



OE e-bulletin

Open Education

■ NUMBER: 15

■ DATE: APRIL 2016

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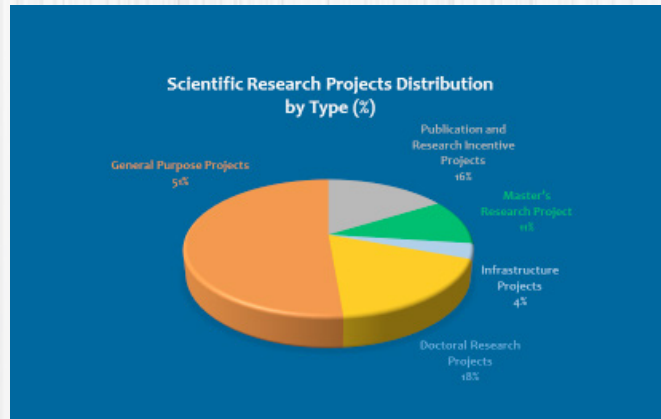
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH PROJECTS DISTRIBUTION BY YEAR IN THE OPEN EDUCATION SYSTEM

■ Res. Asst. Gökhan ÖNDER

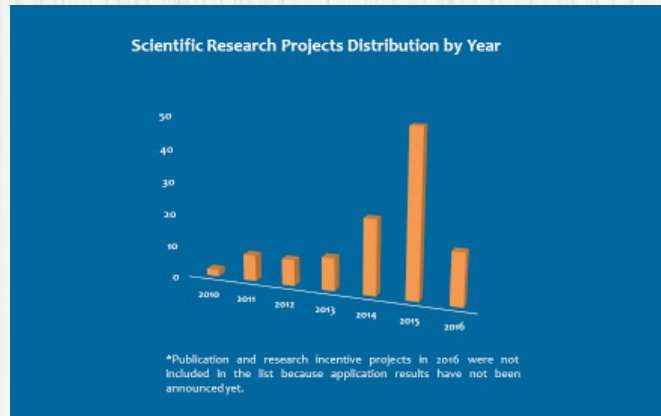
The number of scientific research projects developed in the Open Education System, i.e. Faculties of Open Education, Economics, and Business Administration, has considerably increased in recent years. The number of projects submitted to the Projects Office by three faculties was 50 in 2015. The number of project applications was 16 in the first four months of 2016. With the announcement of the results of publication and research incentive projects and further applications in the coming months, the number of projects in 2016 is expected to exceed the number in 2015. The distribution of project applications by type shows that 51% were general-purpose projects, 18% doctoral research projects, 16% publication and research incentive projects, 11% Master's research projects, and 4% infrastructure projects. 51% general-purpose projects, 18% doctoral research projects, 16% publication and research incentive projects, 11% Master's research projects, and 4% infrastructure projects

* Publication and research incentive projects in 2016 were not included in the list because application results have not been announced yet.

Scientific Research Projects Distribution by Type (%)



Scientific Research Projects Distribution by Year



Scientific Research Projects Distribution by Year

ANADOLU UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

■ Res. Asst. Çağlar KARADUMAN



University life is more than studying and taking examinations. Universities offer an opportunity for socialization and interaction. All infrastructure and services in the Open Education System take advantage of the most advanced technologies that maximize interaction. Another example is the new Alumni Association platform. In this issue of the e-Bulletin, we had an interview with Asst. Prof. Dr. Mehmet FIRAT about the Alumni Association.

Can you please introduce yourself, Dr. Firat?

I am a faculty member and deputy head of the Department of Distance Education in the Faculty of Open Education at Anadolu University. I am a member of the governing body of Alumni Association. Since 2009, I manage the Alumni Association websites of the Faculties of Economics, Business Administration, and Open Education in the Open Education System.

What is the place of the Alumni Association in Anadolu University and Open Education System?

