

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FACULTY TO INFLUENCE ACADEMIC MATTERS AT  
KAZAKH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY AND EURASIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

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Aslan Sarinzhipov

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to my mother, wife and family.  
Their support, encouragement, and constant love have sustained me throughout my study.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR FACULTY TO INFLUENCE ACADEMIC MATTERS AT KAZAKH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY AND EURASIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

Aslan Sarinzhypov

Mary –Linda Armacost

Kazakhstan's higher education system is based on the Soviet governance structure, limited academic freedom and no autonomy from the state. In such a system faculties are contract employees delivering predesigned courses with no incentive to bring new ideas and methods. But employers and the general public are concerned with the mismatch between market demand and curricula of universities. Qualitative research based on two case studies collected evidence on the opportunities for faculty to influence academic affairs of the two most prominent research universities in Kazakhstan. The study gave a detailed picture of state controls, hierarchical structures and limited role of faculty at the higher education institutions under investigation. The national universities of Kazakhstan were also compared with the University of West Florida, a public research university of similar size which is based on academic freedom, shared governance and faculty authority over academic matters. Conceptual framework for the analysis is based on the theory that university governance differs from other organizations in its involvement of faculty in decision making on academic affairs. The power is shared

with faculty because of their recognized knowledge and authority in teaching and research in their particular professional fields.

The study identified that the national universities in Kazakhstan are established regulated and run like government organizations with a hierarchical structure. The existing centralized and stricter controlled environment results in frustrated and demotivated faculty who are not able to produce good quality teaching and research. Universities are required to produce similar academic programs and courses and offer a limited number of majors approved by the inter-ministerial committee. Structures of degree programs are set according to State Standards and contain certain share of mandatory courses which are provided by the Ministry. The universities are managed by the rectors who have wide powers especially in hiring and promotion of faculty as well as on other academic matters.

The research identified a number of shortcomings and mismatches with international theory and international best practice. If national universities are to develop they have to be allowed to compete and have freedom to innovate. The national universities need the governing boards to be introduced. Increasing faculty participation will be central to promoting key values of higher education such as academic freedom, autonomy and transparency. Empowering faculty will contribute to their greater responsibility and engagement in developing higher education institutions and their core functions of teaching, research and community service.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Kazakhstan is a young country in transition from a Soviet control system to a market economy, democratic governance, civil society, and the rule of law. The reform of higher education is an integral part of the transition process since it has to produce new and highly qualified human capital. The most significant challenge for higher education is for the institutions to have greater autonomy and to move towards a model of shared governance with greater faculty participation in academic and student affairs. As the Soviet Union disappeared from the world's map in 1991 its higher education system was inherited by new independent states including Kazakhstan. Its higher education system was based on the Soviet governance structure and approach to curricula design.

The Soviet higher education was designed to serve the centrally planned economy, a system where state-owned enterprises produced all products and services for the population. A free market did not exist, nor did competition or choice. The state knew how many graduates were needed and in what fields, in which region and when. There were some achievements such as high enrollment rates, fair and merit based access. Problems of equality, discrimination by gender, ethnicity, or income level did not exist since under the soviet ideology everybody was equal. Affordability was not an issue because higher education was free for all.

The Constitution of the Soviet Union provided free and equal access to the education. But it also provided that the content of education at all levels must be in compliance with the "state standards". The establishment of universities was carefully

planned and fully funded by the Soviet state. It owned and managed all of its higher education institutions through sector ministries. Curricula were developed centrally. The state dictated what to teach and how to teach.

Kazakhstan inherited the Soviet system with its limited academic freedom and no autonomy from the state. The country had to continue to rely on the centrally developed curricula. Universities and the faculty themselves were not prepared to develop their own courses. The provision on the “state standards” migrated from the Soviet legislation to the national legislation of Kazakhstan. Even private universities which emerged later had to develop their curricula according to the state standards and receive approval from the Ministry of Education. But the ministry had a little ability to develop and implement reforms due to a lack of trained staff and a vague understanding of the changing job market requirements. Development and approval of curricula was a lengthy and bureaucratic process. By the time courses reached the classrooms they were outdated.

In such a system the faculties are contract employees delivering predesigned courses with no incentive to bring new ideas and methods. The culture of teaching self-designed courses did not exist. Each particular course was the same at every university. Thus competition did not exist as well as incentives for innovation and development. Admissions criteria are still the same for all national universities. Graduates of high schools take centrally administered comprehensive final exams which were also considered as entry exams to the universities.

Kazakhstan also inherited inefficient university governance structures. After independence higher education institutions were reorganized into “state-owned

enterprises” controlled by the Ministry of Education. It was the only legal form available after the collapse of the Soviet system. The ministry made key strategic decisions and appointed rectors as chief executives of universities reporting directly to the minister. A rector in his/her turns appointed his/her subordinates including deans, department chairs and faculty. A university had a hierarchical top-down structure with the decision making concentrated in the rector’s hands. The accountability to the faculty, students or public was limited. Such a centralized and heavily controlled system produced a university which mainly concentrated on good relations with the ministry rather than on students and employees. Transparency was an issue in these relationships as well. This led to the inefficiency, the lack of innovation and transparency, and in some instances, to corruption.

The government put universities under strict budget controls since the main source of funding was direct appropriations from the state. Each cost item could not exceed certain approved limits proscribed in the rules including salaries, administrative expenditures, and capital investments. The universities did not have any financial flexibility but at the same time no incentives to gain better efficiency. As a result, the state owned universities have “conserved” low quality. All universities are producing the same product at the same cost similarly to Soviet planned economy when factories were producing standardized products throughout the country with the same price.

Clearly, there is a very little flexibility or freedom in such a governance structure. It reflects the historic culture of state planning and control. It is evident that the lack of academic freedom and autonomy from the state and the absence of shared governance

and accountability deterred universities from further development. There is a growing conflict between the existing system and the ability to adjust to a rapidly changing external environment and market demand. Kazakhstan has chosen to move to a market economy, privatizing its production base, and introducing free market competition. Abundant natural resources brought foreign direct investments and significant numbers of multinational companies. New privately owned companies became dominant players and major employers in the country's economic system.

But the change in higher education was slow in coming. New employers were not satisfied with the quality of university graduates. Modern technology required new skills and knowledge, especially in professional fields such as law, business administration, information technologies, etc. Employers and the general public became concerned about the mismatch between market demand and curricula of universities. Large numbers of graduates took jobs which were different from what they were trained for. Local university diplomas were no longer valued by employers who instead started to look for students who received education abroad. The general public and policymakers were concerned about the low quality of country's higher education.

Thus, there is a need for change in the higher education. Kazakhstan has to look for university models which are suitable for the market economy. One such example is the US higher education. Its history provides important lessons about key principles and underlying values that are fundamental to its success and sustainability. Even in the early days the first colonial colleges in America were set up according to the traditions of free scholars. Colleges were established and run by faculty. During the later period of

independence in the United States the scholars were the intellectual elite who played a central role in defining the mission of the new universities. Colleges shaped the communities around them and became associated with the respect in society and prestige. The notion of academic freedom was preserved as the core value of higher education institutions. Faculty had freedom in teaching and research and became recognized as experts in their fields. The state and the public recognized the importance of both public and private higher education for the development of the country and its economy. Universities received significant support from philanthropy, the local community, the states and the federal government. Higher education institutions became large and complex structures able to learn how to adapt to changing environment and demands. But throughout the history their mission and core values of academic freedom and shared governance were preserved.

These traditions became a great strength for American higher education institutions in a changing world. It helped the higher education system of the US to live through economic downturns, social transformation and political change. In 20<sup>th</sup> century the US higher education emerged as the strongest and most competitive system in the world. Even today when the US universities are facing great challenges they are able to have a healthy debate on how to reform the system. The tradition of intellectual leadership, academic excellence and freedom to express views help universities to look forward.

The focus of this research was an in-depth study of the two most prominent research universities in Kazakhstan with an inheritance from the Soviet legacy with their

state controls, hierarchical structures and limited role of faculty. I collected evidence on the opportunities for faculty to influence academic affairs of higher education institutions in Kazakhstan. These universities were selected for the research because they represent the largest and most important segment of the higher education of the country.

The main research question of the study was formulated as the following: “What are the opportunities for faculty to influence the academic affairs of the national universities in Kazakhstan?” The research inquired into the following subset of issues: In what ways can and do the faculty of the national universities influence the development of curriculum at both the program and course levels and the teaching methodologies and the assessment of student learning in the classroom? How does faculty participate in the selection, hiring, evaluation and promotion in the institutions? How are these opportunities reflected in the structures, policies and procedures of the university? These issues were investigated in the context of the culture and history of faculty participation in university governance of Kazakhstan. The existing political and legal environment was given consideration as well. Key documents were studied including national laws, regulations, rules, and by-laws.

In the final chapter of this dissertation, Discussion and Recommendations, I compare the national universities of Kazakhstan with the University of West Florida, a public research university of similar size which is based on academic freedom, shared governance and faculty authority over academic matters. I visited the University of West Florida and conducted a series of interviews with faculty and academic administrators concerning faculty influence and involvement in academic matters. The comparison can

help national universities of Kazakhstan to learn important lessons from the US higher education how to empower faculty to play a greater role in academic affairs in a shared governance model. I also discuss some of my literature review as it is related to faculty involvement in academic matters such as curriculum development, teaching, assessment, and selection, retention and promotion of faculty in order to draw some important lessons for Kazakhstan.

University governance differs from ones of other organizations in its involvement of faculty in decision making on academic affairs. The power is shared with faculty because of their recognized knowledge and authority in teaching and research in their particular professional fields. To promote shared academic governance faculty have to be given a proper role in academic matters.

This research provided a detailed picture of the opportunities for faculty to influence the academic affairs of the national universities in Kazakhstan at this point of time, 20 years after gaining the independence and development of Kazakhstan's own higher education system. The deeper understanding of faculty role in academic affairs of national universities will help identify problems and will provide directions for future reforms and development. The research will help to move the agenda of higher education transformation in post-Soviet countries in general. This is the first research of this kind done on the national universities of Kazakhstan.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Various sources of literature were analyzed to understand the role which the faculty plays in academic affairs and governance of the national universities in Kazakhstan. It should be mentioned that the country is very young. Thus there is very limited literature on a phenomenon of faculty involvement in university academic affairs and governance, although there is a wider literature on general higher education governance reform in post-Soviet countries. The literature on various aspects of academic governance, theoretical concepts and issues related to the role of faculty in the US provides a conceptual framework and important lenses to help assess and better understand the phenomenon of faculty involvement in the higher education in Kazakhstan.

#### **Higher education reforms and changing role of faculty in the post-Soviet countries**

Faculty involvement in higher education governance is changing not only in Kazakhstan but globally. The higher education institutions around the world were under pressure to change. The governance of academic institutions, from a world-class university to a local college, has been a part of these shifting educational reforms. Important factors influencing higher education governance include a revised approach to managing public institutions, often called “new public management”, which was widely credited for greater efficiency and impact. A greater value is attributed by many academic institutions to their autonomy. Autonomy has been commonly understood as the

capability and the right of an institution and its faculty to determine its own course of action without undue interference from the state.

The huge expansion in enrollments has turned higher education from an elite sector into the service for a wider population. Governments that had to fund this expansion and to be accountable to the public for the funds were bound to hold institutions accountable for outcomes. Thus the regulations through setting standards and monitoring performance in higher education systems became more significant and increasingly diverse. The international dimension has also become important. The fact that universities open campuses in other countries had a significant effect on the governance mechanisms. These trends towards greater autonomy with attendant accountability in higher education governance imply that institutions will need to introduce new managerial structures with a range of active players and stakeholders including faculty (OECD, 2003, pp. 61-62).

The governance of higher education and faculty involvement in academic affairs in former Soviet states including Kazakhstan are characterized as a “strict state control” model where a university is an agency of the Ministry of Education or a state owned corporation. This model is different from other existing models such as the “semi-autonomous model” where a university could be a statutory body (New Zealand, France). In the “semi-independent” model higher education institutions are statutory bodies, a charity or a non-profit corporation subject to Ministry controls (Singapore). In an “independent” governance model a university is a statutory body, charity or non-profit corporation with no government participation or control (Australia, United Kingdom,

US). An important argument of the report is that none of the models should be seen as absolute in their nature. Each model fits into the specific country context. As authors of the report propose, the elements of freedom and autonomy have to be assessed within a country's legal and political context with the system of checks and balances and accountability (OECD, 2003). Thus the country's political and cultural environment is important to understand while analyzing its higher education governance structures.

The reforms in higher education in post-Soviet countries after the collapse of the USSR were linked to the significant change in political and economic models of the countries. After the emergence of the new independent states it was important to meet the new demands of an open economy, democracy and the labor market free of governmental control. It is important to understand this process because it has its implications on the role of faculty in the higher education governance. For a long time autocratic bureaucracy governed the economy with no consideration to demand or prices. Shared governance system and faculty participation in governing higher education institutions were very limited or did not exist in the autocratic systems as well (Heyneman, 2010).

There were four elements of reforms in post-Soviet states including Kazakhstan. First, structural changes entailed the transfer of higher education out of the sector ministries into a single Ministry of Education because before the labor markets within each sector were controlled independently by sector ministries. The educational institutions, faculties, and curricula were administered within each sector and students were assigned to jobs according to the sector of their particular school. This means that for a long time during the Soviet period the state and sector ministries dominated in the

decision making with a very limited role given to faculty even in such areas as curriculum content and delivery. Secondly, the governance of higher education institutions had to change to give universities more freedom. Third, Heyneman (2010) argued that financial changes were needed to diversify the sources of university revenues. Finally, curricula had to be modernized to meet modern industry needs. Shifting the decision making over the curriculum content from the ministry to the higher education institution would require increasing the role of faculty in that area. Empowering faculty is seen as an important factor of higher education reform in former Soviet countries (Heyneman, 2010).

But the governance systems which emerged across former Soviet states were highly centralized with the power concentrated in the Ministry of Education and hands of rectors. Even when decision making was moved from the state to the institutions most of it remained with senior administrators rather than with faculty whose role still was limited. It is evident from the existing literature which focused attention on comparing changes in academic governance and decision making in higher education institutions across former Soviet states. For example, in Belarus, the structure of an institution's supervision and governing procedures were controlled by the charter that was ratified by the President. Moreover, according to the charter, a rector of a university was required to be appointed by the President. The rector was responsible for managing and leading institution's activities including in academic area and reporting directly to the Ministry of Education (Varghese, 2009, p.19).

In Georgia, the Ministry of Education was one of the main bodies which regulated higher education institutions. The new Law on Higher Education established control and regulation of higher educational institutions solely under the Ministry of Education (Pachuashvili, 2009, p.144). The president of the country appointed the members of the special council and this semi-formal body had an advisory function to the president on higher education policy; yet, the President had the final approval for all higher education policy decisions. Despite the institutional level changes, the governance of state higher education organizations remained highly centralized and under the rectors' control. Again the faculty participation in the decision making remained limited.

Faculty did not have a say in senior appointments. The higher education legislation of post-communist countries all contained clauses regarding presidential or prime-ministerial authority in hiring and dismissing of rectors of large public educational organizations. In many cases it was not only the formal requirement but also “the sign of the prestige aimed at enhancing the status of the appointed rector” (Pachuashvili, 2009, p.146). Consequently, the appointed rector had great powers and was responsible for administrative as well as academic aspects of the university. This suggests that the rector had a vast control over curriculum related decisions with limited participation from faculty. In Latvia, the shift in higher education governance structures has been identical to the rest of the post-Soviet countries. Through developing mechanisms of accountability and quality regulation, the government “attempted to identify the limits of the autonomy and imposed control across higher education institutions during initial period of independence” (Pachuashvili, 2009, p.194). So the tendency for centralized

control was dominant in most of post-Soviet states - even in the Baltic States which were considered as better reformers.

It seems that the exception was Lithuania. As compared with all other post-Soviet countries, the higher education institutions in Lithuania had relatively higher degrees of independence, even though there has been the emergence of many coordinating agencies. Since Lithuania became an independent state, the higher education bodies acquired relative autonomy and were able to plan and implement independent strategies, while the state authorities reduced their power and control in the higher education (Pachuashvili, 2009, p.237).

#### **Higher education transformation and changing role of faculty in Kazakhstan**

After becoming an independent state, labor markets in Kazakhstan became free as well. Thus, as labor market changed, reforms in the structure of higher education were also required. Necessary reforms included the “legal environment, open competition for state-funded research, significant state incentives to improve quality; and the support of autonomous agencies in terms of accreditation and professional licensing” (Heyneman, 2010, p.78).

The governance system which started to take shape in independent Kazakhstan was similar to those in other former Soviet states with heavy control from the Ministry of Education in many areas, most importantly in curriculum design and delivery. Its regulatory functions involve setting rules that should be followed by all educational stakeholders. Higher education institutions operate within the common rules of licensing, accreditation, and testing irrespective of the type of ownership. The higher education

institutions had to teach courses according the “state standards”. The faculty could not develop their own courses thus their role in developing curricular remained very limited (Brunner & Tillett, 2004).

The rules imposed by the ministry, as well as its desire to politically control the institution put serious limitations on the willingness and capacity to change. The state compulsory standards of developing curricula inherited from the Soviet system remain strict in regulating the educational process and its content. Thus the country’s system still does not provide rights for institutions and their faculties to make independent decisions in curriculum design (Tempus Project, 2010).

The Ministry of Education centrally approved each specialization offered by an institution, and there was a little deviation across institutions in the composition of academic specializations or in the content of courses within those specializations. Traditionally in Kazakhstan local institutions had little ability to modify their curricula with faculty not participating in that process. The strict regulation of the curriculum hinders the higher education institutions’ ability to meet rapidly changing market demands and the structure of state standards does not allow the flexibility to respond to changes in the economy (Rumyantseva & Caboni, 2012). So the limited ability of faculty to modernize the course material affected the quality and relevance of higher education programs.

The prescriptive system gave a little flexibility to faculty for creativity, innovation or personalization of teaching and learning processes as was mentioned by Caboni (2004) who noted that Kazakhstan’s curricula were highly rigid. He further compared the

responsibilities of the faculty in such a system to routine work of clerks or government bureaucrats, who took notes on class attendance, delivered scripted classes and lectures, monitored student compliance with academic regulations and followed strict guidelines on a course content and pedagogy.

There has been a limited success in the development of institutional autonomy and accountability in Kazakhstan as well as a very limited participation of faculty in decision making and academic affairs. In such a state controlled system where vertical structures were in place administrators felt reasonably secure of their ability to exercise power and monitor quality. But in the process of decentralization of power, a part of control and authority should have shifted away from the ministry to institutions and from administrators to faculty. McLendon (2004) argued that the increased role of faculty should be a part of decentralization in higher education.

However, the idea of professional autonomy of academics raises a lot of concerns among administrators and policy-makers “as they doubt faculty’s ability to remain accountable if a substantive share of control moved to faculty from administrators” (Rumyantseva & Caboni, 2012, p. 2). This reflects the general distrust which the ministry and senior administrators had towards faculty and their ability to participate in decision making.

