	Autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University	
NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY	**Approving body:**	Academic Council
Institutional Research (IR) Strategy of the autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University		
Date of approval:	06.03.2019	**Date of entering into force**	*06.03.2019*
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Bylaw classification:	Academic Activities	
Initiator:	Felly Chiteng Kot, Head of Institutional Research (Office of the Provost)	
Related documents	Not available	

1. Context and Rationale for IR Expansion

1. For the past four years, the Institutional Research (hereinafter – IR) has initiated various research and analytical projects to support decision making and promote thoughtful/data-driven conversations at autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University (hereinafter – NU). IR has implemented new surveys to supplement existing data sources, created clean longitudinal datasets, and initiated a series of national workshops.

2. The time has come to build on this achievement and strengthen/expand IR capacity at NU. Three key factors (along with the SWOT analysis in Appendix 1 to the Strategy) led to the development of this strategy:

1) The Institutional Evaluation Program (IEP) recommended that NU expands its Quality Framework to administration/governance, student services and research. It also recommended that NU build up the IR unit to "analyse information within [this] coherent quality enhancement strategy."[1]

2) In a recent report on higher education in Kazakhstan, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (hereinafter – the "OECD") observed "Significant gaps in the availability and use of data inhibit evidence-based and improvement-oriented policy formation"[2] and highlighted the need for "reliable long-term data" to inform decision making and evaluation.[3]

3) There is a lack of a designated or "official" source responsible for the dissemination of NU statistics. Multiple units produce statistics and implement surveys without coordination. Such an approach increases the risk of data inconsistency and redundancy.

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[1] See IEP recommendations 8 and 10.
[2] See OECD report, *Higher Education in Kazakhstan 2017* (p. 22).
[3] See OECD report, *Higher Education in Kazakhstan 2017* (p. 174).

3. Strengthening and expanding IR capacity will result in a more comprehensive assessment of NU's institutional effectiveness (rationale #1), help ensure the quality and relevance of the data available to internal and external stakeholders (rationale #3), and better position NU as the leader in the area of institutional research at the national level (rationale #2; also see NU's strategic goal #1). This strategy identifies IR's mission, vision, objective, strategic priorities, duties/functions, audience and quality assurance/enhancement approach.

2. Mission

4. The primary mission of IR is to collect and analyze data, and disseminate information and insights to support planning, policy formation, decision making, and continuous improvement at NU.

5. Its secondary mission is to provide education and training to (1) foster a data-driven culture at NU and (2) advance institutional research practice in Kazakhstan.

3. Vision

6. IR's vision is to become a center of excellence that produces actionable intelligence for NU stakeholders and builds analytical capacity across the organization.

7. To this end, IR will (1) be transformed into NU Institutional Research and Analytics (IRA), (2) become the designated source for official NU statistics, and (3) regulate survey administration as well as oversee the design and implementation of strategic surveys at NU.

4. Objective

8. IRA's main objective is to provide relevant, reliable, digestible, and timely data and analyses that address issues of strategic importance to NU.

5. Strategic Priorities

9. IRA will pursue four strategic priorities:
1)   Produce data, information and insights to support evidence-based decision making at NU;
2)   Foster an analytical/data-driven culture at NU;
3)   Advance institutional research practice in Kazakhstan;
4)   Contribute to knowledge production on higher education in Kazakhstan.
Appendix 2 to the Strategy includes examples of activities and mechanisms for achieving these strategic priorities.

6. Key Duties and Functions

10. IRA will have five main duties and functions:

1)   Identify information needs;
2)   Collect data;
3)   Analyze data;
4)   Disseminate information and insights; and
5)   Educate stakeholders.

Appendix 3 to the Strategy identifies the current scope and potential areas of expansion in relation to duties/functions and strategic priorities.

7. Target Decision Makers and Consumers of IR Data/Information

11. IRA will serve all NU "decision-makers", i.e., stakeholders who play a key role in NU's achievement of its mission:
1)   senior leaders/administrators;
2)   faculty members;
3)   administrative staff;
4)   students.

Appendix 4 to the Strategy provides examples of the type of support to be provided to each category of decision makers.

8. Structure

12. IRA will be part of the Office of the Provost. IRA activities will be organized around five areas:
1)   Analytical support for routine and ad hoc projects;
2)   Survey coordination: designing and implementing strategic surveys; developing and implementing policies and procedures to regulate the administration of surveys at NU;
3)   Internal and external data reporting: reporting of official NU statistics internally and externally;
4)   Advanced research projects: producing empirical research papers (on issues of interest to NU) for conferences and publication;
5)   Education and Training: providing training internally (staff, students, and faculty) and externally (other Kazakhstani Universities) on institutional research related issues.