There is a need to design and manage all activities related to graduates meticulously and elaborately to maintain the prestige of being an Anadolu University alumni. This is much more important for universities like Anadolu, which is one of the largest higher-education institutions in the world in terms of student number. We have to plan and support rigorously the activities and assistance services as well as identity and belonging issues related to the alumni. Anadolu University Alumni Association has been quite active for one year. We work cooperatively and harmoniously with the Alumni Association of our University. One of the latest developments is that a new platform was int-

roduced for the websites of Open Education Alumni Association. In the first place, we completed the website of Open Education Faculty Alumni Association. Further efforts have been made to design the Alumni Association websites of the Faculty of Economics and Faculty of Business Administration.

As you know, learning styles and university perception of students and graduates in the Open Education System are different from those of campus-based students. Our students graduate as individuals that adopt self-study principles and are committed to lifelong learning. With the support of information and communication technologies, the Open Education System endeavors to provide its graduates and students with interactive and flexible environments. To achieve this, using modern information and communication technologies, we offer alumni services in a wide range of platforms and environments, from social media to career development applications, and from e-certificate programs to lifelong learning systems. In this respect, we believe that it is of particular importance to update Alumni Association websites in view of contemporary needs and conditions.

Açıköğretim Sistemi

What are the recent innovations and changes in the Alumni Association?

Today, there is a need to revise and update infrastructures constantly because of the rapidly developing technology. That is why we felt the need to renew Alumni Association websites although we had updated them a couple of years ago. The older versions had a traditional interface that did not allow interaction. We now renew Alumni Association websites of all three faculties in the Open Education System to provide a modern interface based on interactive design. The Faculty of Open Education alumni now have access to the system at aof.mezun.anadolu.edu.tr.

How can graduates use the new website?

Graduates log in to the system with their identity information on the website of Anadolu University Alumni Association. After logging in, they can update information in their account. Graduates can search for fellow graduates by name, family name or department. In addition to this, Anadolu University Alumni Association website provides a wide range of information that is of interest to the alumni.

We created a space that all alumni of the Open Education System can use. Students and graduates submit their requests through a form and by e-mail. The original versions of Open Education e-Bulletin are posted on Alumni Association website to ensure that both students and graduates are kept informed of events and developments in the Open Education System, and that we receive their suggestions and feedback. The website further provides information on the Career Club, lifelong learning, second university (admission without entrance examination) chance, e-certificate programs, and announcements. Thus, both students and graduates are kept up to date about the latest developments in the Open Education System and share their opinions with us. We now work on new projects. Using up-to-date technologies, particularly video-based applications, we plan to enable our graduates to share their experience with other graduates and students.

Graduates of the Open Education System are of heterogeneous nature. Among our graduates are parli-

amentary members, governors, mayors, rectors, deans, faculty members, retired people, individuals that have four or more degrees, individuals with disabilities, immigrants, housewives, disadvantaged individuals, and a broad spectrum of human profiles that wish to take advantage of distance education opportunity. This enables us to get feedback from groups with different backgrounds. Such feedback ensures us to respond more effectively to changing and diversifying student needs, and contributes to strong and flexible structure of the Open Education System.

How do you define the position of Open Education System and the new Alumni Association platform?

Anadolu University is a pioneering institution in open education, and serves as a role model for other institutions. Our main goal is to carry out creative, solution-oriented and pioneering work. In the world, there is a limited number of institutions with so many graduates. Thus, the number of institutions with the experience of an Alumni Association working with such a great number of graduates is quite limited. What we do for and with our graduates constitutes a model for other open education institutions. We thus play a leading role in Turkey and in the world.

NEW PLANS AND PROJECTS OF THE TEST RESEARCH UNIT

■ Asst. Prof. Dr. Didem PAŞAOĞLU

We had interviews about assessment-related innovations in the Open Education System of Anadolu University with Asst. Prof. Dr. Nejdet KARADAĞ, head of the Test Research Unit, and Asst. Prof. Dr. Murat AKYILDIZ from the R&D Unit for Evaluation and Assessment. We would like to thank them for their time and contribution.



Dr. Karadağ, can you please inform us about the innovations planned in the Test Research Unit in the near future?