This distrust was partly attributed to high level of corruption in higher education. The move towards increased autonomy for higher education must keep in mind the risk of corruption (OECD and World Bank Joint Report, 2007). Its increasing level was a significant factor of higher education in transition. While scholars generally believed that

corruption was expected in many public services, it was surprisingly high across the education sector. The presence of corruption in the education sector was evident in many countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

It is important to note that the faculty members were also a part of the problem. Silova, Johnson and Heyneman (2007) claimed that “payment for grades, bribery for entry, corruption in accreditation, and licensing threaten the social cohesion of several nations”. Corruption in higher education can be diverse and affect all areas of the system. The authors classified the categories of corruption in higher education and distinguished between corruption in admission, academic misconduct, corruption in accreditation, corruption in procurement, and corruption in educational property and taxes (Silova, Johnson & Heyneman, 2007).

The corruption was a widespread phenomenon in higher education institutions in post-Soviet countries. It involved informal payments for entry, receiving government scholarships, grades and degrees. “Corruption undermines public trust in higher education institutions, devaluates the quality of education, prepares unqualified young professionals and teaches them distorted values and culture” (Rumyantseva, 2005 p.45). Taking into consideration the “grim” picture of corruption in higher education institutions, scholars questioned the capacity of academics to cope with the change, to be able to self-regulate in accountable manner, and to function ethically and professionally. The authors claimed that “without formal mechanisms to ensure accountability to professional standards of behavior, any autonomy granted to faculty could result in an increase of inappropriate behaviors” (Rumyantseva & Caboni, 2012, p. 15.).

Thus there were two conflicting arguments on corruption. One was that the existence of the corruption in higher education was one of the stumbling blocks in giving more freedom to higher education institutions and faculty. The other argument was that the lack of freedom and concentration of power led to corruption. High levels of corruption which was not present in the Soviet system before was the result of the hierarchical structure, the excessive concentration of power and the lack of accountability and transparency (Anderson & Heyneman, 2005).

But there are some signs of hope. In recent years the Kazakhstani government attempted comprehensive reform initiatives aiming at modernizing the higher education system of the country. The reform is designed to significantly reduce the formal power of the Ministry over higher education institutions and to grant autonomy to all accredited institutions, including the power to make their own decisions regarding curricula. As a result of these changes, the role of faculty will change. A bigger responsibility will fall on faculty members as they are the ones who will be ultimately responsible for teaching, research and professional service (Gappa, 2007).

### **Academic governance and the role of faculty in developed systems as the conceptual framework for analysis**

In order to understand the role of faculty in the academic affairs of national universities in Kazakhstan, comparisons were made with the role of faculty in the developed countries. The existing theories on academic governance provided a necessary conceptual framework and important lenses which helped analyze the role of the faculty in Kazakh universities. Heyneman (2010) observed that post-Soviet countries in their reform efforts would look at US, UK or German models as well as other developed

countries' where higher education systems achieved goals of equity and quality, and became highly competitive with significant impact on the growth. He recommended that post-Soviet countries should follow certain principles in their higher education reform efforts reflecting the best international practice (Heyneman, 2010). He argued that if higher education institutions have to be like their western counterparts, they have to have a high degree of institutional autonomy in terms of governance and curriculum content which would mean the higher role for faculty (Heyneman, 2010).

There is an extensive literature on faculty participation in the shared governance and academic affairs of higher education institutions in the developed world especially in the US. Shared governance means that the decision making power is shared with the faculty which play an important role in governing higher education institutions. It is commonly accepted there that the academic governance structure is different from other organizational structures where major decisions are made by people who are at the top of the hierarchy. In educational institutions these decision-making duties are shared among faculty and administration because of the two sources of authority: the first source is bureaucratic; the second one is professional and this defines the division in decision making between faculty and administrators. The administrator's bureaucratic power stems from the hierarchal structure of most organizations. The legal rights of administrators are: (1) to set direction; (2) to manage and scrutinize finances; (3) to improve strategy; (4) to appoint and terminate employees; (5) to implement policies; and (6) to evaluate progress toward goals and priorities. To the extent that colleges and universities are organizations, there is no doubt that all of the aforementioned sources of

administrative authority are important for colleges and universities to operate successfully (Birnbaum, 1988).

In contrast to administrators, the faculty has its own source of power, which is derived from its specific training and professional expertise. Moreover, these qualities are vital to their essential role in providing core institutional functions (Eckel & Kezar, 2006, p.7). Shared governance underlines the importance of faculty control over the professional area and academic matters. The legitimacy of this control is based on the value of the faculty's educational and scholarly capabilities. The shared governance comes from the status of the profession.

The main principals of academic governance and the role of faculty were codified in the "Joint Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities" (American Association of University Professors & American Council on Education, 1966). The notion of shared governance was articulated in the document as a mutual task of all key constituencies of the academic community. It proposes the following division of labor (1) managing the endowment by the trustees, (2) maintaining and creating new resources by the president, and (3) improving the curriculum by the faculty. While acknowledging the legal authority of the board and the president, the Joint Statement recognized a university's faculty as having key responsibilities for the primary areas of (1) curriculum, (2) instruction, (3) faculty status, and (4) the academic part of student life. Reflecting on the document Birnbaum writes that it "give weight to the views of each group which would be dependent on the specific issue under discussion" and that "the de facto authority of the faculty carried more weight than the de jure authority of the board in such

areas with respect to what shall be taught, who shall teach, and finally, who shall study” (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 8).

University governance model is different from the corporate model which emphasizes efficiency in resource allocation, because the institutions of higher education provide public goods rather than private goods. Therefore, attempts to move universities to tight market-like good organization criteria will not work. Public goods, such as research, education, and service should not be diminished to simple exchanges among interested parties. The creation of such public good needs lots of participants and a great deal of sharing to produce high quality. Consequently, “faculty participation is required in order to have results of high quality” (Benjamin, 2007, p.1).

Another argument is that if employees have a stake in an organization’s success through implementing its core function, they have an incentive and a right to take part in organizational governance. Brown claimed that “institutes and other non-profit organizations offer fertile ground for such participation. The competing interest groups with competing goals create the need for a system of shared governance and mutual monitoring” (Brown, 2001, p.1). Scholars such as Blair (1995), Milgrom and Roberts (1992) agree that faculty regulation over certain categories of academic decisions might lead to better performance.

This was the reason why in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the university faculty became more professionalized and more powers on campuses were given to faculties, especially on issues such as curriculum and academic decisions (Birnbaum, 1988). Some even argue that "the faculty tends to think of themselves as being the university. This

leaves the board of trustees with little authority over the major function of the university, which is instruction." (Besse, 1973, p. 5).

Many scholars argue that the university's administrative role was more to serve "idiosyncratic" needs of scholars as assistants; and not to govern scholars. According to Veblen (1957), scholars "follow their work on their own". He claimed that the academic profession cannot be governed by the organized procedures of university administrators. He believed that if university administrators attempted to govern scholars, the university might lose effectiveness, as according to him, only "a free hand is the first and abiding requisite of scholarly and scientific work" (1918, taken from Birnbaum, 1988, p. 6). Similarly Etzioni (1964) points out "although administrative authority is suitable for the major goals activities in private business, in professional organizations administrators are in charge of secondary activities; they administer *means* to the major activity carried out by professionals". In other words, professionals should hold the major authority and administrators the secondary staff authority" (as cited in Birnbaum, 1988, p. 10). Higher education institution must not be organized like other organizations, but must allow full involvement of all academic community members, especially faculty members, in its administration. (Baldrige, 1971).

The shared academic governance systems which evolved in higher education institutions are called "loosely coupled systems". Such systems have certain benefits. Loosely coupled institutions are able to react to any environmental changes more sensitively. Secondly, loosely coupled bodies promote and sustain local innovations. Ideas that work well in one unit do not need consensus through the institution, as they

do not disrupt a university's entire academic curriculum. Furthermore, ideas that "poor" do not spread easily throughout the organization too. Thirdly, loosely coupled institutions benefit from professional autonomy. For example, top administrators are not required to be experts in all disciplines. Administrators could rely on the proficiency of department heads and faculty leaders to make unit decisions. Finally, loosely coupled organizations might have lower cost as less centralization and coordination is needed, a greater bureaucracy is not required. Consequently, it allows organizations to be more financially flexible to invest in teaching and learning or scholarship (Weick, 1976). Loose coupling make it possible, "to produce and preserve a large number of novel solutions to the new situation, and secondly, to seal off ineffective college components so that their failures remained localized" (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 40).

On the other hand, there is a rule that stipulates that if a college or university is to be efficient, the more tentative technical core, "the looser" must be the link to the management subsystem and the tighter it to the environment. But there are some shortcomings of loosely coupled systems: (1) less effectiveness with the lack of central management; (2) low distribution of acquired innovation throughout the institution; (3) some decisions could be at odds with other departments' and (4) they are not often responsive to the central apparatus (Eckel & Kezar, 2006, p.8).

The faculty has an important role to play in various types of higher education institutions. There are some important lessons from faculty involvement, for example, in the US historically black colleges and universities. Ivory Paul Phillips (2001) argued that the critical areas of shared governance in which HBCUs faculty should be involved "(a)

faculty representation on policy and decision-making bodies; (b) searches and hiring of academic personnel; (c) faculty grievances; (d) promotion, tenure, and post-tenure hearings and procedures; (e) evaluations of peers and administrators; (f) salary determination and other budgetary matters; (g) program development, review, and revision; (h) development and revision of faculty handbooks; (i) access to information needed for decision making; and (j) the status of the faculty senate as a decision- and policy-making unit” (p.2). He argued that European and Anglo-American colleges and universities emerged in an environment that accepted faculty primacy in academic matters. Faculty members were recognized as professionals and as experts in higher education. “The sooner the public understands how it loses when the academy becomes a mere factory or training plantation, the better off the US will be as a society” (Philips, 2001, p.2).

The call for more shared governance and increased role of faculty in another type of higher education institutions such as community colleges is aimed at increasing academic and programmatic quality (Lucey, 2002). The link between educational excellence and the historical role of faculty in community colleges is very important. Special legislation in California recognized academic senates at colleges as the body where faculty would participate in governance, and it mandated that local boards of trustees consult collegially with these local senates. Borrowing from the university model, regulations identified the main areas in which to delegate responsibility to faculty. The California legislation mentioned that the “challenges cannot be met without an engaged, empowered, and responsible faculty” (Lucey, 2002, p.66). Shared governance

was the tool to foster such a faculty. It stated that professionals should be treated as such. Centralized approaches did not work well in higher education. The author stated that “the shared governance is also the best mechanism to translate faculty experience with students in the classroom and counseling offices into college decision making” because faculty felt the duty to advocate for the interests of students (Lucey, 2002, p.3).

In developed countries colleges grew in the society based on democratic and collaborative culture. Historical and cultural perspective is important. The culture of collegiality has a long history in developed countries and solidifies the important role that the faculty plays in higher education institutions. Such culture of collegiality based on mutual respect and trust among the faculty may take time to develop in countries in transition like Kazakhstan but would be an important factor contributing to the increasing role and recognition of faculty in governance.

“Collegium” or “community of scholars” is the traditional image of the university in developed countries where faculty plays an important role in academic matters of institutions. There is no doubt that the terms *collegium* and *collegiality* are used in higher education frequently as important principles of how faculty are organized and maintain relationship among themselves in an institution (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 87). The collegiality consists of three elements. First is the right to contribute to institutional matters; second, membership in "a congenial and sympathetic company of scholars in which friendships, good conversation, and mutual aid can flourish; and, third, the equal worth of knowledge in various fields that precludes preferential treatment of faculty in different disciplines” (Bowen & Schuster, 1986, p. 55). The notion of collegiality has been defined by as

"marked by a sense of mutual respect for the opinions of others, by agreement about the canons of good scholarship, and by a willingness to be judged by one's peers" (Sanders, 1973, p. 65). Some authors argued that "only during open discussion, when all members could have an opportunity to express their thoughts and views, even if at the beginning they did not agree, and furthermore to have a chance to influence the results, only then the real consensus might arise" (Schein, 1969, p. 13).

If the collegiums are focused on thoroughness, problems could be resolved and explored by applying more suitable approaches in depth, than if superior attention were paid to effectiveness and accuracy. In fact, when members are ready to be influenced, rather than influencing each other, it is generally accepted that this condition leads to the improvement of compromises which would be supported by people on campus.

Therefore, as noted by Birnbaum (1998), the process of comprehensive discussion can provide effective solutions by campus members than anticipation that all members will likely understand the implications of their thoughts and to be dedicated to them. The author stated that "as understanding increases, the need for interpretative rules and regulations decreases, and as commitment rises, the need for systems of monitoring and control that inevitably lead to alienation diminishes"(Birnbaum, 1988, pp. 99-100). In contrast, "by focusing on social ties and by attempting to maintain them there are many benefits as it might have effect on tightening the collegium together" (Birnbaum, 1988, pp. 99-100).

It is believed that the college has an egalitarian and democratic environment where the administration and faculty consider each other as equals. This means that all

relevant parties have equal rights and opportunities for discussion that can influence decisions. In such a collegial system the president has a status different from a corporate chief executive. Despite the fact that the president has more authority than other members, the faculty members think of him as the "first among equals", but not as their "boss." It is important to point out that according to the literature, the president is seen by his colleagues as an agent who was expected to solve problems, but not as an independent actor. «The president is thought of as the group's servant as well as its master» (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 88).

The important conclusion is that in higher education institutions of developed countries faculty play an important role in governance especially in matters concerning academic affairs and curriculum. But this recognized role of faculty in decision making creates a much greater complexity in governing higher education institutions as compared to other organizations. A shared governance model where authority is shared between faculty and administrators is dictated by the very nature of educational organization but is also a very complicated system with structural, behavioral and cultural aspects which should be taken into consideration while analyzing role of faculty in countries in transition like Kazakhstan.

An important discussion in the literature is around which type of decisions faculty should be involved in and how it affects institutional performance. Both the biggest benefit and the biggest shortage of employee ownership spring from employee involvement in governance decisions. Hansmann (1996) argues that

the advantage is that employees generally have a non-recoverable investment in the success of the organization and better information about the quality of many decisions

than would other owners. The disadvantage is that employees might favor decisions that are detrimental to the enterprise if the gains in their employee benefits exceed their losses as owners. (p. 17).

Some scholars like McCormick and Meiners (1988) by using an aggregated measure of faculty involvement found that faculty participation in governance does affect university performance. Based on the existing institutional governance literature, Brown (2001) argued that the most favorable level of faculty involvement differs by the nature of the decision. The author stated that disaggregating the data by faculty involvement into various decision categories produces outcomes that are consistent with the hypothesis. Increased faculty involvement according to Brown, might be good or bad; the effects differ by the category of decisions in which faculty members are involved.

Higher faculty control over decisions related to academic matters where they might have better motivations and information resulted in increased university performance; higher faculty involvement over decisions related to institutional management produced lower levels of university performance. According to “the nature of academic employment contracts, faculty members are partial residual claimants to the success of the university” (Brown, 2001, p.5). Consequently, the gains of each faculty member are tied to the success of the university but faculty members also may have a motivation to improve themselves at the expense of the organization's success. Additionally, faculty members provide a low-cost source of information related to the performance of the institution and administrators. Brown (2007) claims that members of faculty take part more heavily in those activities where their informational benefits and expertise outweigh any mal-incentive effects. Whereas members of faculty have

improved information related to curricular issues, they might not always have the good motivations for governing these decisions at the individual level (Brown, 2007, p.6).

The one area where the interest of the majority of the faculty members is likely to disagree with the interests of the university is financial and monetary decisions. In these kinds of decisions the faculty as a whole could reach agreements to enrich themselves at the expense of the institution. The author stated that by diverting monetary resources to their own uses such as “supporting smaller class sizes; reduced teaching loads, higher salaries, larger offices, or nice faculty clubs” are in most cases in the best interest of the faculty” (Brown, 2007, p.9). Members of faculty also may have a motivation to favor existing uses of funds over future uses. Besides, the average faculty member has significantly less proficiency than trustees in these areas. Thus, faculty members are not expected to take part in or be the main monitors of fiscal decisions. Whether faculty members should take part in administrative issues is more likely to be determined by the category of decisions. For instance, decisions related to admission, student aid, buildings and grounds are best handled by specialized administrators with proficiency in these areas (Brown, 2007).

The role of faculty in decision making should take consideration the types of decisions otherwise it can lead to the division and in some instances the tension between the academics and administrators. As Rourke and Brooks (1964) stated:

In a context in which faculty members are less privileged and in which they often feel oppressed beneath the weight of administrative authority, the innovations brought by the new devices of management may widen the gulf between faculty and administration and thus intensify the antagonism, latent and overt, which has traditionally existed between the administrative and the academic cultures".  
(p.180)

In some cases, the administration was considered by the faculty as more isolated from the essential academic matters and problems important to the institution. Simultaneously, the faculty was considered by the administration as “self-interested, indifferent with controlling expenses, or unwilling to react to legitimate requests for accountability” (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 7).

While analyzing the literature on governance models of higher education institutions in the developed world it is important to note that the level of faculty participation in decision making is different by types of decisions made. When applying international experience to academic governance as well as forms of faculty participation in decision making of institutions in Kazakhstan one should be conscious of type decisions where faculty should participate as well as the cultural and political environment within which changes are being made or proposed.

Although many scholars called for the need for greater independence for higher education institutions in Kazakhstan and increased role of faculty in modernizing the curriculum, in fact the regulation of the Ministry of Education has remained very rigid. The faculty involvement in key academic issues including curriculum remains limited which hinders the ability to modernize curriculum and increase the relevance and quality of programs. This goes against international best practice in the higher education institutions where faculty is recognized as the source of authority especially with regard to curriculum and academic programs.

The important conclusion from the international literature and developed systems is that governance of academic institution is different from other organizations because it is based on sharing the powers between administrators and faculty. The authority of faculty is based on their professional knowledge and expertise. Its participation in governance and academic affairs is important but outcomes and efficiency depend on the type of decisions being considered. Evidence suggests that faculty involvement makes the most sense in the areas of academic programs. It is generally recognized that academia has the prerogative to decide what and how to teach. Faculty involvement in a shared governance model of higher education institutions of developed countries is based on long historic and cultural traditions. The important principles of collegiality evolved over time based on faculty's mutual respect, engagement and trust. They are also linked to general values of the civil society and democracy. Such kind of traditions and culture have yet to evolve in post-Soviet countries including Kazakhstan.

It is not yet clear from the literature and the very limited research that has been done, on how the countries like Kazakhstan are introducing modern concepts of shared governance in higher education institutions. It is not completely known to what extent faculty members participate in their main area of expertise which is curriculum design. Also the literature is not clear on what legal mechanisms and organizational structures exist in higher education institutions in Kazakhstan to support such critical function of the faculty. The separation of authority between the Ministry of Education, senior administrators and faculty members also is not well understood. Given the limited literature on Kazakhstan it is not clear if faculty participation is the same in different

types of institutions especially in such important segment as large national universities. The literature gives a very general assessment of faculty participation as being limited but it is not clear to what extent and whether it has an impact on curriculum being relevant, faculty being motivated and quality being enhanced. From the literature it is clear that the cultural and political environment must be considered when analyzing the role of faculty. This research on the faculty influence in academic affairs at two national universities in Kazakhstan should help fill this gap.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

During the past two decades after becoming independent, the Republic of Kazakhstan experienced dramatic changes in its political, economic and social life. Once independent the country had to set its own institutions and systems moving from a planned economy to a market economy and democracy. The country's education system including higher education went through, and still is going through, substantial change. The change affected the policies, the norms and the culture of higher education institutions. The external environment as well as internal structures and relations have been transforming. The role of government, higher education institutions and faculty has been changing and creating a new phenomenon in university governance during transition process.