Appendix 5 depicts the IRA structure and identifies the human resources needed to implement this strategy.

9. Quality Assurance and Enhancement

13. IRA will abide by the standards of practice of the Association for Institutional Research (AIR) and will maintain active AIR membership annually.
14. Its staff will continuously engage in professional development by participating in mandatory as well as optional activities.

15. IRA will engage in an internal and informal self-assessment every year and will conduct a formal review every 3 to 5 years.

Appendix 1
to the Institutional Research Strategy of the autonomous
organization of education Nazarbayev University

Appendix 1. SWOT Analysis

Strengths (top 3)	*Weaknesses (top 3)*
1) Qualified staff with expertise in quantitative and qualitative research methods 2) Ability to synthetize and present complex analyses into a digestible form 3) IR studies generally well received by the campus community	1) Narrow focus on academic quality, in part due to limited human resources 2) Limited coordination between IR and other units involved in data management 3) IR's lack of direct access to University databases; reliance on other units for raw data
Opportunities (top 3)	*Threats (top 3)*
1) Senior management support for IR capacity at NU 2) External evaluators' recognition of IR' contribution and recommendation that NU expand IR capacity 3) Strong interest from Kazakhstani universities to learn from NU's experience and expertise in IR	1) Lack of an integrated data management system at NU 2) Limited input from decision-makers (broadly) on the type of information/data needed for decision making 3) IR is a new concept and not an established profession in Kazakhstan. Hiring and retaining national staff with long-term commitment to IR is a challenge.

Appendix 2
to the Institutional Research Strategy of the autonomous
organization of education Nazarbayev University

Examples of Activities and Mechanisms for Achieving Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority	Focus	Key Activities	Mechanisms
1. *Produce data, information and insights to support evidence-based decision making*	Research and analytics	• Analysis of student performance, progression and experiences • Analysis of student support effectiveness • Analysis of governance/administrative effectiveness • Analysis of alumni perceptions/experiences • Dissemination of data and information	• Analysis of institutional data • Survey and qualitative research • Use a variety of mechanisms to disseminate data and information
2. *Foster an analytical/data-driven culture at NU*	Education	• Professional development for NU staff involved in data management and analytics • IR-related training for NU students	• Creation of the NU Analytical Talent Network (ATN)[4] • Design and delivery of data analytics workshops • Design and delivery of an IR-related graduate-level course • Student internship opportunities
3. *Advance IR practice in Kazakhstan*	Education and research	• Assessing analytics capacity at other Kazakhstani universities • Helping Kazakhstani universities develop and/or improve IR capacity	• Survey research • Workshops for Kazakhstani universities • Annual IR Forum for Kazakhstan

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[4] The ATN will serve as a professional development platform for NU staff (from different units) involved in data collection, management, analysis, and/or reporting. Data managers/analysts and relevant stakeholders from different units will meet periodically to learn from each other by sharing experiences, practices and resources. The ATN will also become a resource for implementing a number of analytical projects and will facilitate coordination between IRA and other units involved in data management and analytics.

| 4. | *Contribute to knowledge production on higher education in Kazakhstan* | Research | • Producing research briefs, publishable empirical studies, and conference papers | • Conference presentations and publications
• Join research with NU faculty |