Since last September, we held seminars for textbook editors about changes in the evaluation and assessment system, as well as question construction at the metacognitive level and examination and interpretation of item analyses. The purpose of these seminars was to improve the quality of questions. Examples were used in seminars to instruct editors about question writing. We received significant feedback about item analyses. In seminars, we informed editors on how to interpret such analyses.

The goal of developing questions that assess higher-order thinking skills is to be able to distinguish students studying regularly from the students that start getting prepared for examinations one week or ten days prior to the examination date, and thus to provide advantages for students with inquisitive and analytical thinking skills. We aspire to ensure that students contemplate on how they can build upon and use the knowledge they acquire, rather than recalling information in textbooks. In this respect, we offered seminars to editors. In the fall and spring semesters of 2015-2016 academic year, we held 14 seminars for editors. Now we are making an evaluation of these sessions. We evaluate whether editors found these seminars useful. We got feedback from 133 editors that participated in

seminars in the fall semester. We added an open-ended question, asking what could be done to improve the seminars. One of the suggestions of editors was that we should provide sample questions for each field of study. In this line, we asked our colleagues to construct sample questions for each field of study. After the questions are constructed, we plan to make watch and learn videos for the questions. For instance, in the field of accounting, we are going to provide sample questions at the metacognitive level to test whether students comprehended a topic. Short watch and learn videos will be made for each field to enable editors and authors to construct questions at the metacognitive level. In this respect, we will update the test preparation guide. QR codes will be embedded into videos to provide access through mobile devices.

We have some plans for students, as well as editors. One of these plans is related to report cards. Students can now see their course success on normal distribution curves after the examination. We plan to provide more details in report cards. We will help students go through a more effective learning process, providing them feedback on subjects and topics they fail.



Asst. Prof. Dr. Nejdet KARADAĞ



Asst. Prof. Dr. Murat AKYILDIZ

Are there any changes in exam question formats?

We now include fill-in-the-blanks and matching questions in end-of-chapter tests. The examinations also include fill-in-the-blanks and matching questions; yet, they are in multiple-choice format. To ensure objective evaluation of open-ended questions in examinations, we need time. We plan to ask open-ended questions in examinations, but not in the short term. However, we are working on it.

Within the frame of accreditation process, we have plans related to the programs in Philosophy, Turkish Language and Literature, Sociology, and History. We need to offer elective courses in order to have these programs accredited. In this respect, we work on offering electives with program coordinators and textbook authors. We will enable students in these programs to elect courses already offered in the Open Education System. This will play a guiding role for the entire system.

Dr. Akyıldız, can you please inform us about novel practices related to evaluation and assessment?

Some of our students are faced with difficulties, arising from 1-3 and 2-4 barrier in the assessment system. In order to eliminate this problem, we conduct some simulation studies. We try to determine the courses in which students frequently have a problem, and discuss the benefits of offering these courses in two separate semesters. This is only a projection at the moment. We will share with you developments and results related to this practice soon. Students cannot take third-year courses if they fail courses in the first year. Data shows that there is a number of students that are barred by

1-3 restriction. Some of these students become passive students when they are faced with this problem, and resume their studies in the appropriate semester. They found such a solution, and they are not few in number. Thus, we need to make a strategic decision, and figure out how to reduce the number of such students. We detected the first 10-20 courses, and will submit the list to the Dean's Office soon. We plan to offer 10-15 courses that students fail frequently

in two semesters, not only in one semester. We try to decide on these courses, going through the data of last five years.

We have some new projects. One of our plans is to hold electronic examinations. We wish to launch an examination system with fewer questions, enable students to take the examination whenever they want. Different questions will be asked to each student. Student's success level will be taken into account in preparing questions.

We aspire to establish a separate psychometrics institute for Test Research Unit and R&D Department of Test Research Unit. This institute will evaluate and assess various test formats, and perform online measurements. However, these are long-term projects.

With regard to designing quality questions, the faculty can hold workshops. We plan to organize question-writing seminars of 3-4 hours at weekends or on weekdays.

We also plan to carry out a study on why students preferred the program in which they study. We will develop the scales and conduct the study soon.

Thank you very much. Is there anything else you want to add?

No, thank you very much.