The existing research focused on the understanding of the systemic changes taking place in the higher education of Kazakhstan. It looked at how the state controlled system inherited from the Soviet Union was transforming influenced by various economic and political factors. The higher education institutions moved from sector ministers under a single control of the ministry of education (Heyneman, 2010). The researchers observed that in independent Kazakhstan universities still lacked sufficient autonomy and important academic matters such as curriculum design and remained under the government control (Brunner & Tillett, 2004). It was clear from the existing literature that the change in the higher education system was lagging behind the general change in the economic system with market forces of demand and supply, competition and

innovation coming into play. The strict controls over curriculum and other academic matters prevented universities from being more flexible and innovative in order to respond to market demands (Rumyantseva & Caboni, 2012).

The existing research took an in-depth look at the role of faculty and their views during this serious transition period. Universities are unique organizations where decision making is decoupled and faculty members have recognized authority over academic matters. This key principle is in the core of higher education system in developed countries (Birnbaum, 1998). The opportunities for faculty to influence academic affairs of universities in Kazakhstan is an important area of research since whatever changes have occurred, it is not clear how and what was influencing that change. There was not a significant amount of guidance to direct the study that would help to understand how faculties participate in key academic matters of higher education institutions in Kazakhstan. It was important to understand the factors influencing the phenomenon under investigation on the systemic national policy level, on the organizational level of higher education institution and on the individual level of faculty interacting with the external environment.

### **Research method**

A qualitative research design not only allowed the study itself to identify the variables for exploration, but also provided ideas and sensitivities as different factors come into play at different levels including national, institutional and individual (Creswell, 2008). Thus the qualitative method was applied in the research on the phenomenon of faculty participation in academic matters of national universities. The

research also could set a stage for future qualitative and quantitative research of various academic governance issues in Kazakhstan.

### **Research design**

The research focusing on the underlying questions of “what” and “how” with regard to the opportunities for faculty to influence academic matters gave credence to using a collective case study methodology in the efforts to explain the role of academia at the national universities. While a phenomenological or historical analysis might have been useful, it was important to interview participants to have a fuller understanding of the transition process and to provide a context for the study. To understand fully the factors behind the current state of affairs it had to be seen through the eyes of individual faculty members, senior administrators and policy makers. The research took into account not only the system level changes in higher education, but also the influences of the existing institutional culture and individuals at top positions. Case studies are also most relevant when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Since there are so many competing factors in changing higher education environment of Kazakhstan which influence the role of faculty, the case study methodology allowed multiple issues and explanatory theories to emerge.

The collective case studies allowed the use of replication as a logical approach to finding similar results across cases or different results for anticipated reasons. In aggregate, emergent patterns provided compelling approaches to academic governance for higher education institutions to examine and adapt to their own practices. By looking across two institutions, a deeper analysis of structures and policies was conducted leading

to better understandings and explanations. By examining faculty roles across several cases, the influence of national legislation, history, and current efforts, more specific conditions, explanations, and even results can be generalized in order to be replicated by other institutions in the future.

For this particular research, case studies explain how analyzing the specifics of one institution against another in terms of norms, values, and processes can show how systemic and institution specific factors influence organizational culture. A multiple case study approach not only allowed for an analysis of how two different institutions adapt to external environment to better illustrate the overall issue at hand, but also considered as a single case in depth (Creswell, 2007). An in-depth case provided further validity and a higher level of scrutiny of the research while comparing the findings from one case to another.

The research was conducted involving a particular type of organizations – large public universities in Kazakhstan holding a special status as “national” underlining their significance for the country. A bounded system was explored through a detailed in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (observations, interviews, documents). With data gathered from individual and group interviews as well as document analysis, common themes and issues emerged. The data included the voices of the faculty and administrators of the universities and representatives of the government their reflections, descriptions and interpretation of the role of faculty in academic matters at two national universities.

It was important to study more than one institution because it helped identify systemic issues and problems which can be attributed to the system as a whole. It was important to disaggregate factors influencing faculty participation which can be attributed to the changes in the external environment including political, legal and regulatory. Another factor attributed to the organizations involves history, traditions and culture of institutions. Although institutions under investigation could be of a similar type such as public research university and of a certain size, they still can have differences influenced by the history, the region, the leadership or other circumstances. Comparing the two cases led to a better understanding of how the combination of those factors influenced the opportunities for faculty members to participate in academic matters of these higher education institutions. The study looked into these two institutions of a similar type to identify similarities and differences. The assumption was made that the issues related to the faculty participation in faculty matters in these two universities were similar to the rest of the system.

The findings of the research at Kazakh universities were compared with the role of faculty in governance at a similar sized public research university in the USA which provided important lenses to understand the issues related to the governance. There is extensive research on issues and theories of academic governance and role of faculty in the higher education institutions of developed countries. Comparing the two institutions in Kazakhstan may have helped to understand the current state of affairs in the country but it did not help to understand the situation vis-à-vis the best international practice. Only comparison of the faculty role in academic matters in Kazakhstan with faculty

participation in the USA through the literature review and a limited number of person-to-person interviews at the University of West Florida helped to provide a depth to this study, especially as the higher education system in Kazakhstan moves forward towards a larger role for faculty in academic matters.

It was important to investigate the real life experiences of faculty members in the developed system, understand their views with regard to their role in academic matters, personal experiences, their behavioral patterns, cultural and institutional norms. The study did not aim to explore the public research university in the USA as a separate case study per se. It was used rather as a control case to draw conclusions on two specific institutions of Kazakhstan. The approach was to use the same type of interview questions in Kazakhstan and in the US and compare the answers from both places. I was able to identify whether same issues and situations are approached in a same way or differently in the two systems. If there were differences the research tried to understand how significant they were. Then the research attempted to identify the underlying reasons why certain approaches to faculty participation in academic matters were different and whether the differences were attributed to systemic reasons, organizational specifics or individual characters. Interviewing faculty and analyzing documents at the university in the US helped to identify the kinds of opportunities that might be available to faculty in the Kazakh universities. It was important to identify gaps and discrepancies between the systems of Kazakhstan and the developed systems in the USA because it may help in future to shape the reforms and modernization plans for higher education institutions in the country.

### **Selection of research sites**

The study took an in-depth look into the two largest public universities of the country: the Kazakh National University (KazNU) in Almaty and the Eurasian National University (ENU) in Astana. There are several reasons why these institutions were selected as case studies for the research. First, both are the largest universities in terms of number of students and faculty. As such they are very important for the higher education system of the country. The issues and themes which were identified in these particular universities are more likely to be present at other public higher education institutions. Approaching faculty members at the two largest universities provided a wider access and a diverse population. Second, they take the first and second place in the internal Kazakhstan university ranking, respectively. As such they are considered as the leading ones in terms of quality, size and role in the higher education market. Both universities being the “flagship” universities have better resources and as a result the “better-of” faculty. Thus it was possible to say that institutions have more advanced positions in terms of the quality of faculty which also has relevance to faculty participation in academic matters. Third, both institutions have strived to become research universities with significant resources and efforts devoted to research agenda compared to other public higher education institutions. Research is an important aspect of their academic life.

It is important to note that the two national universities are of similar type which can be described as “large public research universities”. It means that their founding documents, legal and organizational structures, policies and procedures are the same. Yet,

the institutions have certain differences as will be described further. The Kazakh National University is the oldest university established 70 years ago in the biggest city and the densely populated southern region of the country. It has relatively rich history, traditions and recognition in the country. For a long time it was one of the prestigious universities in the country not only for students who wanted to study there but also for faculty as the place to teach. Many of its graduates are in top positions and play important role in political and economic life of the country. The current minister of education is the former rector of Kazakh National University.

The Eurasian National University is a relatively young institution. It was established only 13 years ago at a new northern capital of Astana. At that time the government decided to move its political capital to a small town of 300,000 people which was renamed later to Astana. As a new higher education institution in the new capital the Eurasian National University had to draw its faculty from different parts of the country many of whom were relatively young and mobile to move to Astana. The university did not have a history of functioning under Soviet system since it was established after Kazakhstan became independent. It was interesting to see if the institution being new will have different opportunities for its faculty to influence academic matters and other aspects of university life.

The conceptual framework of the research is built using the classic theories of academic governance and best international practice of faculty participation in the developed world. It was important to select a country for international comparison as well as an appropriate institution. The decision was to use a university in the United

States. The US has the largest and one of the most advanced higher education systems in the world. American universities consistently hold leading positions in the major world rankings systems for decades. According to the Times Higher Education, the US News and World Report, and the Shanghai rankings in 2012 the 70% of top 20 world universities are represented by the US universities (or 14 out of 20). Thus the US universities are most appealing for the research in terms of transparency, quality and governance compared to other countries (Times Higher Education, 2011, US News and World Report, 2011, Shanghai, 2011).

Although, there is a vast variety of higher education institutions in the US in terms of ownership, size, structure, programs, strategy, and focus the choice for comparison was given to the University of West Florida (UWF). It is, at least, in general parameters, comparable to the institutions under study in Kazakhstan. It is similar or close in terms of student population, variety of offered programs (undergraduate, graduate, doctoral programs), involved in research and a public university. The University of West Florida was chosen, in no small part, because I was granted complete access to the faculty and administration.

A public comprehensive university, UWF, has three colleges: the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Business and the College of Professional Studies. It is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. UWF serves a student population of approximately 12,000 students at undergraduate and graduate level. Faculty participation in governance of such a “comparator” university was studied to draw conclusions relevant for Kazakhstan.

### **Interviews at the universities**

A semi-structured interview protocol was developed based on the findings of interviews conducted with faculty members and senior administrators as part of a pilot study. During the pilot phase a number of interviews were held both at the Kazakh National University and the Eurasian National University. The final interview protocol was also based on the theoretical framework developed to assess academic governance (See Research Design Section) and role of faculty in academic matters. The interview protocol was tested on representatives of my home institution, the Nazarbayev University, including faculty members, deans and senior administrators. My university provided a unique opportunity to draw from both local and international experience. The majority of faculty members is hired internationally and has extensive experience of working in developed higher education systems. At the same time there were few faculty members from Kazakhstan who were familiar with local universities, being able to explain how they used to work and what role faculty plays in academic matters at Kazakh universities. Both types of faculty members provided valuable inputs into the design of interview protocol.

The assumption was made that a written survey instrument might not have allowed a deeper understanding of nuances and personal experiences of faculty members. In addition some of the questions might have been seen as touching sensitive issues of relations between faculty members, university administration, and government agency. The personal interviews provided an opportunity to ensure confidentiality of the shared information which was also an important part of collecting reliable data. Therefore, a

carefully designed interview plan provided more reliable and representative information.

Initially the list of potential candidates for the interviews was developed. The selection of candidates was based on the principle that preferably each level of the university had to be represented. It included vice rectors for academic affairs or their immediate deputies, deans of several schools, a number of department chairs, senior faculty members including full professors and associate professors, as well as junior faculty members including assistant professors and lecturers. The introduction letters and emails were sent to potential candidates explaining the purpose of the study (Appendix A) with interview protocol questions attached. The number of candidates to whom the letters were sent was larger than the number of planned interviews to insure that the representation of different levels is kept if some may have declined to participate for various reasons. A similar letter was sent to the Ministry of Education and Science to request an interview with representatives of the Department on Higher Education of the Ministry.

Interviews and focus groups were organized and conducted as planned with faculty and administrators. Three department chairs and three full professors with working experience at least 5 years with the institution from each university were interviewed (12 faculty representatives in total). This broad representation was important for better understanding of faculty participation in decision making. The research included interviews with 5 senior administrators from each institution including a vice rector for academic affairs, heads of department for strategy and development (responsible for long term planning), department for methodology and academic

programs, department for personal management responsible for faculty hiring (10 senior administrators in total). Interviews were conducted with the Ministry of Education representatives responsible for the higher education. The list of interviewees included the Deputy Minister responsible for higher education, the head of Higher Education Department in the Ministry, the head of Department of Strategy and Planning, the head of the Committee on Quality Control in Higher Education. Individual interviews were focused around different types of decisions including strategic decisions, mission definition; curricula, teaching methodologies, assessment of student learning, hiring, evaluation and promotion as well as how these opportunities are reflected in the structures, policies and procedures of universities.

All interviews were conducted at the universities. The interviews were recorded by the researcher and later transcribed by a professional service. The nondisclosure agreement was concluded with a service company to ensure confidentiality (Appendix B). All participating interviewees were provided with consent forms (Appendix C) to ensure consistency and integrity of the interviews and the research process.

### **Focus Groups**

In addition to individual interviews two focus group interviews were organized and conducted at both the Kazakh National and the Eurasian National universities involving faculty members. The focus groups comprised of faculty members allowed obtaining high-quality data in a social context where the faculty could consider their own comments in the context of the view of others. The members for the focus groups were carefully selected to ensure representation from different levels of the university

including senior and junior faculty members. Participating members were introduced to the topic of the study and were provided with consent forms and assurances of confidentiality. Focus groups were conducted at the premises of respective universities to ensure more convenient and comfortable environment. Interviews were conducted in a focus-group format with 8 - 9 individuals participating at each of the two national universities. Focus group interviews lasted 60-90 minutes with 7 questions following the interview protocol.

### **Interview questions**

Anonymity was assured in that no names were used – only general titles. All focus group interviews were recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy but these tapes remain confidential and will remain with the researcher.

A set of following questions was used both in the focus groups and individual interviews:

1. In what ways does the faculty take part in defining strategic goals and objectives of the university?
2. What is the faculty's role in selecting, appointing, evaluating and promoting other faculty?
3. How does the faculty take part in the resource allocation?
4. What is the role of the faculty in program structure course, syllabus, and curriculum design?
5. What's the role of the faculty in teaching load allocation?
6. How faculty selection process is organized? How transparent is the faculty selection?

## 7. What's the faculty's role in defining research policy and priorities?

Document analysis was an important part of the research. Key legal documents were analyzed such as the Law on Education of Kazakhstan, rules, regulations, and government decrees regulating national universities, statutes and charters of national universities, bylaws, various executive decisions produced by university senior management.

In the US the research was conducted to identify the faculty role in governing the University of West Florida. Interviews were held with senior administrators of the university: the president, the vice president for academic affairs. Interviews were conducted with senior faculty representatives: deans of schools, department chairs and senate members. In total seven personal interviews were conducted with senior administrators and faculty. Interviews followed the same interview protocol as in the case of Kazakh institutions. The same questions were asked related to the role of faculty in decision making within the university.

One focus group was organized with representatives of UWF faculty members. Altogether about seven representatives participated in the focus group which discussed the role of faculty in the governance of public research university in the US. The focus group helped to develop a comprehensive description of the phenomenon under investigation. Although various faculty members brought different prospective of faculty participation in the governance the common objective reflection of the state of affairs was drawn from the discussion.

Before interviews and focus group discussions in UWF the document analysis was conducted. This included the study of the charter, governing regulations, the board of trustees and senate decisions. The faculty participation in the governance was studied as reflected in publications about the university in literature and media which helped develop a better picture of the phenomenon and related issues.

### **Data Analysis**

The selected method provided an understanding of issues at a particular type of institution in Kazakhstan, i.e. the national university. The data were collected from the focus groups with faculty members and interviews with senior academia and administrators. Once the data collection and interviews were completed the research went through the interview transcripts to identify and highlight any significant statements, sentences or quotes that provide a general understanding of how faculty participated in the governance. The NVIVO software was used to analyze the data from the interviews. Most significant meanings from the statements and quotes were clustered into themes that were common to all interviewees and focus group members. The identified significant themes and statements were used to write a description of how able to better understand the challenges and issues affecting opportunities for faculty to influence academic affairs of the national universities.

### **Validity, reliability and limitations**

Total number of people participating was around 35 to 40 representing all levels of organizational structure of the institutions. Senior administrators including the rectors and their deputies, heads of key departments were involved in the research providing

their comprehensive experience and knowledge of the existing systems, its historical development, peculiarities and etc. Faculty members with long experience (at least 5 years) with an institution provided a necessary angle to the phenomenon under investigation.

The document analysis provided a necessary supplement to the interviews and focus groups which ensured an adequate variety in kinds of evidence to warrant key assertions. Official documents with formal authority were used including official laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan, norms and regulations adopted by the Ministry of Education, as well as formal decisions approved by the universities.

As the issues and themes developed the research conducted validity checks by returning with the findings to the colleagues from my home institution interviewed as a part of the pilot project phase. They added assurance that the information gathered from participants matches their experience and knowledge as well as understanding of the role of faculty in influencing academic matters of universities.

The research had limitations related to the scale and the depth of investigation. It was conducted in a particular type of the higher education institutions which are national universities, although there were other types of higher education institutions in Kazakhstan such as state universities, private universities, academies and institutes. The research was conducted using the two largest National universities in Kazakhstan and the findings may or may not be generalizable to the seven other national universities. The status of the two institutions as being the leading and most important in terms of attention

and resource allocation may impact faculty participation in the academic affairs differently than in other national universities of Kazakhstan.

An important limitation to the research at Kazakh universities is the fact that a rector plays a very significant role in setting policies and a tone of an institution. Because of his/her great powers, one person can significantly affect an institution's approach to the phenomenon under investigation. Thus faculty participation in the academic affairs may depend on certain personality on top of an institution at this particular point of time and not be attributable to the system as a whole. The research looked into this assumption and collected evidence of it during interviews and focus groups with administrators and faculty.

The site selected in the US is a public university of similar size to the universities in Kazakhstan and is classified as a research university and has a doctoral program. The faculty participation in academic affairs at this particular institution may have specifics attributed to the region, historical development, political situation, and cultural environment at this particular point of time. These limitations were taken into consideration during the research.

### **Eliminating biases**

For the selected research method of case study based on focus groups and interviews, it is important to understand the researcher's personal experiences and biases with a regard to the research question under investigation. Overall perception of university governance in Kazakhstan is negative if compared with the developed countries. But it is important to understand that universities exist in certain cultures and

historic backgrounds. Universities in developed countries grew in the environment of democratic rule and active civil engagement. Citizens in general are expected to participate in governance at different levels and developed certain ethics and sense of responsibility. Such culture and environment are yet to develop in post-Soviet countries thus the negative bias has to take into consideration local situation and people's mentality. The researcher, educated in the West, has to be aware of personal experiences, perceptions and prejudice while taking an objective look toward the governance issues given country's cultural and political environment. I attempted to account for any possible personal biases.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

#### Findings

#### *Systemic role of the Ministry of Education and Science and its influence over faculty in Kazakhstan*

##### *Overview*

The opportunities for faculty of national universities in Kazakhstan to influence academic matters are defined by the legal frameworks and policies of the state. In order to understand the space and the environment in which faculty of the two national universities operate, it is important to describe and understand the role which the state plays through the Ministry of Education and Science specifically with regard to national universities.