Current IR Scope and Future Expansion

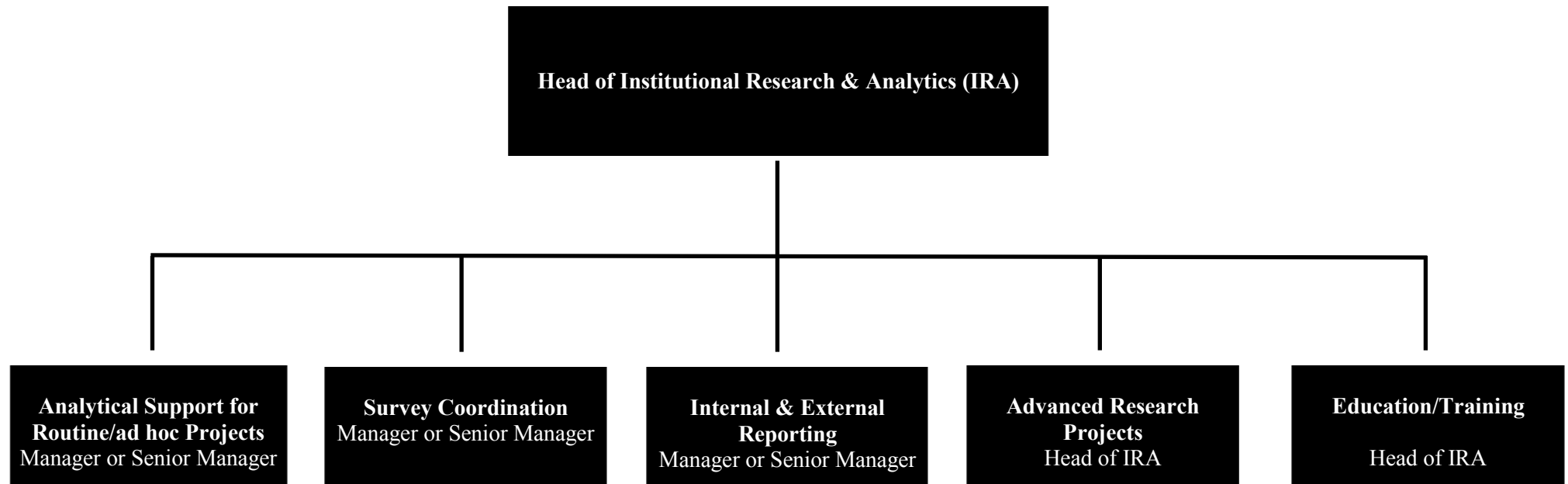| Functions	Current Scope	Potential Expansion	Strategic Priority
IDENTIFY, COLLECT & ANALYZE	• Student admission records • Student academic records • Entering Student Survey • First-Year Undergraduate Survey • Undergraduate Student Exit Survey	• First-Year Graduate Survey • Graduate Student Exit Survey • Socio-Economic Survey (NU applicants) • Student Support Service Effectiveness • Governance/Administrative Effectiveness Survey • Alumni Survey • Faculty research productivity studies	• Priority 1 • Priority 1 • Priority 1 • Priority 1 • Priority 1 • Priority 1 • Priority 1 • Priority 1 • Priority 1 • Priority 1, 3-4
DISSEMINATE	• Full Reports • Report Memos • Institutional Research Monthly-Friday Fact (IR-MFF) • Presentations • Empirical Research Papers	• Fact book / Data digest • Interactive Reports and dashboards • Joint research projects with faculty	• Priority 1 • Priority 1 • Priority 1 • Priority 1-4 • Priority 1, 3-4
EDUCATE	• IR workshops for KZ institutions	• Annual or biannual IR Forum for KZ institutions • NU Analytical Talent Network (ATN) • Data management/analytics workshops for NU staff • IR-related graduate course • Student internship opportunities	• Priority 3 • Priority 2 • Priority 2 • Priority 2-3 • Priority 2-3

Appendix 4
to the Institutional Research Strategy of the autonomous
organization of education Nazarbayev University

Examples of Decision-Making Areas and IR Support

Decision Makers	Decision Making Areas (Examples)	IR Support (Examples)
Senior leaders	Institutional planning and policy formation	Data, information, and insights to support planning, policy formation, and decision making (e.g., analysis of student, faculty, and staff perceptions/experiences; assessment of governance/administrative effectiveness)
Faculty members	Curricula, teaching, research, advising	Data, information, and insights to support curricular design and delivery, and assessment of student learning (e.g., grade distribution analyses; student perceptions and experiences)
Administrative staff	Policies, procedures, student support/success initiatives and structures	Data, information, and insights to support design, implementation, and improvement of policies, procedures, and student support structures (e.g., assessment of student support service effectiveness)
Students	Choice of educational pathways; compliance with institutional requirements; campus experience (academic and non-academic)	Data, information, and insights to educate students and inform their decision making on academic and non-academic matters (e.g., time management; factors that impact student success)

NU Institutional Research & Analytics[5] Organizational Chart

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                    │  Head of Institutional Research & Analytics   │
                    │                   (IRA)                       │
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| Analytical Support for Routine/ad hoc Projects Manager or Senior Manager | Survey Coordination Manager or Senior Manager | Internal & External Reporting Manager or Senior Manager | Advanced Research Projects Head of IRA | Education/Training Head of IRA |

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[5] IRA will not be a simple data repository or provider of statistics that describe the institution. In addition to a "data reporting" function, institutional research has a "research" dimension. IRA will (continue to) produce empirical research that examines issues of strategic interest to the NU community, through rigorous application of methods, tools, and theories of social science research. IRA will allow for an expansion of the research dimension (e.g., through collaborative research with faculty and graduate students) to not only produce evidence to support planning, policy formation and decision making at NU, but also contribute to knowledge production (particularly on higher education in Kazakhstan). A number of faculty members from Economics, Education and CPS have particularly expressed interest in collaborative research projects with Institutional Research.