

## **FIRST PRIZE FROM PINAR INSTITUTE TO IGU DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS HEAD ASSOC. PROF. HATICE MERVE BAYRAM**

Assoc. Prof. Hatice Merve Bayram, Head of the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics at Istanbul Gelisim University (IGU) Faculty of Health Sciences, has been awarded First Prize within the scope of the 2025 Scientific Article Awards of the Pinar Institute. The Pinar Institute encourages high-quality studies that contribute to science and society in the fields of sustainable food, health, nutrition, and agriculture through these awards.

### **A STUDY ADDING VALUE TO SCIENCE, SOCIETY, AND PRACTICE**

The Pinar Institute evaluates scientific articles published in peer-reviewed journals between 2021 and 2024 based on criteria such as contribution to science, social benefit, and applicability. While aiming to support research and education that contribute to the development of a healthy society, the Institute also seeks to encourage young researchers. The jury reviewed Assoc. Prof. Hatice Merve Bayram's work in line with these criteria and deemed it worthy of the first prize.

**"AN ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT THAT MAKES ONE FEEL SAFE NOT ONLY PROFESSIONALLY  
BUT ALSO HUMANLY"**

"This study, which I conducted as part of my doctoral thesis process at Marmara University, represents an important stage in my academic journey. Continuing this process at Istanbul Gelisim University has enabled me to produce work in an environment where I feel supported and secure not only professionally but also on a human level. The encouraging approach of my institution, its strong culture of solidarity, and its qualified academic sharing atmosphere have been an important source of motivation and strength in the patient maturation of my study and its transformation into a scientific publication. I would like to express my sincere thanks to my institution, which contributed to and supported me at every stage of this process."

## THE EFFECTS OF CORNELIAN CHERRY ON HEALTH EXAMINED WITH SCIENTIFIC METHODS

The award-winning article titled “Effects of *Cornus mas* L. on anthropometric and biochemical parameters among metabolic associated fatty liver disease patients: A randomized clinical trial,” published in the Journal of Ethnopharmacology, which is indexed in SCIE and ranked in the Q1 category, scientifically examines the effects of the traditionally consumed cornelian cherry (*Cornus mas* L.) fruit on anthropometric and biochemical parameters in individuals with metabolic dysfunction–associated fatty liver disease, a condition common in society.

## A NUTRITION-BASED SOLUTION TO A SILENT AND WIDESPREAD DISEASE

Today, there is no definitive drug treatment for metabolic dysfunction–associated fatty liver disease, which affects nearly one in every two adults in Türkiye. Experts emphasize that the main approach is based on nutrition and lifestyle changes. In this study, the effects of using cornelian cherry alongside nutritional therapy or alone on body measurements and biochemical parameters were examined in detail.

## CLINICAL RESEARCH WITH FIVE DIFFERENT GROUPS

The research was conducted across five different groups:

Individuals receiving diet therapy and consuming cornelian cherry

Individuals receiving only diet therapy

Individuals consuming only cornelian cherry

A group receiving no intervention

A healthy control group

The research team provided cornelian cherry to participants in lyophilized powder form at a standardized dose and closely monitored possible side effects throughout the process. At the end of the eight-week intervention, the results revealed noteworthy findings.

The study results showed reductions in body weight, waist circumference, and body fat percentage in the groups consuming cornelian cherry and/or following a diet. Significant improvements were observed in blood glucose, insulin resistance, and cholesterol levels. Liver enzyme levels decreased, and even in the group consuming only cornelian cherry, blood glucose control improved. In contrast, the group receiving no intervention showed negative changes in many parameters.

#### IGU'S CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC HEALTH AND SUSTAINABLE NUTRITION

This research, which brought Assoc. Prof. Hatice Merve Bayram first prize, was highly appreciated by the jury due to its scientific evaluation of a local and traditional food, its presentation of a non-pharmacological and practical nutritional approach, its potential contribution to public health, and its sustainable nutrition perspective.

In these respects, the study demonstrates strong alignment with the Pinar Institute's goals of a healthy society and sustainable food systems, while once again highlighting Istanbul Gelisim University's active role in scientific production.