The higher education system of Kazakhstan is based on the provision of the Constitution which states that the “content of the education in the country is defined by the state” (Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 1995). Thus the government by constitution has the sole responsibility over the educational sector. It is regulated by the national Law “On Education” (Government of Republic of Kazakhstan, July, 2007) adopted by the parliament and signed by the president of the country. The law regulates the roles and the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and Science (MES), the main government agency responsible for education, as well as the local authorities (city and district levels) and educational institutions involved in education.

The higher education is represented by 146 institutions including universities, academies, and institutes. There are 9 large national universities; 46 smaller scale public

institutions; 19 specialized and quasi-public institutions which have the legal status of a joint stock company with a share owned by the government; 73 private higher education institutions; and 1 autonomous university, Nazarbayev University (Ministry of Education and Science, 2012).

There are 630 thousand students in total in Kazakhstan with 50% of the age group from 17 to 35 engaged in higher education. As a result of the government policy of equal access based on merit regardless of the ability to pay, 20% of students are covered by government scholarship. It is a merit based program where students who score high on a comprehensive national examination receive government scholarships which pay to a university chosen by a student. The remaining 80% of students pay tuition fees which have certain caps in the public universities. According to the National Report on Education (2012), 50% of students study in private higher education institutions.

Kazakhstan has joined *the Bologna Process* and formally introduced a three-level system in higher education: bachelor, master, and PhD, along with a credit based system (European Credit Transfer System). According to the State Program of Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan (2010-2020) (Government of Republic Kazakhstan, 2009) adopted by the government, “the introduction of the three-level model in higher education was aimed at integrating Kazakhstan into international educational space, modernizing educational programs to meet market economy needs and improving the quality of students and faculty”. The introduction of a credit system was an important change in the higher education which started to operate in Kazakhstan in 2005. It was first introduced at 36 higher education institutions (HEI) which were mostly public

universities. Universities still have a right to choose a linear cohort based system on the undergraduate level (heritage of Soviet past) where students in a cohort have to take the same sequence of courses to get a degree. As for the graduate level all higher education institutions offer master degree programs which are based on the credit system (Ministry of Education and Science, 2012). The system still carries the Soviet legacy of heavy government controls and domination.

### ***Legal structure and property rights in public higher education***

From the legal point of view public universities constitute government property as with all other government owned organizations. Formally the founder of all public higher education institution is the *State Property and Privatization Committee at the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kazakhstan*, which also charters all public universities developed according to the guidelines set in the Law “On State Property” which regulates activities of state owned enterprises (last amended 2011). Thus the public higher education institutions are in fact structured and run like a state owned enterprise (SOE) while faculty members from a legal point of view are civil servants. This fact determines the role of faculty members and their opportunities to influence academic matters at public universities.

The Law “On State Property” regulates activities of government organizations, public utilities and state enterprises. Such enterprises exist to perform specific public services in certain areas on a self-sustainable basis. Thus the government owns and manages such enterprises through sector ministries. The employees (in our case faculty members) of the public universities as such are civil servants performing and delivering

certain services to the public. Universities in such a system are meant to provide educational services to the population on behalf of the government.

According to the Law, the Ministry of Finance has the final property rights and ownership of assets of SOEs. Thus university property, including all the assets, the cost of which is reflected on a balance sheet, do not belong, from the legal point of view, to public universities. The property cannot be sold, divided, used as collateral or liquidated by a university itself as it represents government's assets. If a university's property "does not serve objectives of authorized activities, unused or used for other purposes or used inefficiently it may be withdrawn by the government by a decision of the Ministry of Finance" (Law "On State Property", last amended 2011). All the transactions with regard to the purchase or sales of the assets have to be cleared by the Ministry of Finance. It has the right to perform annual inspections of the use of property of a university (Law "On State Property", last amended 2011).

The Law also regulates financial activities of national universities. They are allowed to receive revenues from educational activities but an annual budget must be approved by the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance. Appropriations from the government budget are allocated in accordance with the public finance laws and procedures. If the university has a positive net income, according to the legislation it should be transferred back to the national budget similar to all other government owned enterprises. As stated in the law "prices on educational services of university must be equal to university' costs, and determined by the responsible ministry" (Law "On State Property", Republic of Kazakhstan, last amended 2011).

According to the Law “On Education” (2011), other responsibilities of the Ministry with a regard to public universities include approval of strategies; approving and monitoring budgets and financial plans of University; and monitoring educational performance. The Ministry approves organizational structure, compensation levels, and a list of personnel including academic staff.

The law also proscribes the governance and management structure of state owned enterprises. Public universities do not have governing boards. The sole responsibility for running the institution is in hands of the head of the organization (a rector in case of universities). A rector of a university as ahead of a state owned enterprise has a wide range of powers. A rector “acts on behalf of the university, represents its interests in all transactions and relations, exercises control over university’s property, signs contracts and other legal documents” (Kazakh National University, Charter, 2009).

According to the Law “On Education” (2007) rectors of national universities are appointed by the decree of the President based on the recommendation of the Minister of Education after the confirmation with the President’s Administration. Rectors of other public universities are appointed by the executive order of the Minister of Education and Science. Vice rectors of higher education institutions are appointed by a rector’s order with an approval of the Ministry of Education. (Law “On Education”, Republic of Kazakhstan, last amended 2011).

Rectors of public universities employ and terminate contracts with all employees, including faculty members. As codified in a public university charter the rector appoints and discharges vice rectors for academic and other affairs upon approval of the Ministry

of Education. Also, a head of the university approves organizational structure of the university, a list of personnel, compensation levels, defines duties and authority of deputies, heads of departments and other senior officials of university (Charter, Kazakh National University, 2009).

### ***Nationwide program and course structure requirements***

According to the Law “On Education” the Ministry of Education and Science is a primary government agency “responsible for developing and implementing state policy in education, science and technology” (Law “On Education”, Republic of Kazakhstan, last amended 2011). It regulates activities of higher education institutions through determining the content, monitoring and enforcing standards of quality, and licensing educational organizations. When it comes to public institutions including national universities the Ministry plays a governing role by approving strategic development plans, budgets, and key academic and administrative personnel. One of the key responsibilities of the Ministry is to regulate the content of higher education programs.

All specialization programs teach towards a certain degree (bachelor, master or PhD) in a certain “specialty” (major). The special document approved by the government called the *Classification of Specialties* (effective since Sept.1, 2009) contains a list of all majors that can be taught in both public and private universities and be legally recognized in the country by the public and private employers. Higher education institutions cannot teach programs towards majors if they are not included in the document.

The document is important because it lays down the foundation for all programs offered by the higher education. It represents a nationwide qualification framework recognized

by both public and private sector employers and must be followed by all higher education institutions. In the document all majors are divided by levels (bachelor, master, PhD) and by area groups. For example, on Bachelor level there are 174 majors divided into 12 areas (field of study) groups (Table 1).

TABLE 1. AREA GROUPS IN CLASSIFICATION OF SPECIALTIES (MAJORS)

Source: Committee on Technical Regulation under the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Republic of Kazakhstan. (2009). *Classification of Specialties of Undergraduate and Graduate Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan*. (20.03.2009, N.131)

1. Education (23 majors)
2. Humanities (14 majors)
3. Law (4 majors)
4. Fine Arts (23 majors)
5. Social sciences, Economics and Business (19 majors)
6. Natural Sciences (12 majors)
7. Technical Sciences and Technologies (49 majors)
8. Agricultural Sciences (12 majors)
9. Services (12 majors)
10. Military and Security
11. Healthcare and Social Security (6 majors)
12. Veterinary science (2 majors)

On the Master's level there are 203 majors divided on the same 12 groups by fields of study and on Doctorate level there are 193 majors. As an example, the majors in the Humanities group on both Bachelor and Master levels are displayed in Table 2.

TABLE 2.MAJORS IN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Source: Committee on Technical Regulation under the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Republic of Kazakhstan. (2009). *Classification of Specialties of Undergraduate and Graduate Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan*. (20.03.2009, N.131)

<u>Bachelor Majors in Humanities</u>	Masters Majors in Humanities
1. Philosophy	1. Philosophy
2. International Relations	2. International Relations
3. History	3. History
4. Culture	4. Culture
5. Philology	5. Philology
6. Religious studies	6. Religious studies
7. Translation/Interpretation	7. Translation/Interpretation
8. Archeology and Ethnology	8. Archeology and Ethnology
9. Oriental studies	9. Oriental studies
10. International Philology	10. International Philology
11. Theology	11. Theology
12. Turkology	12. Turkology
	13. Linguistics
	14. Literature

There are 12 majors in Humanities on Bachelor level in the entire country. On the Master level there are the same majors plus two additional (Linguistics and Literature).

The process of changing and updating the Classification of Specialties is led by the Ministry of Education and Science. The unit within the ministry responsible for higher education is the Department on Higher Education which sets up a special task force including representatives of the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Industries and others as necessary (Agriculture, Environment etc.) as well as representatives of the universities and private companies usually represented by industry associations. The composition of the task force is approved by the executive order of the Minister of Education. The task force considers proposals from the universities and private sector and after series of deliberations, develops the final list of majors which once approved by the government becomes mandatory for the entire system. According to the ministry representatives the document is updated once in 5 years. The most recent publicly available Classification of Specialties was updated in 2009 (Committee on Technical Regulation under the Ministry of Industry and Trade, 2009).

In general universities cannot offer degree programs that are not included in the Classification. There are exceptions when universities could do so but such programs should be recognized by the ministry as “experimental”. A university needs to apply and receive an approval from the Ministry of Education. In case the experimental majors are successfully delivered and receive positive external evaluation by outside experts, then they can be submitted to the Ministry as a new major for inclusion into the Classification.

Based on the approved Classification of Specialties (qualifications framework) the Ministry of Education and Science develops the *State Compulsory Educational Standards on Bachelor, Master, PhD levels (hereafter – State Standards on Bachelor/Master/PhD level)* in the higher education (Ministry of Education and Science, 2011 a, b, c). These standards set requirements for each level (Bachelor, Masters and PhD). For example, the State Standards on Bachelor level specifies the structure and volume of all bachelor programs offered in Kazakhstan. These requirements are “mandatory to public and private higher education institutions offering bachelor programs” (State Compulsory Educational Standards on Bachelor level, 2011, p.1). As the document states the Standards are based on “European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) User’s Guide”, as well as on guidelines of “Tuning Educational Structures in Europe” (Ministry of Education, 2011a, p.2).

The State Standards on Bachelor level determine that the total amount of credits to be earned in order to receive a Bachelor degree must be not less than 129 credits with a certain structure of a program. The structure of courses is divided into three components: a General Education component (33 credits – 25% of total program), a Core component (64 credits – 50% of the program), and a Specialization Component (32 credits – 25% of the program). All bachelor programs must follow the above pattern. The General Education component described in the State Standards on Bachelor level has predetermined set of 11 courses which are the same for all bachelor programs in all higher education institutions. The courses are displayed in Table 3 below (State Compulsory Educational Standards on Bachelor level, 2011a).

TABLE 3. COURSES OF GENERAL EDUCATION  
COMPONENT OF BACHELOR PROGRAMS

Source: Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. (2011a). *State Compulsory Standard of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Higher Education. Bachelor level.*

1. History of Kazakhstan – 3 credits
2. Philosophy – 3 credits
3. Foreign Language – 6 credits
4. Kazakh (Russian) Language – 6 credits
5. Informatics – 3 credits
6. Ecology and Sustainable Development – 2 credits
7. Sociology – 2 credits
8. Political Science – 2 credits
9. Economics – 2 credits
10. Basics of Law – 2 credits
11. Safety and Lifestyle – 2 credits

The rest of the program consists of the *Core* and the *Specialization* components. The courses of the core component (64 credits) would be the same for the programs in certain field of study, for example, all business or economics majors will have the same core courses. Specialization courses (32 credits) will define a more narrow area within the field. For example, a major in International Economics will have its own specialization courses different from other economics majors.

Both Core and Specialization components are further divided into a mandatory subcomponent, which is determined by the state and an elective component, which is developed by higher education institutions themselves. Out of 64 credits of the Core component not less than 20 credits are determined by the State Standards and are mandatory. The rest 44 credits are set by higher education institutions themselves. Out of 32 credits of the Specialization component 5 credits are set by the State Standards and 27 credits are designed by higher education institutions.

The State Standards on Master level follow a similar pattern. All Master programs must have the Core and the Specialization components. The Core component (10 credits) is further divided into a mandatory subcomponent, set by the State Standards (5 credits), and an elective subcomponent, set by higher education institutions (5 credits). Within the Specialization component (26 credits in total) 3 credits are allocated to a mandatory set of courses and 23 credits for an elective set of courses determined by an institution. According to the State Standards, additional 8 credits must be devoted to students' internships, projects or master thesis (State Compulsory Educational Standard on Master level, Republic of Kazakhstan, 2011).

All three State Standards on Bachelor, Master, and PhD levels are developed by working groups led by the Ministry of Education and Science involving representatives of leading higher education institutions and their faculty as well as industry associations' representatives. Once developed the standards are approved by the executive order of the Minister of Education and Science.

### ***Course development***

Further based on the above Standards the Ministry develops a separate set of documents called a *State Standards on a Specialty* for each of majors included in the Classification of Specialties for Bachelor, Master and PhD levels. The State Standards on a Specialty sets learning outcomes, determines a level of skills and knowledge which must be acquired by a student to earn a degree in a particular major. It also provides a detailed list of topics and themes which must be covered by the each of the course of the General Education Component. For example, the State Standard on a Specialty prescribes that the mandatory course on History of Kazakhstan must cover 70 specific topics/themes. Similarly, the mandatory part of the Core component specifies a list of themes which must be covered in each of the mandatory courses. For example, in Economics majors on a Bachelor level there must be the General Education component similar to other Bachelor programs plus in its Core component must have certain mandatory courses as described in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4.MANDATORY COURSES OF CORE COMPONENT,  
BACHELOR IN ECONOMICS (34 CREDITS)

Source: Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. (2006). *State Compulsory Standard of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Higher Education. Bachelor level. Specialty 050506 – Economics.* (3.08.310-2006)

1. Economic Theory – 2 credits
2. Mathematics for Economics – 3 credits,
3. Microeconomics – 2 credits
4. Macroeconomics – 2 credits,

5. Entrepreneurial Law – 2 credits,
6. Statistics – 3 credits,
7. State Regulation of Economy – 3 credits,
8. Econometrics – 2 credits,
9. Management – 3 credits,
10. Marketing – 3 credits,
11. Finance – 3 credits,
12. Financial Markets and Intermediaries – 3 credits,
13. Accounting and Audit – 3 credits.

For each of a mandatory course of the Core Component the State Standards on a Specialty describes a list of themes, which must be covered by the course. All higher education institutions offering Bachelor programs in Economics must follow provided lists. The example on Microeconomics course is provided in Table5.

TABLE 5. MICROECONOMICS. CORE COMPONENT COURSE  
AND ITS MAIN THEMES

Source: Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. (2006). *State Compulsory Standard of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Higher Education. Bachelor level. Specialty 050506 – Economics. (3.08.310-2006)*

**Micro 1203 – 2 credits. Themes to be covered:**

Analysis of markets;

Theory of supply and demand;

Theory of production;

Cost of production;

Profit maximization in perfectly competitive market, in monopoly, oligopoly;

Markets for production inputs;

Market equilibrium;

Definition of public good and externalities.

Based on the above the State Standards on a Specialty the Ministry of Education and Science develops so called Model Programs which have a more detailed description of learning outcomes, skills and knowledge acquired by a student. These Model programs are uniform for all the system and give a detailed description of General Education courses, as well as mandatory courses of the Core and the Specialization components. Model Programs are reviewed and approved by a national body called the *National Education and Methodology Council* which is formed by the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education and Science, 2008). The composition of the Council is approved by the executive order of the Minister.

The Council is chaired by the Deputy Minister responsible for the higher education. Members are heads of key units of the ministry involved in higher education and rectors of largest public universities. According to the recent publicly available list of the Council members approved by the Minister it included 6 representatives of the Ministry including the deputy minister as a chair and 29 rectors of public universities (Ministry of Education and Science, 2008). According to the bylaw regulating activities of the Council (signed by the Minister) its responsibilities include: “developing recommendations on State Compulsory Educational Standards on Bachelor, Master, and

PhD levels, Standards for Specialties, as well as Model Programs” for all majors offered by higher education institutions of the country.

The Council delegates the development of the Standards for Specialties and Model Programs to thematic *Education and Methodology Sections* which are a group of senior administrators and faculty based in selected national and public universities. Thus, the council distributes (outsources) the work of developing standards and programs to leading universities. A rector of a respective university is appointed as the chair of a Section. He/She forms the Section from his/her faculty members and has to get an approval of the composition from the Ministry. There is a Section for each of major included in the Classification of Specialties. Some large universities may have a dozen Sections, some may have few and some smaller universities may have only one Section that develops a program for one major. This represents an existing system of how the Ministry distributes the work to develop standards and Model Programs back to universities. The allocation of work to develop Model Programs “is based on historic assumptions and reputation of certain universities being leaders in certain areas of specialty” (Ministry representative, personal communication, December 18).

Rectors/Vice-rectors of the universities who chair their respective Sections have to report back to the National Council not less than once a year. Within the institutions the work is distributed among schools and departments who nominate members from their faculty. Thus the faculty members who are appointed for the development of Model Programs at Sections are able to influence the content of mandatory courses in their respective fields.

The model programs once approved by the National Education and Methodology Council are distributed to all higher education institutions by the Ministry of Education and Science. It then requires that higher education institutions develop their own *Working Programs* based on the structure prescribed in Model Programs. The State Standards also set requirements and procedures for curriculum development which must be followed by higher education institutions. It requires that institutions finalize a program structure for each specialization by adding courses into elective parts of the Core and Specialization components of programs. As specified in the State Standards “institutions are not allowed to decrease credit hours or change courses in the mandatory subcomponents” (Ministry of Education and Science, 2011a, b, c). The final versions of Working Programs which have both mandatory and elective parts need to be approved by institutions’ Academic Councils (in some cases called “Education and Research councils). Working programs are typically developed on a departmental level where the work is distributed among faculty members. Higher education institutions are required to set up school level program committees consisting of deans, department chairs and faculty member to review the Working programs which are then approved by university Academic Councils chaired by the rectors/vice-rectors.

The Ministry of Education conducts regular inspections (typically once in 5 years) to check whether working programs and syllabi are in compliance with the standards. The State Compulsory Educational Standards on Bachelor, Master and PhD levels in addition to setting the main structure of programs prescribe general guidelines on student’s study loads, a number of academic hours per credit, evaluation system and

requirements for “educational environment” (e.g. infrastructure, classrooms, library, IT services etc.).

### ***Quality Control and Evaluation***

The student evaluation system is also regulated on the national level. As was mentioned above, inspections of the higher education institutions are conducted by the Ministry in order to monitor compliance of educational services with the requirements of state standards. The results of student learning in General Education and mandatory courses of the Core and the Specialization components are assessed by a nationwide comprehensive examination which is conducted in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> (final year) of the undergraduate programs. This monitoring has been conducted since 2004 to assess the quality of educational services and to determine the level of learning outcomes of students enrolled in both public and private higher education institutions. Instruction on running of examinations is very prescriptive: “the number of test questions for each subject equals to 25, the duration of the examination (in a test form) is 150 minutes (2.5 hours); the examination is conducted in the language of instruction (Kazakh or Russian); the test results have to be provided to students within 24 hours after its completion” (State Compulsory Educational Standards, 2009).

