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Starting new collaborations and taking a leading regional and national role in developing entrepreneurial education

HEInnovate is being used at Turan University in Kazakhstan to help the institution develop its role as a regional and national leader in developing the entrepreneurial agenda.

In 2016, a PhD student at Turan University found HEInnovate via an academic article while conducting research on entrepreneurial universities. After exploring the HEInnovate website, an ambitious project was outlined with the objective to provide input both to the primary PhD research and to the university to understand and monitor its position in entrepreneurialism and to find a way forward to build on its leadership ambition.

The first step was a presentation on HEInnovate to the Head of the Department, members of the Rector's office and management figures from other university departments, outlining the potential learning of HEInnovate for each structure.

The project quickly gained institutional support. The PhD student translated the self-assessment questionnaire into Russian and circulated it to a broad range of university stakeholders in January 2017, across all faculties and schools. The self-assessment exercise received over 100 responses with wide audience coverage, from students to faculty staff and senior management.

The self-assessment exercise was followed by a workshop facilitated by international experts at the university in June 2018, which received high attendance. Almost 40 individuals from across the institution and representatives of other regional and national universities were present to explore the findings of the self-assessment and the potential for collaboration among the institutions.

High participation was underpinned by the overarching culture of the university. The management of Turan University undertakes significant ongoing work on the development and transformation of the institution, extending from a passion for entrepreneurialism, and

feeding an openness among staff and stakeholders to participate in such exercises.

Nonetheless, there were some challenges to overcome in the project. These were due to cultural and domain norms, whereby some participants did not understand the specifics of the entrepreneurialism concept, which was new to them. These initial challenges were overcome by clear positioning of the HEInnovate exercise as a learning process and by the active engagement of the participants. In addition, early preparation in outlining the potential learning points for each of the different university structures also contributed to maximising the benefits of the work.

The project has been very successful so far and has laid the foundations for the development of a new university strategy on entrepreneurialism and collaboration. The university management has gained significant insight into the state of the university, which developments should be prioritised, and started to discuss the question of how. To assess the progress made, that university plans to organise a follow-up workshop in 2019.

This user story was prepared by Martin Wain, Technopolis Group with input from Gulnaz Alibekova

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