#### VISIT FROM ISTANBUL GELISIM UNIVERSITY TO ISTANBUL MEDENİYET UNIVERSITY

Istanbul Gelisim University Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Serdar Egeli and Director of the Graduate Education Institute Prof. İzzet Gümüş visited Istanbul Medeniyet University with the aim of strengthening inter-university cooperation. Within the scope of the visit, the delegation met with Istanbul Medeniyet University Rector Prof. Gülfettin Çelik and conducted comprehensive evaluations on areas of mutual development in higher education.

#### QUALITY-ORIENTED COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION DISCUSSED

During the meeting, strategic collaborations that could be established between higher education institutions were among the priority agenda items. The parties exchanged views on potential collaborations aimed at increasing academic quality, developing graduate education programs, encouraging interdisciplinary studies, and enhancing academic productivity.

## A SHARED VISION IN LINE WITH CHANGING HIGHER EDUCATION DYNAMICS

The meeting also addressed the responsibilities undertaken by universities within the framework of structural transformations in higher education, digitalization, internationalization, and student-centered education models. In this context, comprehensive discussions were held on how to develop more qualified, sustainable, and contemporary education and training environments for students and academic staff.

## ISTANBUL GELISIM UNIVERSITY'S COLLABORATION-ORIENTED ACADEMIC APPROACH

This visit by Istanbul Gelisim University to Istanbul Medeniyet University once again highlighted the importance of inter-university dialogue and collective wisdom for the future of higher education. Istanbul Gelisim University continues its efforts to enhance quality in higher education with an innovative, development-oriented academic approach that is open to cooperation at both national and international levels. Through its strong relationships with partner universities, its vision supporting academic productivity, and its institutional collaborations, IGU continues to contribute to the higher education ecosystem.

## SECTOR COLLABORATION MEETING IN TOURISM AND GASTRONOMY FROM ISTANBUL GELISIM UNIVERSITY

Istanbul Gelisim University Secretary General Assoc. Prof. Serdar Egeli and Faculty of Applied Sciences Asst. Prof. Muzaffer Çakmak visited the Renaissance Polat Istanbul Hotel within the scope of university–industry collaboration efforts. During the meeting, they met with Hotel Manager Elif Denктаşı and Executive Chef Arif Madakbaş to discuss potential areas of cooperation. As part of the visit, discussions focused on strengthening education–industry integration in the fields of tourism, accommodation, and gastronomy. Collaboration models based on bringing together the university's academic knowledge with the practical experience of the sector were emphasized.

## **PRACTICAL TRAINING AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS**

The meetings also addressed topics such as practical training opportunities, internship processes, and joint projects that would support students in gaining sectoral experience. The parties evaluated collaboration areas that would enhance students' professional competencies and enable them to enter the sector as more well-equipped individuals.

## **AN ACADEMIC AND INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE ON THE FUTURE OF TURKISH CUISINE**

The future of Turkish cuisine, global trends in gastronomy, and increasing the international visibility of local culinary culture were also discussed. It was emphasized that preserving the unique values of traditional Turkish cuisine while supporting them with modern presentation techniques would make significant contributions to both the tourism sector and gastronomy education. In this context, it was stated that collaborations bringing together academic knowledge and industry experience would play a decisive role in the sustainable development of Turkish cuisine.

## **UNIVERSITY–INDUSTRY COLLABORATION EFFORTS CONTINUE**

Istanbul Gelisim University continues to strengthen its practice-oriented education approach and contribute to students' career development by meeting with industry representatives in various fields as part of its ongoing university–industry collaboration efforts.

## **INTERNATIONAL CHESS SUCCESS BY AN ISTANBUL GELISIM UNIVERSITY STUDENT**

The FIDE Women's World Team Chess Championship, held in November 2025 in Linares, Spain, stood out as one of the most prestigious and highest-level events in the world at the women's national team level. Competing against the strongest national teams, including world and Olympic champion countries, the Azerbaijan Women's National Chess Team featuring Istanbul Gelisim University student Khanim Balajayeva achieved a remarkable success by finishing as world runners-up.

## SILVER MEDAL AMONG STRONG RIVALS

Alongside Istanbul Gelisim University student Khanim Balajayeva, the Azerbaijan National Team consisting of Ulviyya Fataliyeva, Govhar Beydullayeva, Gulnar Mammadova, and Ayan Allahverdiyeva attracted attention with its high performance, disciplined style of play, and effective teamwork throughout the tournament. Facing the undefeated FIDE team in the final, the Azerbaijani players completed the championship with a silver medal. This result represents the highest achievement in the history of the Azerbaijan Women's National Chess Team at the World Championship level.