A control over implementation of the comprehensive examination in higher education institutions is exercised by the territorial bodies of the Committee for Controls under the Ministry of Education and Science. If students of a certain institution do not gain the minimum results determined by the Ministry of Education, the institution is subject to an ad hoc comprehensive state inspection.

### ***Selection, hiring and promotion of faculty members***

Labor relations in Kazakhstan, including in education, e.g. between the institution and a faculty, are regulated on the national level by the Labor Code (2007), the Law “On Education” (2007), and the Rules “On Faculty Selection and Appointment at Higher Education Institutions” (2012) adopted by the Government. Universities have to develop selection, hiring and promotion policies based on provisions of the abovementioned legal documents. The employment relationships between the institution and faculty members “are determined in accordance with labor legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan and by the signed contract, whereas working hours are established by the rector taking into account provisions of the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan” (Kazakh National State University, Charter , 2009)).

Rules “On faculty selection and appointment at higher education institutions” adopted by the Government in 2012 contain the rules of selection and promotion procedures, public announcement, rights and responsibilities of applicants. It requires that “all vacancies have to be announced in public media; all candidates are free to submit applications not later than 30 days the publication”. The institutions are required to form Selection Committees. The size and the composition of the committees are proposed by the Academic Councils of universities and approved by rectors. The Selection Committee has to be chaired by a vice rector. Candidates for professor, associate professor, lecturer positions have to be reviewed and recommended by the relevant department. A department has to review whether a candidate has professional experience and determine if a candidate meets the criteria set by the qualification

requirements adopted the Ministry for each of the academic position. A Selection Committee has to review recommendations made by the department and vote on either “to recommend or not recommend” a candidate to a rector (Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2012).

An Executive Order of the Minister of Education and Science No.338 on July 13, 2009 has set the Qualification Requirements for senior administration and faculty positions for all public and private higher education institutions. They contain the detailed job description, required knowledge and professional qualification for each position. For example, a person taking a position of a professor “has to be able to plan, organize and implement learning activities, develop methodologies for the supervised courses, conducts all types of educational activities, supervise master and doctoral students, conduct research, publish textbooks, and mentor other faculty at the department”. A professor “has to know the Constitution, the Law “On Education”, other regulations in the educational area, the state standards, the rules on developing educational programs, teaching and assessment methodologies, as well as pedagogy, physiology, psychology, labor code, safety rules”. Candidates must have “a graduate degree, teaching and research experience with the institution of not less than 5 years” (Ministry of Education of Kazakhstan, Qualification Requirements for Employees of Higher Education Institutions, 2009a).

The rules of providing *academic titles* (which are different from positions) of a “Professor” and an “Associate Professor” are set by a separate Executive order of the Minister of Education and Science No.128 of March 31, 2011. According to this

regulation, the titles of “a Professor and an Associate Professor can be granted by the special Control Committee of the Ministry of Education and Science upon recommendation of Academic Councils of higher education institutions”. An associate professor title can be given to the candidates “who worked in the same institution not less than 3 years after completion of the dissertation and doctorate degree”. A candidate “has to have not less than 14 publications in the area of specialization including at least 2 international publications and has to be an author of syllabus which was used in the institution not less than during 1 academic year” (Ministry of Education and Science, Rules on Granting Academic Titles, , 2011d).

To receive the title of a “Professor” a candidate has to have a work experience with the same institution not less than 5 years after completion of dissertation and receiving doctorate degree, “has to have not less than 28 publications in the area of specialization including at least 5 international publications, has to be an author of a syllabus which was used in the institution not less than for 3 academic years, and have supervised at least 3 doctoral students”. The application has to be submitted to the Control Committee of the Ministry with attachment of all relevant documentation. The Committee has to make the decision in a 2 month time (Ministry of Education, 2011d).

It should be mentioned that all degrees in the Republic of Kazakhstan (except Nazarbayev University) are issued by the state. The Ministry of Education has another special body called the Attestation Committee which is responsible for confirming that all students receiving Bachelor, Masters and PhD degrees have completed their degree programs and have met the final evaluation criteria in accordance with the State

Standards. Confirmation on Bachelor and Master Program happens automatically upon verification of submitted documents with an evidence of completion of the course and examination by a student. Candidates for PhD degrees have to be interviewed in person by the Attestation Committee, which then can decide to approve or not to approve the PhD degree for the person (Ministry of Education and Science, 2011d).

### ***Other requirements***

The Ministry does regulate the teaching loads through enforcing *Academic and Teaching Load Standards* (Ministry of Education and Science, 2009 b) and *Rules for the organization of the educational process according to credit technology* (2011f). The rules determine the types of study activities, such as lectures, seminars, practical studies. They set limits on a number of students in the classroom, set faculty to student ratio, and determine a number of hours per a credit unit. The example of requirements per one credit is displayed in Table 6.

TABLE 6. REQUIREMENTS FOR 1 CREDIT EQUIVALENT

Source: Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. (2009b). *State Compulsory Standard of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Academic and Teaching Load Standards* (5.03.015 – 2009)

- 15 contact hours of lectures, seminars and practical study;
- 22,5 contact hours of studio studies;
- 30 contact hours of laboratory works;
- 15 contact hours of educational internship;
- 30 contact hours of pedagogical internship;
- 75 contact hours of profile internship.

The Standard also sets a number of students in the classroom study, at practical works and other activities. “A lecture should involve not less than 30 students, seminars and practical work not less 20 students, language and IT courses should involve 10 to 12 students in a group, laboratory and studio work not less than 10 students. The ministry sets strict rules on faculty to student ratio which should not be less than 8 on a bachelor level, 4 to1 on a master level, and 3 to 1 on a doctorate level” (Ministry of Education and Science,2009b).

The Ministry of Education and Science also sets standard procedures for admission and enrollment to all public universities. Enrollment is based on a nation-wide comprehensive examination called *Unified National Test* for secondary school graduates. Based on the examination results, graduates may receive the scholarship and chose the university they would like to enter. Thus the final examination at high school serves as an entry examination to a university which takes students according to the rules set by the Ministry. Enrollment of students is conducted by a university Admission Committee within a period established by the Ministry. A University submits information to the Ministry of Education on admission of students and a final report on admission results according to forms and within the period established by the Ministry of Education.

***Opportunities for faculty to influence academic matters  
at Kazakh National University***

***Overview of the university***

Kazakh National University (KazNU) is the largest and oldest university in the country established in 1933 by the Soviet government in Kazakhstan as a Pedagogical

Institute with a first group of 54 students enrolled to the departments of Biology, Physics and Mathematics. It was converted into the Kazakh State University by a special government decree in the end of the 1936 with three more departments opening (Chemistry, Foreign Languages and Philology). After Kazakhstan became independent, the Decree of the first President of the Republic of Kazakhstan gave the institution the special status of the “National University” and named it after al-Farabi (a medieval Central Asia scientist) on July 5, 2001.

Today after 80 years since opening KazNU has more than 20,000 full time and part time students who study Natural Sciences, Engineering, Humanities and Social Sciences at 14 Schools which include: School of Mechanics and Mathematics, School of Physics and Technology, School of Biology and Biotechnology, School of Journalism, School of Geography and Nature Management, School of Law, School of Chemistry and Chemical Technology, School of Philosophy and Political Science, School of History, Archeology and Ethnology, School of Philology, Literary Studies and World Languages, Graduate School of Economics and Business, School of International Relations, and School of Oriental Studies (Kazakh National University website, accessed on May 25 at <http://kaznu.kz/en>).

The University has more than 2500 faculty members including 400 professors (holding degrees of Doctors of Sciences), and about 800 associate professors (holding degrees of Candidates of Sciences). There are 27 members of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan holding titles of “Academics”, the highest scientific title in the country. The university has 20 research institutes and centers such

as: Research Institute of New Chemical Technologies and Materials, Institute of Biology and Biotechnology, Institute of Ecology, Research Institute of Mathematics and Mechanics, Science and Technology Park, National Open Nanotechnology Laboratory, Research Institute of Combustion Problems, Research Institute of Experimental and Theoretical Physics, Engineering Laboratory, Institute of Combustion Problems and etc.

For several years KazNU has been the leader in the national ranking of education institutions run by the National Accreditation Center under the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan as well as of the general ranking run by Independent Kazakhstan Quality Assurance Agency in Education. The University has been ranked among top 500 universities of the world by QS World Universities Rankings (Top Universities, 2011). It is a member of numerous international organizations, including International Association of Universities, European Society for Engineering Education. The University signed the Bologna Charter in 2003, first among higher education institutions in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. KazNU was the first university in Kazakhstan and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to fully transfer to a three-stage Bachelor-Master-PhD system as well as the credit system. KazNU has a large campus in the center of Almaty with over 100 hectares on which that includes 14 academic buildings, 13 dormitories, and sports and recreation centers.

### ***The role of faculty as reflected in organizational structure***

Faculty members of KazNU have an opportunity to participate in university-wide academic matters through membership in the *Science and Education Council* (Academic Council). According to the Charter of the university this is a consultative body under the

rector who chairs the Council. Usually members are vice rectors, deans, heads of departments, some faculty members nominated by the faculty as a whole and approved by the rector, and a few representatives of student organizations selected by the rector as well (Kazakh National University, List of members of Science and Education Council, 2011). In other words, the rector controls the membership and, as such, the agenda of the Council.

Bylaws governing the Council are developed according to the *Regulations of Activities of an Education Council of a University and Order of Its Election* (Ministry of Education, 2007), the guidelines which are established by the Ministry of Education. The Council votes and adopts academic decisions which take force if signed by the rector. If the rector is in disagreement with a decision of the Council, the matter should be sent for the Ministry of Education's consideration. No such cases were reported so far as the rector controls membership to the council and has a large say in faculty hiring and dismissal. There are no incentives for a disagreement or for independence in views. The Council is under the tight control of the rector. The higher educational governance system is a top-down centralized control since the rector is appointed by the government and the rector, in turn, appoints his council.

According to the bylaws of the Council it can consider various issues such as establishment, reorganization and closing of departments, laboratories, and research institutes. It can advise on opening or closing programs, majors (specialties) or courses. It can vote on awarding academic and honorary degrees, individual scholarships and other rewards. The Council approves annual reports of deans and chairs of departments. It can

review and approve new forms and methods of teaching and research, various educational and international activities. Its responsibility also includes an approval of supervisors and themes for master and doctoral students (Kazakh National University, Charter, Article on Education Council, 2009).

Schools are headed by deans who chair School Councils which consist of department chairs. The department is a primary organizational unit of a school engaged in “teaching and research work in one or more related disciplines, work with students, and ensure professional development of faculty members” (KazNU Charter, 2009). Department chairs are nominated by a dean and appointed by the rector.

Rights and responsibilities of faculty members of the university are proscribed in its Charter. According to the document they have rights to “freely choose methods and forms of teaching in compliance with the requirements of state standards; elect and be elected to the Academic Council of the university and a School Council, participate in international and national scientific and methodological conferences and meetings in accordance with an established procedure” (Kazakh National University, Charter, 2009). As codified in the charter faculty members have the responsibility “to exercise high quality teaching and research, help develop students' individual and creative skills, actively engage in their learning, respect national, human and moral values, and observe high ethical standards” (Kazakh National University, Charter, 2009). Rights and responsibilities of faculty and researchers are also mirrored in their employment contracts.

### ***Faculty role in program and course design***

KazNU can teach majors which are included in the national Classification of Specialties. Introduction of new majors is quite difficult although as became evident from the interviews at KazNU almost all departments are eager to open new majors. As described by one faculty member, usually if department comes up with an initiative on a new program the Academic Council would support it. However, starting a new major is a complicated and long process on the national level which requires at least 3 years because the major should be included into the national Classification of Specialties in order to be taught in the higher education institutions (KazNU professor, personal communication, December 15, 2012).

Faculties are able to introduce new courses into elective components within existing majors. They would put proposals on modification of Working Programs to their departments, then to a School Council and finally have to receive an approval of the Academic Council. The courses of mandatory components are described in Model Programs and state standards distributed by the Ministry of Education and Science.

Faculty members at the Kazakh National University have to follow Model Programs based on state standards which were developed and approved by the state. Mandatory courses of Core and Specialization components are provided by the Ministry. Kazakh National University has to develop a structure and courses for “Elective” parts of both components. The work is assigned to Schools where deans are responsible for a final delivery. A school then distributes the work among departments depending on relevant specialization. On a department level the work is assigned to curriculum

committees which consist of faculty members. Once developed a program and a course structure go for an approval to a School Committee and after that to the university wide Education and Science Council. Based on the approved program structure, departments have to develop Working Programs for each major. Introduction of new courses into Elective components gives the faculty an opportunity to keep the programs up to date.

Once working programs are developed for majors offered by the university then a course catalogue is developed or updated. Based on working programs faculty members develop syllabi of courses that they are going to teach which are reviewed and approved by curriculum committees of departments Courses developed by curriculum committees include syllabi, detailed guidelines for student assessment (assignments, tests, exams, guidelines on writing papers, etc.), outline of lectures, methodical instructions on seminars and lab works, a list of literature, as well as study materials (as textbooks, presentations, etc.).

As observed by faculty teaching based on state standards and model programs creates lots of bureaucratic procedures. The university has to interact with the ministry on a constant basis. The volume and amount of correspondence between the university and the ministry are quite substantial as the latter has to give assignments, check results, provide feedback, and monitor the work. A chair of KazNU argued in favor of reducing procedures in dealing with the Ministry of Education: “We need to go away from Soviet heritage, the standards”. However, he observed that “Ministry of Education orders the university to follow strictly all procedures, for example, almost all documents should be

in 3 paper copies, each to be twice signed by a faculty, a chair, an office registrar, etc.” (KazNU professor, personal communication, December 15, 2012).

There is growing concern among many chairs and faculty on increased level of bureaucracy imposed by the Ministry of Education. The university is constantly requested by the Ministry to implement different assignments and provide input, apart from regular reports to the ministry committees. The ministry considers public universities as its extension and faculty members as its public employees. Chairs and faculty of KazNU confirmed that they spend a significant share of working hours not on teaching and research, but replying on requests of the Ministry of Education that takes time and efforts by looking up for archives, entering data, calculating rating scores, etc. None of the respondents among faculty told that they can ignore a request of the Ministry.

A chair of KazNU also mentioned about an increased number of obligatory meetings at university (rectorate), school and departmental level. “Earlier department meetings were held only once a month and at demand, now it is a common practice to hold them once every week” (KazNU assistant professor, personal communication, December 15, 2012).

A professor of KazNU noted that faculty members are frustrated with an increased paperwork. At the same time faculty members need to publish their research, to participate in research conferences, and to share these knowledge to students. (KazNU professor, personal communication, December 15, 2012). A faculty of KazNU notes that faculty needs to teach 26 credits, some young faculty even 30.

### ***Teaching methodology and student evaluation***

While delivering a mandatory course faculty has to cover the certain themes established by the State Standards. But faculty members are free to develop their own syllabi and define teaching and assessment methodology. As one faculty member described that even when delivering a state standard course in other schools professor should follow the themes but at the same time has a right to develop some additional tasks, methods, and guidelines for an individual student's work. Each professor in this case may use a unique approach even if formal requirements are still in place. Even if the same lectures have to be developed, and faculty have to follow the model course they can deviate within themes. A sociology professor explained "for instance, I know a subject well, and I want to deviate from a subject of general sociology depending on sources I use or add something new". Professor thought that it was acceptable for KazNU, may be because it used to be a leading university, a developer of many national standards. He also added "we have such an atmosphere where we are not under a strict control, each of us is free as for choosing a method of lecturing, a choice of themes, methods. We have a right environment". Therefore, the choice of methodology is based on a professor's preference (KazNU professor, personal communication, December 15, 2012).

For non-mandatory courses faculty members decide on how to evaluate student's progress during the course, in a midterm or a final stage. A faculty member is free to decide which forms of evaluation to use, i.e. an oral exam, an essay or a multiple choice test. State regulations on delivery and teaching are not as restrictive as with a structure of a program and a curriculum design. Faculty members are free to develop and use their

teaching methodologies. The surveyed faculty of the institution testified that they were free in choosing teaching and delivery methods as well as in selecting types of evaluation methods.

Some faculty mentioned that they even can teach differently the same course to students of different majors. For example, if Philosophy is taught for Language majors, a faculty can put more emphasis on language issues in Philosophy. As one faculty member points out that all professors develop their own methods taking into account the specific nature of a program. There are some widely accepted and commonly used methods. But as he admitted that nevertheless professors while being able to choose methods stick to old approaches. “For example, I don’t think that elder generations of professors apply innovative technologies, they use some technologies and assessment developed by themselves long time ago. KazNU has a methodological division which helps them to prepare syllabi, and reflects the new methods” (KazNU professor, personal communication, December 15, 2012).

As for student evaluation some faculty members thought that a recently introduced credit system as very effective in terms of assessment of a students’ progress as it requires students to attend all classes and to participate actively in classroom discussions in order to receive points for a higher grade. They remembered that in the former 5-point system students would miss classes as it wouldn’t seriously influence a final grade.

### ***KazNU faculties as authors of State Standards***

Being the leading national university, KazNU has certain advantages over other higher education institutions in the country. Within the existing system described above, the Ministry of Education and Science has assigned the Kazakh National University to develop the State Standards on Specialties for 33 majors which are included in the national Classification of Specialties. These majors are grouped and developed by 12 *Education and Methodology Sections* based at KazNU. Each of this thematic “Section” represents a group which consists of deans of relevant schools, department chairs and faculty members. Formally all groups are chaired by the rector of KazNU but the major responsibility is with the dean. Subject to approval from the Ministry the group can propose the structure of Core and Specialization components and define the courses of their mandatory parts. The group can define themes which have to be covered by mandatory courses as well as develop Model Programs which include more detailed description of courses. The State Standards on Specialties (majors) developed at the Kazakh National University are displayed in Table 7.

TABLE 7. STATE COMPULSORY STANDARDS ON SPECIALTIES (MAJORS)  
DEVELOPED AT THE KAZAKH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Source: Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. (2008). *Provision on the National Education and Methodology Council for Undergraduate and Graduate Education* (The Decree of the Minister of Education and Science, dated 16 June 2008 , N.353)

<b>Humanities</b>	<b>Social Sciences</b>	<b>Natural Sciences and</b>
Philosophy	Archeology	<b>Technology</b>

International Relations,	Public relations	Mathematics
History	Sociology	Informatics
Culture	Political Science	Mechanics
Philology	Phycology	Physics
Religious studies	Journalism	Nuclear Physics
Archeology and ethnology	Regional Studies	Chemistry
Oriental Studies	World Economy	Biology
	Management	Ecology
	State and local governance	Geography
	Marketing	Hydrology
		Astronomy
		Meteorology
		Mathematical and Computer modeling
		Biotechnology

Some courses of General Education component such as Philosophy, History, and Sociology are also developed by the faculty of KazNU because the relevant Section is based at the university. Once developed and approved by the National Education and Methodology Council programs and course structures for the above majors become compulsory standards to follow for all other higher education institutions in the country.

