop a program curriculum that requires implementation of new research projects on identifying inequalities in career development and gender discrimination in Kosovo in terms of political, economic and innovation participation as well as an access to economic resources on annual biases. Whereas the second direction integrates the academic directors of all programs in coordination with the Research Coordinator and the Research Committee in developing research project themes for students to enhance gender awareness in institution with a focus on stereotypes and prejudices in gender issues and career development.

REAL FIGURES FROM “UNIVERSUM” COLLEGE GENDER PERSPECTIVE

The achievements of removing gender disparities do not imply radically new actions for our institution in providing access services to education and employment. Moreover, the efforts are commendable, and more efforts will be taken to empower women in decision-making and research to fully achieve and implement the objectives of our institution. Our institution extracts data from various gender dimensions on annual basis and real figures and inputs are made available to public from our office.

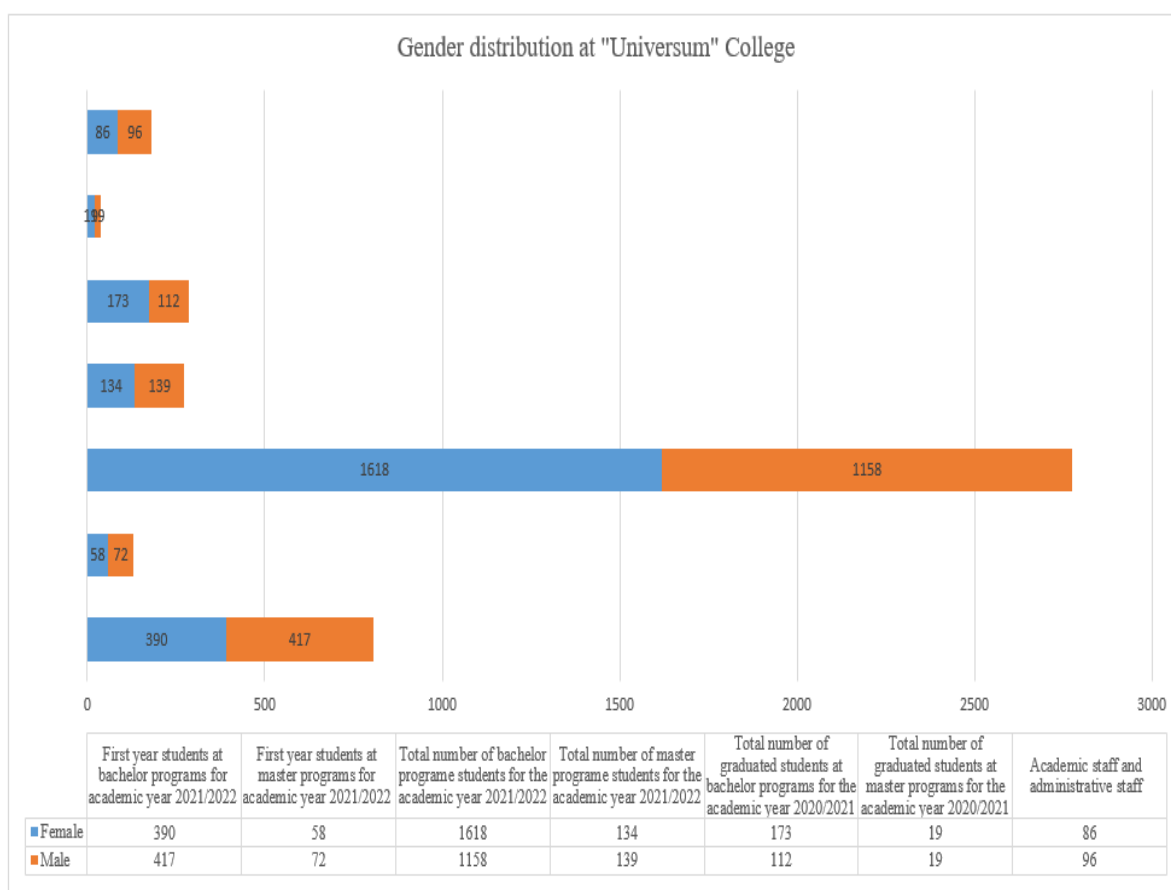


Figure 1: Data on gender distribution within “Universum” College

On the gendered nature of the “Universum” College, on the academic year 2021/2022 in our Bachelor program are enrolled 48% of females, and 52% of males. Whereas at the Master program at academic year 2021/2022 are enrolled 55% of females and 45% of

males. The total number of our bachelor program students based on the gender on the academic year 2021/2022 rates with 58% of females and 42% of males. In addition, the total number of our master program students for the academic year 2021/2022 based on the gender rates with 49% of females and 51 % of males. Hence, the total number of graduated students at bachelor programs for the academic year 2020/2021 based on gender rates 61% of females and 39% of males. The total number of graduated students at master programs for the academic year 2020/2021 based on gender rates 50% of females and 50 % of males. The gender structure of our academic staff and administrative staff is 47% females and 53% males.

FIRST OBJECTIVE: BALANCE AND HARMONY IN THE WORK LIFE - CORE OF THE INSTITUTION'S CULTURE

The first objective of the plan is to achieve realistic balance and harmony in the work life for all members through changes in our internal regulations, administrative instructions, manuals, and policies to create a well-balanced, healthy, happy, and holistic institution. Amendments shall take place by managerial level and will implement necessary policies and practices to ensure open and inclusive working environment for all members. Actions are listed below.

✓ Raising awareness on inclusive institutional culture

All members shall adopt a culture that fully embraces and leverages diversity and inclusion within institution following the below listed activities to be conducted by human resources office, academic staff, and public relation's office.