## FULL SUPPORT FROM IGU FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Umedjon Haitmurodov, Director of the International Student Office at Istanbul Gelisim University, emphasized that IGU supports its students not only academically but also in sports and cultural fields, stating:

“As Istanbul Gelisim University, we take pride not only in our students’ academic achievements but also in their sporting and cultural successes on the international stage. We will continue to provide a supportive educational environment so that our students can realize their potential in every field.”

## NEXT GOAL: AZERBAIJAN CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

Khanim Balajayeva, who has been a long-standing member of the Azerbaijan Women's National Chess Team, played an active role in achieving the world runner-up title in Linares. The successful athlete emphasized that this achievement is the result of many years of disciplined work, both individually and as a team.

The national athlete will next compete in the Azerbaijan Chess Championship, one of the country's strongest and most prestigious chess events. The championship will be held in Baku between February 7 and 22.

## IGU STANDS OUT WITH INTERNATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Istanbul Gelisim University has once again demonstrated its global vision and commitment to high-quality education through the international achievements of its students. By supporting students in academia, sports, and the arts, IGU continues to contribute to globally recognized successes.

## **IS THE FEBRUARY BREAK AN OPPORTUNITY OR A RISK FOR YKS CANDIDATES? ASSESSMENT BY IGU EXPERT PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELOR ELIF UNAL**

For students preparing for the YKS, the February break is seen as an important threshold that can shape the course of the preparation process, rather than just a short break. Stating that this period can offer significant academic and psychological gains if managed correctly, Istanbul Gelisim University Expert Psychological Counselor Elif Ünal warns that unconscious use of the break may also lead to a loss of motivation.

**“THE FEBRUARY BREAK IS A STOP WHERE STUDENTS CAN OBSERVE THEMSELVES”**

Elif Ünal notes that by February, students are faced with an intense pace, an increasing number of mock exams, and exam anxiety, emphasizing that this process often makes unnoticed problems more visible. Highlighting the critical psychological function of the break, Ünal states:

**“This period offers an important opportunity for students to pause and evaluate themselves. Learning gaps, mental fatigue, and attention difficulties can be recognized more clearly during the February break.”**

## **ADVANTAGE OR DISADVANTAGE? THE ANSWER LIES IN PLANNING**

Ünal emphasizes that it is difficult to make a definite distinction as to whether the February break is an advantage or a disadvantage, noting that the determining factor is the student’s approach:

“Spending the break completely disconnected from studying can cause adaptation problems. On the other hand, turning the break into an intense and pressuring program can lead to burnout. The healthiest approach is to move forward with a controlled and realistic plan.”

#### “AWARENESS SHOULD COME BEFORE SCORE IMPROVEMENT”

Pointing out that this period offers an important opportunity to identify shortcomings, Ünal stresses that the focus should be on quality rather than quantity:

“For a student, understanding why and where mistakes are made is more valuable than an immediate increase in scores. This awareness reduces exam anxiety while strengthening self-confidence.”

Ünal also underlines that mock exam results should be viewed not with a judgmental perspective but as a constructive evaluation tool, noting that mistakes are a natural part of the learning process.

#### SLEEP, ROUTINE, AND REALISTIC GOALS ARE THE KEYS TO SUCCESS

Ünal states that disruption of sleep patterns during the break significantly reduces attention and learning capacity, adding that maintaining biological rhythms makes returning to the school routine easier.

She also notes that setting unrealistic goals creates pressure on students and offers the following assessment:

“Small, clear, and measurable goals strengthen a student’s sense of control. This, in turn, supports self-confidence and motivation.”

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE IS NOT ONLY FOR THE YKS

Emphasizing that the February break offers important gains not only academically but also in terms of emotional resilience, Ünal states that the self-awareness and time management skills gained during this period form a strong foundation for university life as well.





## PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS FROM ISTANBUL GELISIM UNIVERSITY

Istanbul Gelisim University stands out with its approach that values students' psychological development as much as their academic success. With its expert psychological counseling staff and student-oriented support services, IGU continues to contribute to young people experiencing a healthy, conscious, and sustainable preparation process during the exam period.

Istanbul Gelisim University Expert Psychological Counselor Elif Ünal concludes that a well-planned February break can be not just a pause, but a powerful turning point for YKS candidates.