Faculty members at KazNU confirmed that the university has advantages compared to other universities because its faculty members directly participate in the development of the state standards and have more influence on the content of mandatory subjects. As one interviewee mentioned “faculty members at our department are authors of three state standards on specialties: International Relations, Regional Studies and World Economy at undergraduate, master and PhD levels (KazNU department chair, personal communication, December 15, 2012).

Another faculty member from a different department confirmed a similar notion. He said that KazNU professors had developed state standards, model programs, and curricula in Economics, Philosophy, Political Science, Cultural Studies, and Religious Studies. For some courses the faculty of the university have been the program developers for more than ten years. Therefore, KazNU faculty determined the obligatory block of courses for all other institutions of higher education institutions which teach in these fields (KazNU professor, personal communication, December 15, 2012).

Another faculty member described the situation as following. There are six economic programs in the national specialties list; three of them are developed by the Kazakh National University, and other three – at the Kazakh Economic University. “They have Economics, Finances, and Accounting, and we have Marketing, Management and Public Management” (KazNU department chair, personal communication, December 15, 2012).

Through my interviews it became apparent that the process of assigning course development among universities is not completely clear and transparent. One faculty

member described the following that earlier all economics and business programs were developed at the Kazakh Economic University. Then according to him the new Minister of Education and Science ordered to transfer them to the Kazakh National University. Then the situation changed again, when the Minister changed, the three programs were left at the Kazakh Economic University, and other three were transferred to the Kazakh National University. But then he noted that faculty members at both universities managed to agree through personal and informal contacts jointly develop the model programs (KazNU department chair, personal communication, December 15, 2012). This is an interesting example of informal politics and informal cooperation between institutions as the reaction to state controls and bureaucratic pressures.

***Faculty selection, appointment, evaluation and promotion***

The rector of KazNU is appointed by the president of the country upon recommendation of the Ministry of Education and Science. Vice rectors are appointed by the Ministry. Further down the chain of command, deans of schools are appointed by the rector following the selection procedures according to nationwide rules approved by the Ministry. But according to interviewed representatives of KazNU standard rules for filling deans' position give a rector a freedom to contract a candidate who fits to the rector's personal vision. "In practice such freedom creates precedents of continuous staff turnover of deans at the university". The rector, based on his or her personal vision of the institutional development, makes decisions on creation, termination, and division of the schools (KazNU professor, personal communication, December 15, 2012).

Department chairs are nominated by a dean and approved by the rector. Formally there is a selection committee but key decisions are made by senior administration. Overall, faculty members have expressed concern that a position of department chair has dramatically changed in recent years from an academic position to more an administrative one. Earlier chairs would have much more free time for academic and research work. They would be... “an academic leader of faculty at their departments, and would have enough time to conduct research. It was a common trend that chairs were well-known professors or scientists” (KazNU professor, personal communication, December 15, 2012).

As faculty reported, nowadays chairs have turned into administrators, rather than prominent professors or researchers. They are obliged to do much more routine work as to control and monitor of faculty to do both teaching and administrative duties. Taking into account the increased centralization and bureaucracy from the Ministry of Education chairs have to monitor enormous amount of paperwork to be done on time by faculty. A chair of KazNU complained that all new initiatives usually have a top-down approach. Faculty does not want to participate in it as it is time consuming and usually is not paid. So, chairs “have to spend all the time to struggle with faculty in order to make them fulfill new assignments, as well as, a routine work” (KazNU professor, personal communication, December 15, 2012).

Some interviewees mentioned that “since last year, department chairs of KazNU were appointed by an order of the Rector, by signing a contract for one year without a due process and a fair selection” (KazNU professor, personal communication, December

15, 2012). Department chairs and deputies are released from teaching, although they may take an additional teaching load of not more than 0.5 and 1 teaching loads for full professors (or 26-30 credits). According to one chair at KazNU, it is usually a dean who recommends a candidate for a chair position, a final decision of the appointment is taken by the rector only and “opinions of faculty are not taken into account”. Obviously, the centralization of powers is taking place at KazNU, as a role of faculty in management of a department is seriously diminished (KazNU professor, personal communication, December 15, 2012).

A new faculty appointment process was described by some faculty members as following: a chair of a department recommends a candidate to a dean. If the dean has no objection he/she sends a candidate to the rector’s office. As for the competition and selection procedures, in most cases they are just formalities and remain on paper while key decisions are known in advance that have been made by senior administrators. (KazNU professor, personal communication, December 15, 2012). Documents are filled by the relevant department and then transferred to the university HR department which is responsible for making sure that the documents were filed according to the selection rules.

Usually, as witnessed by some faculty at KazNU “vacant positions for next academic year are determined by a chair”. For example, if a senior lecturer received his/her PhD degree and plans to become an associate professor, a chair of a department can reserve a vacant position for him/her by reallocating the number of credits at the department (KazNU professor, personal communication, December 15, 2012).

There are three types of faculty evaluation at the Kazakh National University: at the University level, by peer faculty members and by students. At institutional level faculty are evaluated through a rating system. This system represents a table that includes categories of accomplishments in educational process, research, administrative duties by a faculty in a certain period (usually, a year). The rating tables are filled by the faculty and direct supervisors (a chair of department, a deputy dean, a dean). Each activity has a scored value that is set by the senior administration of the university. The total score defines a performance level. A commission headed by the rector or a vice rector decides on assignment of final scores to each faculty.

Most faculty members find this system imperfect as according to their views, it is impossible to create such a uniform scale acceptable to various disciplines and departments. For instance, not all departments would have patents and inventions which are eligible for high scores. It puts faculty in natural and technical sciences in more advantageous position than faculty in social sciences and humanities.

In terms of evaluation of teaching methods by a faculty there is a traditional system inherited from the past when a faculty attends each other's so called "open lectures". Then there are discussions at department level on delivery methods used with valuable comments given by colleagues that should lead to improvement. It is believed that this system is mostly useful for young faculty. A shortcoming of this system is that sometimes it could be held formally with no serious discussion of quality of teaching. Effectiveness of this system mainly depends on attitude of a chair of department or the faculty attending open lectures.

Evaluation of delivery methods also takes into account students' opinions. At the end of each semester surveys of students are conducted. A general online survey of all students is conducted that typically includes questions on delivery methods used by a faculty of all subjects taken in a semester. Comments of students are used by faculty for improvement of delivery methods. Also, there is a paper-based survey that includes questions on incorrect behavior, not proper treatment of students, unethical activities, etc. The survey is conducted unanimously among a sample of students. The results of the survey are reviewed by the department chair, the deans, or the rector's office can impact decisions on promotion.

According to official rules "procedures for *staff promotion* is part of policy of a higher education institution on retaining highly qualified faculty" (Ministry of Education, 2009). A candidate seeking promotion submits a written application to a dean through a head of the department. The dean holds a meeting with the candidate for a preliminary discussion of the candidate's request. If the candidate is willing to proceed with consideration of his or her request after the preliminary discussion, the dean sends documents to the supervising vice rector who recommends or does not recommend the candidate to the rector. Some interviewees think that in fact there is "no special procedure for promotion, instead, faculty can just apply for higher vacancy, if all requirements (experience, academic degree, availability of publications on the basis of recommendations of department, knowledge of English, etc.) are met and there are vacant higher positions" (KazNU professor, personal communication, December 15, 2012).

As a result, the role of chairs is crucial in determining the number of vacant positions in the department for new hiring, as well as promotion. As one professor observed “at KazNU it is a common practice that there is no real competition for vacancies, i.e. all vacant positions in the following year are taken by the same faculty who worked in the previous year at lower positions”. It is one of the reasons why very few faculty members from other universities want to participate in the competition to take faculty positions at KazNU as they think it is not feasible. (KazNU professor, personal communication, December 15, 2012).

All interviewed faculty members and some administrators claimed that the process of selection, hiring and promotion could have been more transparent and efficient. There is some faculty participation in the above processes but the main role is played by senior administration.

***Opportunities for faculty to influence academic matters  
at Eurasian National University***

***Overview of the university***

The Eurasian National University was founded in 1996 by the Decree of the first President of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the new capital Astana and is one of the youngest among large national universities. The special status of the National University was given by the Decree of the President. Education at the undergraduate and graduate levels is delivered in 12 Schools with 71 majors at Bachelor level, 65 majors at Master level, and 29 majors at doctorate (PhD) level. The university has: School of Economics, School of Journalism and Politics, School of Law, School of Information Technologies, School of International Relations, School of Philology, School of Mechanics and

Mathematics, School of Architecture and Construction, School of Social Sciences, School of Physics and Technical Sciences, School of Transport and Energy, and School of Natural Sciences (Eurasian National University web site, accessed on May 25, 2012 at <http://www.enu.kz/about/>).

The University has 1,700 faculty members including 125 Doctors of sciences and 332 Candidates of sciences, 7 faculty are members of the National Academy of Sciences. ENU has more than 12 000 students including full time and part time students. ENU is the leader among Kazakhstani universities in the number of state education scholarship holders (74% of the total number of students).

The University has 27 research institutes and centers such as: Eurasian Mathematical Institute, Institute of Theoretical Mathematics and Scientific Computations, Institute for Basic Research, Eurasian International Center of Theoretical Physics, Research Institute of Bioorganic Chemistry, Institute of Cell Biology and Biotechnology, Institute of Applied Chemistry, Institute of Applied Chemistry, Laboratory of Intercultural Communication and Applied Linguistics, etc.

In 2012 the University was ranked as the second in Kazakhstan by Independent Kazakhstan Quality Assurance Agency for Education (IQAA). The same year it entered top 500 world ranking by QS World University Ranking and took 369th place. In 2005 the university signed the Bologna charter and introduced a three-level education and a credit system.

### ***The role of faculty as reflected in the organizational structure***

The Charter of Eurasian National University is identical to the Kazakh National University's. The university is established as a state owned enterprise with the property rights belonging to the Ministry of Finance. A strategy, a budget and an organizational structure are approved by the Ministry of Education and Science. It nominates the rector who is then appointed by the president of the country. Vice rectors are appointed by the Ministry of Education and Science.

The highest academic body of the university is the Education Council (Academic Council) which is an advisory body and chaired by the rector. The faculty members are elected and can participate in the Council. School Councils are chaired by deans. Faculty members of ENU same as KazNU's have an opportunity to participate in academic matters of the institution through membership in the Academic Council. Similarly according to the Charter of the university this is a consultative body under the rector who is a chair with members being vice rectors, deans, selected heads of departments. The Council may include some faculty members approved by the rector, and several representatives of student organizations selected by the rector as well (Eurasian National University, List of members of Science and Education Council, 2011).

Bylaws governing the Council are developed according to the rules mentioned earlier which are established by the Ministry of Education called the *Regulations of Activities of an Education Council of a University and Order of Its Election* (Ministry of Education and Science, 2007). The council votes and adopts academic decisions which take force when signed by the rector. All disagreements on decisions of the council can

be resolved by the Ministry of Education according to above rules. There were no evidences of disagreement in views between the rector and the council.

According to the bylaws the Council can advise on opening or closing programs, majors (specialties) or courses as well as can consider various issues such as establishment, reorganization and closing of departments, laboratories, and research institutes. It votes on awarding degrees, individual scholarships and other awards. It can review and approve new forms and methods of teaching and research, various educational and international activities. The council approves annual reports of deans and chairs of departments (Eurasian National University, Charter, Article on Education Council, 2009).

Rights and responsibilities of faculty members of the university are proscribed in ENU Charter which is identical to Kane's. For example, according to the document they have identical rights according to the document to freely choose methods and forms of teaching in compliance with the requirements of state compulsory standards; elect and be elected to the Academic Council of the university and a School Council, participate in international and national scientific and methodological conferences and meetings in accordance with established procedures (Eurasian National University, Charter, 2009). Rights and responsibilities of faculty and researchers are also mirrored in their employment contracts.

As observed by many interviewed representatives of the university the rector has vast powers and controls most of the key decisions, especially related to a budget and finances. As reported by a department chair, budget and financial issues are not

transparent to faculty members. Furthermore, "...even the Academic Council doesn't have full rights and a status on decision making". Besides, faculty of ENU reported that they are not fully aware about expenditure and revenue structures. However, in reality faculty members do not have a sufficient status in the development of university's strategy, and may not participate in decision making at all since financial instruments belong to the rector only (ENU professor, personal communication, December 20, 2012).

Furthermore, ENU's faculty members do not participate in development of the University Strategy. They are not aware of the Strategic Plan. It is developed by the rector as "... every new rector brings the new strategy as well, without consulting or seeking advice from faculty members" (ENU professor, personal communication, December 20, 2012).

According to a vice-rector of ENU, "the proportion of powers for making decisions is 80% at the Ministry of Education level, 19.8% at a rector level, and just 0.2% at faculty members' level". Faculty members "try to participate in making decisions, but the Ministry of Education usually limits their freedom" (ENU vice rector, personal communication, December 20, 2012). A vice-rector of ENU suggested that "proper conditions for faculty are not created by the state".

Many of the interviewed faculty members and administrators complained about excessive paper work and routine exchange of information in relations with the Ministry of Education and Science which is a distraction from the academic work similar to what KazNU faculty told. Because of "routine paperwork faculty members may not have enough time to work on research or other activities" (ENU professor, personal

communication, December 20, 2012) Another professor at ENU's suggested that "the 80% of faculty members load is related with routine paperwork and other administrative functions dealing with reporting on state requirements. Teaching is on the second place, and research is on the third" (ENU professor, personal communication, December 20, 2012).

As declared by many faculty administrative powers are quite strong and there is a sense that it is not a "proper situation since professors are exploited by administration". Because of administrative barriers faculty members "are not motivated to propose new ideas or initiatives. There is no dialogue between research staff and administration" (ENU professor, personal communication, December 20, 2012). According to the Charter of the University the institution has the same structure typical to other national universities. Deans of schools chair School Councils which consist of department chairs. Department chairs are nominated by the dean and appointed by the rector.

### ***Program design and course structure***

The university delivers programs according to state standards. It receives State Standards on Specialties and Model Programs from the Ministry of Education and Science for all the majors it teaches. Out of the majors which are included in the national Classification of Specialties, the Eurasian National University develops only state standards on a Specialty and model program for only one major to be used by the rest of the system which is "Turkology" (or Turkic Studies). This probably is based on the fact that the university is quite young compared to other universities. Thus, the courses of General Education component, mandatory courses of Core and Specialization

components of its degree programs are predesigned and provided by the Ministry of Education.

After receiving State Standards on Specialties and Model programs the university has to develop structures and courses for “elective” parts of both components. Similar to KazNU the work is assigned to schools with deans being responsible for the final delivery. A school then distributes the work among departments depending on specialization. On the departmental level the work is assigned to curriculum committees and faculty members. Once developed, a Working Program and a course structure are submitted for an approval by the School Committee and the University Academic Council.

Based on the approved program structure, departments have to develop Working Programs and a course catalogue. Based on Working Programs faculty members develop syllabi of the courses that they teach subject to approval by curriculum committees of departments. In addition to the syllabi, faculty members develop detailed guidelines for student assessment, outlines of lectures, methodical instructions on seminars and lab works, lists of literature, as well as other necessary materials.

Interviews revealed that at the Eurasian National University faculty members are less pleased with state standards because they have almost no opportunities to participate in its development compared to KazNU. They do not have opportunities to introduce changes into mandatory courses if they feel necessary. Faculty at Eurasian expressed concern about certain mandatory courses as well as courses in the General Education Requirement. For example, one faculty believes that current state standards do not

include enough Math preparation. He claimed that previously Math subjects were taught for 4 semesters on all Economics majors. Now there is only one semester of Math course for economists. Economics departments who participated in the development of state standards were interested in including more specialized Economics courses instead of Math in order to create more jobs at their own departments. As the result, economists receive less Math preparation and graduate with weak knowledge of Math, “which seriously diminishes their skills, ability to continue education on graduate level”. The same is true for other non-Math majors, as Physics, Chemistry, etc. (ENU professor, personal communication, December 20, 2012).

Some faculty at ENU expressed concern about them having to follow the obligatory General Education component provided by the Ministry of Education. They insist that the component is set on the national level and very difficult to change because it requires decisions by the National Educational and Methodological Council. A faculty member of ENU finds that some of obligatory subjects are excessive burdens especially in the early study years, for example, “History of Kazakhstan” (a mandatory general education subject) is taught during high school, and again is taught at all universities (ENU professor, personal communication, December 15, 2012). The faculty believes that the course is included intentionally in order to provide jobs for departments of history in all universities around the country. This was confirmed by the Ministry representative by saying “...we have thousands of history professors in the universities around the country. We cannot allow them to become jobless” (Ministry representative, personal communication, December 15, 2012).

But some faculty members see certain advantages of teaching in accordance with state standards and Model Programs especially for smaller and younger universities which lack the capacity to develop good quality programs themselves. It is easier for them to teach pre-designed programs and courses developed by larger institutions.

At the Eurasian National University faculty members confirm that curriculum delivery methods are not imposed by the state. There are no special frameworks or requirements for methods of curriculum delivery and teaching. Each faculty member decides what methods to choose while developing syllabi for both mandatory and “elective” courses. According to interviews most faculty members rely on their own experience or advice of senior colleagues or methodological support from the department.

A department chair at ENU confirmed that the faculty can voluntarily decide on which delivery methods to use. Members of curriculum committee which consists of senior faculty can attend open lectures and provide comments on delivery methods afterwards. In this case faculty members can receive feedback from the colleagues and improve their methods.

As for the student evaluation faculty have to follow the system proscribed by state standards. Nevertheless, other interviewed faculty expressed concerns about inconsistency in evaluation systems used in secondary and higher education in Kazakhstan. One professor argues that secondary schools use a 5-point scoring system, while in higher education most of universities have transferred to a 4 point GPA grading system. He thinks that “for most of faculty it is still difficult to grade students based a 4-point system, especially for senior faculty, as they typically would use a 5-point system

and then transfer it to a 4-point system based on percentage” (ENU professor, personal communication, December 15, 2012). Faculty believe that that it is necessary to implement a unified system of knowledge assessment in high schools, colleges and higher education institutions so faculty and students are not confused by different systems.

***Faculty selection, appointment, evaluation and promotion***

Moreover faculty selection and appointment at the Eurasian National University are not as transparent and inclusive as might be desired. It was mentioned by a number representatives of ENU that, in general, faculty members participate in hiring of new faculty members in a limited way. Only those who are members of a Hiring Committee and the Academic Council could have a voice in hiring process. According to a vice-rector of ENU even though faculty can recommend a candidate to a chair, then a chair would recommend him or her to a Hiring Committee, “a final hiring decision would be up to the rector”.

Overall the perception is that the rector at ENU is quite powerful and authoritarian. As one senior faculty member observed that although the procedure for selecting a vice rector are adopted by the ministry, in reality the absence of the checks and balances allows the rector to select candidates “at his own discretion among the acting staff of higher education institution as well as candidates from the outside” (ENU professor, personal communication, December 15, 2012).