- Training on gender equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Roundtables on better understanding gender equality and women's leadership
- Publishing and promoting success stories and experiences of women in institution

- Communicating via institution's website, social media, print media and other traditional media the role of the inclusive culture

✓ **Employee engagement**

All members involved in, enthusiastic and committed to their work shall be equally entitled to the following:

- Friendly working environment
- Two way open and transparent communication with coworkers and students
- Mutual trust and respect
- Supporting financially the career advancements and development of staff
- Rewards (paid family holidays, position advancement) and price loudly

✓ **Package of employee leaves**

All members shall be entitled to the following leaves as per their requirements:

- Annual leave
- Paternity leave
- Maternity leave
- Paid sick leave
- Extended leave up to six months without pay

✓ **Flexible working hours and/or remote work**

All members having a particular need for special working arrangements (e.g., having children to take to school) and unforeseen conditions (e.g., sick family member for a prolonged time) shall be equally entitled to coordinate their mode of conduct and working schedule with their first supervisors and Office of Human Resources concerning the following:

- Working hours flexibility schedule
- Choice of working remotely

✓ **Recreational activities**

All staff is entitled to the following opportunities:

- Paid weekend trips to regional countries
- Day visits to historical cities, places, museums
- Free tickets to theater, musical festivals, exhibitions
- Free Yoga
- Free swimming classes in campus
- Free foreign languages courses in campus

SECOND OBJECTIVE: IMPROVING GENDER BALANCE IN DECISION MAKING

“Universum” College bases its success on the hard work of women and shall continue to improve the representation of women on Committees and managerial positions because aims to improve the quality of the future decision-making. This is the second objective, and the Executive Managerial Office agrees that improving the managerial roles is good for the performance and productivity of the institution. This Office shall determine criteria on who should occupy such roles. In addition, the appointments shall be made on merit.

✓ **Filling decision making roles**

The targets are interested candidates in decision-making roles. Actions include the following:

- Identifying decision-making positions
- Drafting detailed job description
- Drafting detailed competency and merit-based evaluation matrix
- Announcing job vacancy posts on official website of the institution as well as other external medias
- Selecting and interviewing candidates
- Fair selection of candidate and announcement of filled position

THIRD OBJECTIVE: GENDER INCLUSION AND GROWTH IN CAREER

The third objective of our institution is to become gender inclusive and give an opportunity to underrepresented candidates to grow in career. In preventing discrimination on gender bias during the hiring and selection process, we shall take precaution measures through amendments in our hiring process instruction. Favoring a candidate due to gender prejudice is a very common practice in the country and that has led many women to withdrawal and isolation. This phenomenon affects sadly hiring process in many institutions and we strongly fight such practices. The Human Resources Office at “Universum” College shall incorporate new articles to existing governing regulations and instructions on gender inclusion and career development. To increase motivation of valuable candidates from underrepresented gender segments, we shall recruit a Gender Equality Officer who will be in charge to investigate, search, and recommend the potential candidates to the recruiting team. The Gender Equality Officer will be in charge to make updates and modification to all internal regulations, manuals, guidelines, contracts in terms of gender equality.

✓ **Transparent recruitment process**

The targets are new potential candidates seeking employment within “Universum” College.

- Amendments to Recruitment Instruction by adding article on gender equality
- Training to interviewing staff on gender equality and preparations for undertaking nondiscriminatory interviews with interested applicants
- Advertisements on job vacancies must include the article on gender equality and invite underrepresented representative to apply
- Gender balanced selection and evaluation committee
- Recruitment of the Gender Equality Officer based on competency
- Networking hiring events

FOURTH OBJECTIVE: GENDER EMPOWERMENT DIMENSION IN RESEARCH AND TEACHING

The fourth objective of the plan is to include research on gender empowerment dimension in research and teaching. That shall be done in two directions.

1. The first direction integrates the academic directors of all programs in coordination with the Research Coordinator and the Research Committee in developing new research project themes for academic staff to identify inequalities in career development and gender discrimination in Kosovo in terms of political, economic and innovation participation as well as an access to economic resources on annual biases. That shall be a consisting part of the curriculum and the research shall be conducted individually by a researcher or by a group of researchers within institution. Collaboration in our research projects with other individual research partners or institutions is possible after an issuance of approval by the Research Coordinator.

2. The second direction integrates the academic directors of all programs in coordination with the Research Coordinator and the Research Committee in developing research project themes for students to enhance gender awareness in institution with a focus on stereotypes and prejudices in gender issues and career development. That shall be a consisting part of the curriculum and the research shall be conducted individually by a student or in a teamwork depending on the nature and complexity of the research as deemed appropriate by the mentor/professor. The target audience of this project are mainly students attending bachelor and Master programs at the Department of Political Science, the Department of Business and Administration, the Department of Justice, the Department of Nursing, the Department of Computer Science, and any other group of interest from our community.

✓ **Field research on gender empowerment**

The target audience of such research projects are “Universum” College community and any interested external party. Activities shall include the following:

- Training on qualitative and quantitative methods
- Workshop on developing gender indicators to be measured and applied
- Workshop on identifying gender gaps and defining what to measure
- Publishing of research papers and reports in credible journals or in chapter books
- Internal and external discussion forums on research findings

✓ **Representation of women as a theme in research projects**

The target audience are students and activities by “Universum” College shall include the following:

- Trainings to students on gender imbalances in the country and the importance of conducting research in this field

- Training on research methodology (modes of research, quantitative methods, qualitative methods, importance of interview and focus group, process of research design, data collection, data analysis and drawing conclusions)
- Various research themes to be conducted by students on topics such as women and their career path, women in entrepreneurship, urban and rural differences of gender employment, or women in politics.
- Communicating results of student's research to broader audiences outside the institution via publication, blogs, social media, or any other traditional media