Professors at ENU noted that in the 90’s faculty members elected rectors, as well as vice-rectors as opposed to nowadays when rectors of national universities are

appointed by the decree of the President of Kazakhstan based on the recommendation of the Ministry of Education while deans and vice-rectors are appointed by rectors. A vice-rector of ENU thought that it would be good if appointments of rectors, vice-rectors, and deans would be based on democratic principles “to ensure effective working environment at higher education institutions” (ENU professor, personal communication, December 15, 2012).

According to another professor of ENU, faculty members do not participate in hiring process of faculty members. Hiring of faculty members is usually decided by department chairs and school deans in accordance with written or verbal recommendations given to a candidate.

Some faculty at the Eurasian National University mention that there is no institutional evaluation, instead faculty are evaluated by an attestation (a regular checking procedure by the Ministry of Education usually held once a five-year period at all universities on a rolling basis). Faculty members are assessed based on certain parameters including a number of published monographs and/or books, articles and participation in international conferences. Faculty members who meet these parameters are certified by an attestation committee.

A chair of ENU noted that faculty members have an opportunity to participate in assessment process of other faculty members during attestation procedures. Attestation of faculty members depends on performance of a faculty: contribution to research, a number of publications, student evaluation, and etc. However, there is no certain system of

evaluation. He thought that results of attestation do not affect compensation and promotion of faculty members.

As mentioned by another professor at ENU, faculty members do participate in the assessment of each other. In accordance of Departments' plan faculty members attend each other's classes and evaluate them. Faculty members are also evaluated by students' surveys. The faculty confirmed that the assessment of faculty members and attestation are not effectively used for decision making. Results do not lead to dismissals or to promotion.

## **Analysis**

### ***Organizational structure of the two universities***

The opportunities for faculty to influence academic matters at the Kazakh National University and the Eurasian National University are very much shaped by policies, legal structures and a culture of the existing higher education system in Kazakhstan. The higher education of the country is built on the notion of public service. This has historical as well as systemic reasons given that the higher education system is evolving from the Soviet past with neither traditions of autonomous institutions nor self-governance. The historic reason is that during Soviet times the state had to exercise heavy controls over higher education especially over the content of the courses for ideological reasons. After gaining the independence the universities still remained in the government domain.

The universities are structured as hierarchical government organizations. In the absence of any other suitable organizational form, the government kept universities as state owned enterprises, the form usually used for organizations providing public utilities (gas, electricity, water, etc.). This fact is reflected in the organizational structure of both national universities and codified in their charters. This arrangement also provides vast powers to the sector ministry - the Ministry of Education and Science. In both universities we see identical founding charters which delegate decision making power to the Ministry and the appointed head of the organization, i.e. the rector. This is amplified by the fact that both leading national universities do not have governing boards which could ensure checks and balances as well as collegial decision making. Without governing boards there is less of an opportunity for collegial decision-making as well as a greater opportunity for abuse of power and inefficient management. Lack of motivation and frustration among faculty were evidenced from interviews at both universities. The issue seems to be in a top down management system which begins with the MOE, through a rector and further down to the university. It seems that there needs to be an independent governing board and a loosening of regulations with regards to what is taught and how it is taught.

The role of faculty as professionals in their respective fields is not clearly reflected in an organizational structure or a decision making process. All of the bodies where faculty participate such as the Academic Council and School Councils are advisory in nature while key decisions are taken by senior administrators and ministry officials with membership selection on both of these councils in the hands of the senior

administration. Thus, the existing system does not provide for collegial or shared governance in academic matters. According to the Law “On state enterprises” and the Charter, the decision making rests with the sector ministry in term of strategy and governance and with the appointed rector in terms of management of the institution.

There is no clear separation between administrative and academic issues. At both universities the academic councils as well as school councils take decisions on academic as well as administrative matters. There is no evidence that the universities make any attempt to separate academic and administrative parts. All decision making falls into a single administrative hierarchical structure. It was symptomatic that many faculty members noticed that chairs of departments became both administrative and academic in nature positions. Deans are the similar situations as they are very heavily involved in both administrative and academic matters. This again reflects the fact that there is no clear separation and understanding of the dual nature of academic organizations.

#### ***Faculty participation in curriculum development***

At the programmatic level both universities have very limited opportunities to introduce new specialties (majors). The existing system is such that the higher education institutions can teach only those majors which are included in the National Classification of Specialties. Changing or updating existing classifications is a lengthy bureaucratic procedure on the national level which involves several ministries and industry associations. The inability to offer new or to make changes to degree programs seriously hinders the ability of the national university to develop, compete and keep up with the market demand. As a result both national universities offer almost identical degree

programs without serious distinctions in certain areas or disciplines. This leads to a limited choice for students, less competition and innovations in universities.

The role of faculty in developing curricula is limited by the national frameworks at both universities. A curriculum is developed according to state standards which are universally applied to both the Kazakh National and the Eurasian National Universities. The program and course structures are the same for General Education Components. Faculty members at both universities do not have flexibility in changing or amending the structure of the General Education courses except small variations in developing syllabi and applying teaching methodology. The same is true for the mandatory courses of the Core and Specialization components of the programs. As defined by the system faculty has opportunities to influence courses in the elective component which is 50% at Bachelor level and 70% at Master Level.

When it comes to individual faculty, there is a big difference if they teach mandatory courses or elective courses. The structure of mandatory courses and the topics they have to cover are prescribed by Model Programs provided by the Ministry of Education and Science, leaving a little flexibility or opportunities for innovation. Faculty teaching elective courses have much more flexibility and freedom to determine the content. Development of such courses is done by an individual faculty or departments based on the approval at school and university councils.

### ***Participation in developing state standards***

One noticeable difference between the Kazakh National University and the Eurasian National University comes from the fact that the Ministry of Education and

Science assigns certain universities to develop state standards and Model Programs. This gives advantages to participating faculty and departments of a chosen university who have an opportunity to incorporate their ideas into the courses they design for the rest of the system. As mentioned the Kazakh National University is tasked to develop 33 degree programs which are included in the national Classification of Specialties. The faculty at the Eurasian National University does not have such opportunity since it is assigned to develop only one degree program for the country. But this fact explains why faculty members at ENU are more frustrated with the system having to teach programs and courses designed by somebody else. The result is that the content of general education and mandatory courses tend to stagnate and do not develop for a long time since there are bureaucratic obstacles to and no incentives for improvement and changes. It also provides wrong incentives as some faculty who find it easy to teach predesigned courses which do not require research or professional development. This also hurts innovation and incorporation of new ideas as well as may be less responsive to the market demands.

The system of distributing tasks on designing programs and courses to certain universities is not transparent. It is not clear if it is based on the quality assessment and merits. There is a sense that this “distribution of labor” is based on historical or political connections between the Ministry of Education and Science and a university (for example, the current Minister of Education is a former rector of the Kazakh National University).

### ***Faculty selection, hiring, evaluation and promotion***

At both universities faculty selection, hiring, evaluation and promotion are based on the rules which are set on the national level by the Ministry of Education and Science. On paper they should provide a competition and a fair selection process. In reality as many faculty reflected, senior administrators (rectors, vice rectors and deans) tend to dominate the decision making process in this area. The existing practices reflect the culture of hierarchical organizations with limited collegiality. In faculty hiring process the final decisions are in the hands of the university administration, and not of faculty or academic departments. Final decisions are controlled by the rector. So, the role of faculty in selection of new colleagues is not clearly defined.

Almost unanimously all faculty at the Eurasian National University believe that fair selection and promotion procedures “do not exist” or “they are not aware of them”. At ENU, administrators tend to play even a stronger role, with a very little participation from faculty in academic hiring process. This can be explained possibly by systemic as well as personal reasons. A rector is appointed by the President/the ministry and reports to the ministry, so he/she is accountable to the ministry but not to the faculty or other stakeholders. Since a rector has significant powers, a lot depends on his/her personality. If he/she tends to be more authoritarian there are very limited opportunities to curb his/her authority.

The faculty members at ENU are mostly new and young due to the fact that the University itself was established in the new capital only 13 years ago. There is also a disincentive for faculty to change universities. The faculty members at the Kazakh

National University are relatively older and more experienced and are in more of a position to defend their roles and voices. That is why senior administrators including the rector and vice rectors at KazNU are more responsive to faculty opinions.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **How are findings correspond with the concepts in the literature review**

The literature on academic governance talked about different structural models of how higher education institutions are organized. They usually fall into several categories such as: a “strict state control” model, a “semi-autonomous model” where a university could be a statutory body; a “semi-independent” model where higher education institutions are statutory bodies, charity or non-profit corporations subject to the Ministry controls or “independent” when a university is charity or non-profit corporations with no government participation or control (OECD, 2003).

The governance of higher education and faculty involvement in academic affairs at the Kazakh National University and the Eurasian National University are characterized as a “strict state control” model where the university is a state owned enterprise under the Ministry of Education. This fact is codified in both university charters which are developed under the jurisdiction of the Law “On State Property”. This legal status of state own enterprise influences an organizational structure, decision making as well as opportunities for faculty to influence academic matters at the universities. The research confirmed that the model is different from the models prevailing in developed higher education systems. The differences in faculty participation, which were observed in Kazakhstan compared to the university in the US, are systemic in nature and should be attributed to the universities’ external political and legal environment.

The existing research on higher education in Kazakhstan observed the systemic changes which were happening after the country became independent from the Soviet Union. Market economy reforms and democratization of the society had their influence on the higher education. Heyneman (2005) observed “four elements” of reforms in post-Soviet states including Kazakhstan. This research identified that each of the main four elements played out differently in the country with regard to national universities. First, structural changes occurred with a transfer of the higher education out of the sector ministries into a single Ministry of Education and Science because before the labor markets within each sector were controlled independently by sector ministries. The educational institutions, faculties, and curricula were administered within each sector and students were assigned to jobs according to the sector of their particular school. All higher education institutions (except specialized military and security institutions) were moved under the single ministry.

Secondly, as Heyneman (2005) claimed the governance of higher education institutions had to change to give universities more freedom. As this research found this was not necessarily true especially with regard to public institutions. As of today public universities are state owned enterprises governed and regulated by the ministry which appoints senior administrators, approves strategies and determines educational activities.

Third, it was in the financial area where changes happened and universities had to diversify sources of revenue. This was partially true with regard to national universities which were studied. They were able to charge private tuition but their annual budgets and spending rules have to be approved by the ministry. Expenditure items such as faculty’s

and administrators' salary, investment programs, research initiatives have to be approved by the financial department of the Ministry of Education and Science. There is still very limited flexibility when it comes to finance. Thus the changes in financial area are yet to happen in Kazakhstan.

Finally, the most important area of the reforms in post-Soviet was a curriculum contents which had to be modernized to meet modern industry needs. Shifting the decision making over the curriculum from the ministry to the higher education institutions required increasing the role of faculty in that area. Empowering faculty is seen as an important factor of higher education reform in former Soviet countries (Heyneman, 2010). As the research identified it was only partially implemented in Kazakhstan. The list of majors (specialties) which universities can offer is developed by an inter-ministerial committee. Changes to the list are introduced once in five years and involve a lengthy bureaucratic process, while last changes, for example, were introduced in 2009 (see Findings Chapter). Within the majors 50% of courses in undergraduate programs and 30% in graduate programs are defined by the state standards. Content of those mandatory courses are also determined by the state. Thus the important element of the reforms was only partly implemented where faculty of an institution can influence only partially on educational programs and individual faculty can influence the content of non-mandatory courses.

Certainly, the research confirmed the findings of the EU report on higher education in Kazakhstan which stated that the rules imposed by the ministry, as well as its desire to politically control institutions put serious limitations on the willingness and

capacity of institutions to change. (Tempus Report, 2010). This was confirmed by almost all interviews of the research at the national universities. But the research provided a more detailed picture of what was happening on the ground. For example, the state lifted some compulsory standards of developing curricula inherited from the Soviet system and limited the number of courses of compulsory component but still remains strict in regulating the educational process and its content within that component. The research confirmed that the country's system still does not provide opportunities for institutions and their faculties to make independent decisions in curriculum design, at least, in the part regulated by the state standards.

Across the former Soviet republics higher education institutions were highly centralized with the power concentrated in the Ministry of Education and hands of rectors. Most of it remained with senior administrators rather than with faculty whose role still was limited. In many instances public institutions did not have boards and rectors were appointed by the government (Varghese, 2009). It is certainly true at the national universities in Kazakhstan where, according to the charter, a rector of a university was required to be nominated by the ministry and appointed by the president of the country. A rector is responsible for managing and leading institution's activities including in academic area and reporting directly to the Ministry of Education while faculty did not have a say in senior appointments.

The literature on governance of higher education institutions in the post-Soviet world indicated that there were two conflicting arguments on why there were indications of corruption in universities. Rumyantseva and Caboni (2012) questioned the ability of

faculty “to self-regulate in an accountable manner, and to function ethically and professionally without formal mechanisms to ensure accountability to professional standards of behavior”. They thought that any autonomy granted to faculty could result in an increase of inappropriate behaviors and more corruption. So the existence of the corruption in higher education was one of the stumbling blocks in giving more freedom to higher education institutions and faculty.

On the other hand, Anderson and Heyneman (2005) argued that the lack of freedom and transparency as well as concentration of excessive power in the hands of the senior administrators and ministry representatives may have led to corruption in the higher education. The research as was evidenced from the most of the interviews with faculty representatives confirmed that the latter argument has better ground. Many of the participating faculty members when being asked about the issues thought that a corruption issue was a result of the hierarchical structure, excessive concentration of power and the lack of accountability and transparency.

Heyneman (2010) recommended that post-Soviet countries should have looked at the US higher education which became highly competitive with a significant impact on growth. He argued that institutions have to have a high degree of institutional autonomy in terms of governance and curriculum content.

The existing literature on the theories of academic governance provided a framework and lenses to the situation in Kazakh national universities. Decision making power is shared with the faculty which derives professional authority over academic matters from their specific training and professional expertise (Birnbaum, 1988). These

qualities are vital to their essential role in providing core institutional functions (Eckel & Kezar, 2006, p.7). The legitimacy of this authority is based on the value of the faculty's educational and scholarly capabilities. This research which attempted to study in depth how faculty at national universities see their role in academic matters identified that faculty not to mention administrators do not have clear grasp of the above concept. It was never mentioned by the interviewees that the concept of shared governance at academic institutions or primacy of faculty over curriculum has some recognition at national universities.

It became clear that faculty did not conceptualize or institutionalize their role in decision making at higher education institutions. For example, certain principles of academic governance which were codified in the "Joint Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities" (1966) in the US still do not exist in Kazakhstan. The research did not identify any legal or policy document which would articulate roles of all key constituencies of the academic community similarly to the way the US Joint Statement recognized a university's faculty as having key responsibilities for curriculum, instruction, faculty status, and the academic part of student life.

The literature clearly states that a university governance model is different from the model of business or government organizations because the nature of higher education institutions which produce public goods, such as research, education, and service. (Benjamin, 2007, p.1). The national universities in Kazakhstan are purposefully established, regulated and run like government organizations. Both national universities are opposite to the arrangement described by Etzioni (1964) where administrative

authority is suitable for the private business, while in professional organizations administrators are in charge of secondary activities and administer means to the major activity carried out by professionals. Administrators in the Kazakhstan universities and the Ministry play more prominent role rather than faculty members.

Such a structure where national universities are organized as hierarchical government organizations is in conflict with the academic structure which requires certain degrees of freedom, innovation and flexibility. The existing centralized and controlled structure result in frustrated and demotivated faculty who are not able to produce good quality teaching and research. That in turn leads to general dissatisfaction by employers and general public with the higher education in Kazakhstan. Limiting faculty participation in certain categories of academic decision making might lead to lower performance (Milgrom & Roberts, 1992) which seems to be the case at national universities. The findings of my research suggest that the quality of higher education is questioned by many stakeholders which confirmed the notion of existing literature that there is a link between educational excellence and the historical role of faculty in colleges where shared governance and increased role of faculty are aimed at increasing academic and programmatic quality (Lucey, 2002).

Another thesis in the literature is that if employees of academic organizations do not have incentives and the right to take part in organizational governance, they may not be interested in an organization's success through implementing its core function (Brown, 2001). This was found to be true in Kazakhstan's circumstances. Most of the faculty of the national universities who were denied a role in academic decision making were

demotivated and did not take interest in universities' initiatives. This fact is again solidified by the existing literature. Greater faculty control over decisions related to academic matters where the faculty might have better motivations and information resulted in increased university performance because the gains of each faculty member are tied to the success of the university (Brown, 2001).

The findings of the research made it clear that in Kazakhstan the policy makers, senior administrators and faculty are not familiar with the concepts of shared academic governance or loosely coupled systems. They are also not familiar with the benefits of such a system which allows higher education institutions to be more flexible in teaching and learning or scholarship (Weick, 1976).

Some important lessons from faculty involvement in different types of US colleges and universities described in the literature are very relevant for Kazakhstan and were proved by its national universities. For example, Ivory Paul Phillips (2001) argued that European and Anglo-American colleges and universities developed and became strong due to the environment that accepted faculty primacy in academic matters. I think that his argument that without this faculty primacy in academic matters the university becomes a "training plantation" and faculty become "plantation workers" is very relevant comparison for faculty members of national universities in Kazakhstan (Philips, 2001, p.2).

The faculty participation in academic matters including introduction of new majors, a program structure and a content of the courses remains limited which presents an obstacle for modernization, relevance and innovation. The literature and existing

research suggested a number of reasons why faculty members have to be involved in academic matters or the result would be shortcomings if they are denied that right. Findings in Kazakhstan are largely supportive of that notion, showing that limited faculty participation results in less motivated faculty, less interest to be relevant for the market demands and low quality of the education. The current practices at national universities in Kazakhstan go against international theory and best practice in the higher education institutions where faculty is recognized as the source of authority, especially with regard to academic matters, particularly curriculum.

### ***Observations from the University of West Florida***

The University of West Florida (UWF) is part of the state university system which is governed by the Florida Board of Governors. The UWF Board of trustees is a 13-member governing body for the institution. The Governor of Florida appoints 6 of the members, who serve five-year terms and the Board of Governors appoints 5 of the members who serve five-year terms. All of the members must be approved by the Senate. The president of the Faculty Senate holds one of those places. The final member is the president of the Student Government Association. (University of West Florida web site, accessed May 26, <http://uwf.edu/trustees>). I have been given an access to the university through its president. The Florida system is unionized. As a part of my dissertation and as a way of drawing from live observations as well as from a literature search, I spent a short period of time interviewing faculty and administration concerning the role of faculty in faculty matters as defined in this dissertation, and I compared my findings with the findings of the two national universities in Kazakhstan.

### ***The faculty role at the University of West Florida***

The faculty role at the national universities was compared with faculty participation at the University of West Florida. It was established by the state in 1955 when the Florida Legislature authorized the State Board of Education to locate a state university in Escambia County. UWF became the sixth state university of the State University System of Florida, which today consists of eleven institutions of higher learning. The university has 342 faculty members. UWF's major research centers have earned national and international reputations. Among the best known are Archaeology Institute which offers a unique marine archaeology program, Center for Environmental Diagnostics and Bioremediation which conducts research into the health of Northwest Florida's natural resources (University of West Florida web site, accessed May 26, <http://uwf.edu/academics>).

### ***UWF academic governance system***

Overwhelmingly faculty members and senior administrators at UWF asserted the idea that the faculties are in the heart of the university and that they are involved in decision making process. Thus they are committed to the extent that they can contribute their knowledge and expertise to help develop the institution. The committee process at UWF typically includes some student representation and staff representation in addition to the faculty. If everybody comes to the table with a notion that they can influence the process successfully, then this approach can be productive. There are more than 120 committees on the university campus.

There are a lot of opportunities for faculty voice. As one senior UWF faculty member emphasized: “Even it takes longer and often the results are messier, but it does give an opportunity to have faculty voice heard”. As he observed if it is done well and if a process is transparent and you get out of the issue and try to provide the committee with accurate information in advance, so it can give some good decisions. When committees are not giving enough information or the process is rushed, then personal agendas sometimes get in the play and in thus make the process down (UWF professor, personal communication, 2012). Unlike in Kazakhstan there is recognition that faculty voice is important in solving various issues. Even if the process could be lengthier and more complicated collegial decision making and wider participation are valuable.

### *Curriculum development*

The typical structure at the UWF is that the curriculum is really owned by the faculty. The faculty and departments decide what courses to teach and how the structure of the degree will look like. They design general policies related to how the course will be taught. The university focuses very heavily on what is called “student learning outcomes” - what the student needs to learn, and how well they learned it.

In Kazakhstan as was described earlier legislations gives the government the right to determine the content and structure of educational programs. The government through the Ministry of Education and Science exercises that power and has the right to intervene into curriculum development by setting standards and mandatory requirements.

At UWF the government on the state level requires a general education component that faculty at UWF have some control over. An accreditation agency also has

a role in terms of general parameters. The State of Florida has a “Standard general education curriculum”, taught in 12 State University System universities. On that level, the State has some guidelines rather than strict requirements for what a course should basically cover. The major difference with Kazakhstan is that there is a variety of courses within the five categories which students can choose. Within each category there are lists of acceptable courses; students do not have to take same courses. Most of general education is taken in the first two years and includes categories of courses in Mathematics, English and Composition, Natural Sciences and a Cultural component. But the program structure and course content are left to the discretion of individual departments, who are responsible for their programs.

Introduction of new majors at UWF is up to the institution and its faculty as opposed to Kazakhstan where it is set by the national framework. In general if the institution and its faculty members in Florida want to make changes to the curriculum, they have to submit a ‘modification request’. That goes through multiple levels of review within the university. Members of these bodies – the academic council, the faculty senate and the graduate education council - are faculty who look at new course requests and requests for program modifications. They assess the rationale, the topics to be covered, student learning outcomes, and the rigor of the material.

Often a faculty member begins the discussion about curriculum modification which then can turn into a proposal. The faculty presents the proposals through a structured process for presenting new degrees and new courses. Those proposals are reviewed at the department level and at the college level. Graduate program proposals are

reviewed by the graduate education council, which is made of faculty. Eventually proposals are reviewed at the large University Senate, which is made up of faculty. That is a bottom up approach to curriculum and course development. But the idea for a new proposal can come from multiple sources: administration, faculty, state legislature, etc. The point is that there are more actors who can initiate a proposal and more actors who are involved in shaping a particular proposal.

It is possible that the college deans or the provost propose to embark on a new degree or start up a new curricular emphasis. For example, if the university is going to start a new school or get into an area of doctoral programs that it had never offered before, the discussion is initiated at the provost level, and/or a college dean level. Then they invite faculty to get involved in the discussion. Once a new school or new degree program is approved, the faculty again have a control over the course contents. Thus, it may be two way streams: top-down and bottom-up. Usually within existing degrees it is the faculty who develop a new course, however, as the institution tries strategically to decide where it is going to have new areas and majors, it is often more on the executive level. There is an inclusive system in place, encouraging participation and de-centralizing much of the decision making on multiple levels.

UWF regularly conducts a review of all degree programs and prioritizes them. The university analyzes the whole degree structure to determine which ones to continue, which ones to remove and which ones to introduce. Some decisions can be made at the school council level and faculty will be involved in developing. The important point is that the institution is free to initiate this process without intervention from the state.

### *Faculty evaluation and promotion*

Annually the faculty member will go through an evaluation with his or her college dean. A faculty member puts his/her promotion materials together and makes them available to his/her colleagues through a promotion committee. A dossier is reviewed by a department, a college committee, and a college dean and the university committee. The committees provide comments about the quality of the research, and how well the faculty member meets the standards for national recognition, creative research, teaching excellence, and etc. The important principle is that academic work of the faculty is assessed by the academics from the same field but not administrators. As one professor emphasized: “historians are evaluated by historians, mathematicians are evaluated by mathematicians, this is a key” (UWF professor, personal communication, November 2012).

The department has a personnel committee that reviews all the materials concerning those seeking promotion. The colleges have permanent College Councils which review the promotion materials. Then there is the University Committee that is involved with the awarding of tenure which is a separate process.

The current search for the provost at UWF is a good example of faculty involvement in selection of senior administrator. What is important in determining the composition of those committees, the president in the case of the provost (or the provost in the case of the dean) tries to make sure that the full spectrum of the people that the new person would have to interact with including faculty, students and non-academic administrative units are represented.

Compared to UWF, it seems in Kazakhstan faculty have no rights beyond teaching methodology. There is no notion of freedom of speech or academic freedom. Academic freedom is a right of the university and faculty members at UWF. There are “responsibilities” but few rights are granted to the faculty of the two national universities, i.e. there is no such a process of tenure, which does give a faculty member in the US/Europe a very large degree of freedom once he/she earns tenure.

The research identified the major differences between the two national universities in Kazakhstan and the University of West Florida in the US which are summarized in the table 1 below.

TABLE 8. KAZAKH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY AND EURASIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY VS. UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA

	<b>Kazakh National University Eurasian National University</b>	<b>University of West Florida</b>
<b>National Legislation on Educational Content</b>	State determines the content of education (Constitution, Law on Education)	Content is determined by faculty (Self-regulated association declaration)
<b>Legal Status</b>	State Owned Enterprise	Autonomous Non-for-profit Organization
<b>Physical Property rights</b>	Belongs to government	Belongs to institution
<b>Governance</b>	Rector appointed by Ministry	Board of trustees
<b>Budget</b>	Budget including expenditure	Recommended by

	items approved by the Ministry	administration with faculty input approved by the board of trustees and institution
<b>Introduction of new majors</b>	National Inter-ministerial Committee Updated in 3-5 years	Decided by institution, introduced when necessary
<b>Number of majors</b>	70 in undergraduate and graduate (170 nationally)	170 in undergraduate and graduate (several thousand nationally)
<b>Program structure</b>	Designed according to State Standard, approved by the ministry	Faculty committees, approved by institution
<b>General education component</b>	Requirement to take specific courses developed by the ministry	Guidelines on areas which have to be included in general education requirement.
<b>Mandatory/required courses within majors</b>	Developed according to state standards approved by the ministry	Developed by individual faculty Approved by department at school
<b>Elective courses</b>	Developed by individual faculty	Developed by individual faculty

<b>Faculty selection and promotion</b>	Rector	Faculty committees recommend, approved by provost, president, board of trustees
<b>Employment status</b>	State employees	Tenure and non-tenure contract with institution
<b>Grading students and assessment of learning</b>	Individual faculty	Individual faculty

There is a top-down nature of the higher education system and a lack of opportunities for faculty to participate in the process. This even goes to the institutional level with KazNU enjoying a more influential status than other universities, leading to even further isolation and obvious frustration by the faculty at ENU. Not only they have no influence on the local level but little influence on the national level. ENU is also younger with a younger faculty. In part, this is compounded by the disincentive to move from one university to another. In both systems, initiatives are not encouraged.

***Implications of this research for the future of Kazakhstan higher education***

This research provided a detailed picture of the faculty role and influence on academic matters at the Kazakh National University in Almaty and the Eurasian National University in Astana, which represent an important segment of higher education system of Kazakhstan. At this point of time the country has to modernize its economic systems

and improve human capital to be competitive in the globalized world. Higher education institutions have to play a crucial role in generating high quality graduates for the new economy. The biggest challenge is to overcome the legacy of the Soviet past where a centralized bureaucratic approach in running higher education institutions was dominant.

The research through the case study analysis of two national universities in Kazakhstan identified a number of shortcomings and mismatches with international theory and international best practice. Discovered problems and underlying reasons can help to identify areas where changes are needed to move higher education system and its institutions closer to international best practice. Based on the research results it is possible to say that these changes have to happen on several levels. First, the national legal and regulatory environment for higher education has to be modified. Second, there should be changes in the organizational structure and policies of national universities. Third, the way educational programs and curriculum are designed have to be revised. The role and participation of faculty in academic matters of the national universities have to change. A set of specific measures needs to be taken at each of the above levels to ensure a comprehensive approach to higher education modernization.

At the national legal and regulatory level there is a need, first of all, to change the legal status of the national universities. As the research revealed public higher education institutions are established and registered as state owned enterprises. Such government owned entities exist to deliver public services in a certain sector, for example, electricity or water supply. Because of their social role the government had to keep a strict control over their costs and pricing, and ensure homogeneous outputs, appoint key management

positions, restrict freedom and flexibility. Existing state controls are required by the legislation on state owned enterprises. All these features of state own enterprises go against the very nature of academic organization functioning in the market environment which requires introduction of new knowledge, innovation and competition for faculty and students. Contrary to that public higher institutions in Kazakhstan are required to produce similar academic programs and courses. If national universities are to develop they have to be allowed to compete and have freedom to innovate.

On the institutional and organizational level the research identified the shortcomings which need to be fixed using the international best practice. The national universities as well as other public higher institutions need the governing boards to be introduced. The boards will ensure collegial decision making, wide representation of stakeholders, checks and balances, accountability as well as transparency. The power concentrated in one person's hands makes it difficult to manage educational organizations given the complexity of the issues of modern teaching and learning, research and protecting the interests of wider university community.

The concepts of shared governance should be introduced at the national universities which will clearly define the authority of administrators over management of resources and the authority of faculty over academic matters. The national universities need new charters which will codify such an important principle. Faculty senates will have to be introduced in the institutions to protect faculty voice. The national universities would benefit from introducing policies which will require committees with faculty participation to select and appoint senior administrators and academic leaders. In general

committee structures with participation of faculty to solve various university issues will help ensure wider representation, transparency and collegiality. Such an approach will also have to be reflected in university charters and by-laws.

The fourth important area which needs improvement as well was identified by the research and solidified by international theory and practice is program and curriculum design. At the national level the current practice of approving the list of majors which universities in the country can offer is outdated and quite bureaucratic. Higher education institutions in Kazakhstan have to be allowed to offer majors and degrees that they think are appropriate with their quality confirmed by an independent accreditation process. Faculty members at national universities have to have a chance to participate through collegial bodies and committees in shaping the programs which the institution can offer. The program structure and composition of courses have to be decided on the institutional level as well. The government may set the general education requirement by providing general guidelines on what type of courses it should include rather than requiring the fixed set of mandatory courses. In any way the courses which are required by general education component have to be developed by faculty themselves. The state standards which make programs very rigid are probably an outdated approach and can be abolished to allow universities to innovate and keep up to market demands.

Finally the role of faculty in academic matters at the national universities has to be significantly enlarged. There should be a formal recognition that academia has definite authority over academic issues and faculty has key responsibilities for the primary areas of curriculum, teaching and learning, faculty evaluation and status, and the academic part

of student life. This will be consistent with international theory and best practice. Faculty at national universities in Kazakhstan has to be given clear responsibility over program structure and course content in addition to freedom in choosing teaching and assessment methodology.

Faculty participation is in the core of the shared academic governance of higher education institutions in developed market economies. The role of faculty is recognized and reflected in the governing structures of universities. Such a system respects the authority of faculty in ensuring the quality and relevance of the academic programs. After 20 years of country's independence and development of Kazakhstan's higher education system there is a need to take a hard look on the ability of universities to self-govern and develop high quality and relevant curricula. The faculty at Kazakh universities has to play a critical role in this process. The future research may look in depth to identify political, legal, organizational, and cultural barriers to increase faculty participation. Consequently, the identified problems will help shape a policy reform in governance of universities and in the higher education in general.

Increasing faculty participation will be central to promoting key values of higher education such as academic freedom, autonomy and transparency. In general, empowering faculty will contribute to their greater responsibility and engagement in developing higher education institutions and their core functions of teaching, research and community service. When people on the ground take more power and responsibility, this in general makes an input to promoting democracy and civil society.

At this point of time the country has political will, financial resources and market demand to reform higher education institutions. The proper governance and role of the faculty is in the center of existing problems. The hierarchical structures of universities no longer satisfy the dynamics of country development. In the core of the governance problem is the faculty participation. The proper diagnostics will help develop the right approach in handling the problem. The systemic and scholarly research of this phenomenon will provide that kind of diagnostics for an important problem in Kazakhstan's higher education.

### ***Future research***

The current research studied opportunities of the faculty to influence academic matters at the two national universities. This is an important area because it is in the core of academic governance, efficiency and transparency of higher education institutions in Kazakhstan. The research revealed that even in similar type of universities, such as large public research, there are some differences based on the history and traditions. Since the big powers are concentrated in the hands of the top management opportunities for faculty to participate in academic matters also depend on who is on top of the organization.

There is a need to study other institutions in Kazakhstan. The future research could study other national universities or smaller public universities which do not have national status but still important for certain regions and cities. The developed protocol and conceptual framework could be used in such a study. Future research could also look at opportunities for faculty to influence academic matters in private (for profit and non-profit) universities since they also represent an important segment of higher

education. The US model can be tested further on different types of institutions in Kazakhstan to understand differences and similarities as well as to draw important lessons.

If studied deeper the above issues will help to draw system wide conclusions and develop a better understanding of faculty role in higher education in the country. A deeper understanding of current situation across the sector can help develop policies to improve teaching and learning in Kazakhstan. It will serve a bigger purpose of bringing local higher education system closer to international best practice and developing competitive human capital capable of competing in the modern global world.

## APPENDIX A

*(This is the translation from Russian original made by Aslan Sarinzhipov)*

Dear [name],

My name is Aslan Sarinzhipov, and I'm a student in the Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management program with the University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education. My doctoral research seeks to understand the opportunities for faculty to influence the academic affairs of the national universities in Kazakhstan.

The reform of higher education in Kazakhstan is an integral part of the reform and modernization process of the country. The most significant challenge is for the higher education institutions to have greater autonomy and to move towards a model of shared governance with greater faculty participation in the academic and student affairs.

The most effective way to learn about this phenomenon is through a qualitative study of cases that examines the opportunities for faculty to influence academic affairs in the national universities of Kazakhstan. The research will seek to understand in what ways faculty of the national universities influence the development of curriculum, teaching methodologies, assessment of student learning, research priorities, student co-curricular life and how are these opportunities reflected in the structures, policies and procedures of the university.

In October, I will be interviewing and conducting focus groups with faculty members and senior administrators in two national universities in Kazakhstan in order to collect data for the research. Individual interviews of approximately 40 - 60 minutes will be conducted with administrators and faculty members. At least one focus group of approximately 60-90 minutes will be conducted at each institution that will consist of approximately five - six faculty members.

As a [role or position] with the [institution name], I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to speak with you regarding your experience and role in academic affairs of the university. It is only through the willingness of individuals like you, who share their experiences, that we can advance our understanding of this important phenomenon.

Sincerely,

Aslan Sarinzhpov  
Doctoral Candidate, 2013  
University of Pennsylvania  
Graduate School of Education

## APPENDIX B

### NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

Astana city

« 15 » October 2012

The Language Center «Gold Eagle» represented by an individual entrepreneur Sagima Sultanbekova, (hereinafter - Contractor) in the period of the business relations with a citizen of the Republic of Kazakhstan Aslan Sarinzhipov, passport №07946915, issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated on March 05, 2012, (hereinafter – Customer) during three years after the end of the service relations shall: not disclose information which constitutes the secret of the Customer, that will be entrusted to or become known within the work (service);

1. not transfer to any third party and not disclose publicly information that constitutes Customer's secrets, without the Customer's consent;
2. immediately inform the Customer in case of unauthorized attempts to obtain information from the Contractor about the Customer's secrets;
3. maintain the secrecy of those companies with whom the Customer has business relations;
4. not use the knowledge of the Customer's secrets to engage in any activity, which as a competitive action could harm the Customer.

Clarifications on provisions for keeping the Customer's secrets brought to the attention.

The Contractor understands that violation of these provisions and clauses of this obligation may result in criminal, administrative, civil or other liability in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in the form of imprisonment, fine, accountability for damage to the Customer (for losses and loss of profits and non-pecuniary damage) and other penalties. (clause 126, paragraph 2 of the Civil Procedural Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, clause 200, paragraph 2 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan).

**«Contractor»:**

Language Center «Gold Eagle»  
Individual entrepreneur  
Certificate of state registration  
number IE series 09915 №0119370  
dated 02.08.2010  
Address: 29 Syganak Str.  
Astana, 010000  
TRN 580210347337  
IIN 730323402873  
SIC KZ 47 722 R 00 00 22 13 40 58  
JSC«Kaspi Bank»  
BIC CASPKZKA

**Customer»:**

Aslan Sarinzhipov  
a citizen of the Republic of Kazakhstan  
Passport № 07946915, issued by  
Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of  
Kazakhstan, dated 05.03.12  
TRN: 600410949687  
Address: 53 Kabanbay batyr Str.  
Astana, 010000

S.Sultanbekova



A.Sarinzhipov

A handwritten signature in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

## APPENDIX C

*(This is the translation from Russian original made by Aslan Sarinzhipov)*

University of Pennsylvania

RESEARCH subject

Information form

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**Protocol Title:** Opportunities for faculty to influence the academic affairs of the national universities in Kazakhstan

**Researcher:** Aslan Sarinzhipov

**Note:** The following statement will be read in advance of all interviews and focus groups and will also be digitally recorded as part of the interview process.

The purpose of this study is to **What are the opportunities for faculty to influence the academic affairs of the national universities in Kazakhstan?**

Individual interviews are estimated to last approximately from 40 to 90 minutes and focus groups are estimated to last from 60 to 120 minutes.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Pennsylvania is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research volunteers. The IRB has access to study information. All data will be maintained in a secure location. The data will be shared with the researcher's three dissertation committee members. This data will be maintained in a secure location beyond the time period of the study.

Relative to confidentiality, unless interviewees indicate an unwillingness to use their name, the researcher may use names relative to responses.

Complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed since subjects may discuss the focus group outside of the group. Subjects will be asked to discuss the focus group conversation only within the group.

This interview will be digitally audio-recorded and transcribed by a professional transcription service. The digital audio file will be transferred to a password-protected computer that only I, as the interviewer, will have access to, and written documents will be kept in a locked secure area.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. If anyone should decide not to participate, he/she is free to leave the study at any time by notifying the researcher of intent to withdrawal. If anyone has questions about his/her participation in this research study or about individual rights as a research subject, please contact the researcher, Aslan Sarinzhpov, at [asarinzhpov@nu.edu.kz](mailto:asarinzhpov@nu.edu.kz). You may also call the Office of Regulatory Affairs at the University of Pennsylvania at (215) 898-2614 to talk about your rights as a research subject.

Your agreement to participate in the study is acknowledged by your participation in this interview or focus group.

Aslan Sarinzhpov

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