

IJEVAN BRANCH  
OF  
YEREVAN STATE UNIVERSITY

STRATEGIC PLAN  
2011–2015

Strategic planning by Ijevan Branch of Yerevan State University allows this higher educational institution to state its mission, fundamental goals, and the programmes with which Ijevan Branch (IB) of Yerevan State University (YSU) will carry out its mission. These strategies and actions are intended to provide progress and positive change in the future.

Essential parts of this strategic plan include detailed action plans, staffing information, and discussion of necessary resources.

The strategic plan of IB of YSU is a work in progress subject to periodic assessment. This plan will be periodically reviewed and updated as circumstances change.

The strategic plan is reviewed each year at year-end, using an annual accounting, essential indexes of appraisal, and other analyses of Ijevan Branch of YSU for the purpose of assessing new additions and reporting on changes made to the plan. Changes in the strategic plan are made by the Academic Council of IB.

The starting point of Ijevan Branch's strategic plan of development is the 2010–2014 Strategic Development Plan of Yerevan State University, along with Yerevan State University's development plan of 2011.

## Introduction

As the only state institution of higher education in the northeastern area of the Republic of Armenia, Ijevan Branch (IB) of Yerevan State University (YSU) provides learners with many opportunities to achieve their full potential.

By the order of Bologna, the fundamental values are student success, multi-faceted development, and accessible education. Therefore, a fundamental mission of our educational and cultural institution is the creation, the transmission, and the spreading of knowledge.

Today, it is necessary to improve upon the structure and content of the YSU system's credit-based Bachelor's degree programmes. A credit system has also been introduced in the Correspondence and Part-time Studies programmes.

In the near future, changes in IB's educational programmes will increase the number and choices of courses of study, which is one of the first conditions for securing the independent and productive work of students

Ijevan Branch's library and computer laboratories provide Internet connectivity, and a branch Web site is under development, which will enable IB to connect to "external" consumers and well as to "internal" consumers.

In the effort to attract more students to IB, the entire educational process is being fine-tuned with the assistance and expertise of Yerevan State University and other educational centers of the Republic.

In the near future, IB will have foreign-language versions of its programmes and course information, which will be accessible to IB's students as well as to others. The regular publication of "Akunq," the collected articles published by IB faculty, is further promoting the individual scientific and academic activity of IB's faculty and students.

IB's Faculty of Applied Art has the mission to focus, in this region and beyond, on the development and teaching of both traditional arts and new techniques and trades, with the goal of more closely aligning applied arts and fine arts. As of 2011, the Faculty of Applied Art offers both Bachelor's and Master's degrees.

The fundamental aim of the planned reforms is the improvement of the teaching and the education offered by IB. By the means and norms of contemporary education, and in the name of such education, these improvements will be the basis of the creation of prosperity, an educated society, a strong economy, and the national security of the country. Such improvement will also be the basis of achieving success in "the information century."

## Mission of the Branch

Ijevan Branch of YSU is an educational, cultural, and scientific establishment, the fundamental mission of which is the creation, transfer, and sharing of knowledge as part of the State's strategy of educational development. IB stimulates students' and lecturers' intellectual and personal qualities and development, and is furthering the development of the economic, social, and cultural life of the northeastern part of the Republic. The first and foremost aims of IB's activities is the development of Armenian Studies, the humanities, socio-economics, natural sciences, and culture in northeastern Armenia.

As the most important part of its mission, IB is striving to become a more student-centered institution, providing educational services and programmes that will satisfy all stakeholders' present and long-term demands:

- Graduates will become competitive specialists in the marketplace
- Employers will be able to hire qualified and competent specialists who can solve professional tasks in everyday life as well as in unusual situations,
- The State will have professional and pedagogical cadres who can direct activities and continuing education in the professional sphere,
- Society will have professionally responsible individuals embracing the values of civil society
- The staff and personnel of IB will have moral and material satisfaction from the results of their work as educators.

## Fundamental Values

The particular character of every institution of higher educational is determined by the values that its educators and employees provide to its students. For IB of YSU, those values are the fundamental principles which form the basis of all of its activity—creating the conditions and environment that enable students to maximize their education and acquire necessary knowledge and skills. IB embraces the following fundamental values:

### **1. Student success.**

First of all, IB has a responsibility to focus its attention on students' acquisition of skills and knowledge and on their satisfaction, tailoring its academic and auxiliary services, educational programmes, and policies to this end. This institution supports the development of its students' critical, research, and creative work as a reflection of their intellectual and social progress.

### **2. Multi-faceted development.**

IB values an individual's multi-faceted development and tries to cultivate in its students the freedom to verbalize and ask questions, and the ability to make decisions and take personal responsibility.

### **3. Accessible education.**

IB takes seriously the opportunity for every talented individual to get a higher education. In order to provide every student with an education, **it provides** financial assistance to qualified students.

### **4. A professional staff.**

IB's scientific potential and fundamental pledge of success is backed by Yerevan State University's high-quality professional staff.

# Strategic Goals

## I. A high-quality education

Keep educational criteria high and enable learners to realize in full their potential through flexible educational programmes that satisfy contemporary demands.

**Task I a / Realize substantial structural reform of educational programmes, to be in sync with contemporary programme criteria and with the demands of regional labour needs.**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Make changes in IB's Bachelor's programme to make it more dynamic and effective.
2. Do research about IB's internal and external stakeholders' satisfaction with its educational programmes, with the goal of modernization of its programmes.
3. Improve the "study module" system in order to achieve better measures of student knowledge, abilities, and skills.
4. Rebuild the structure of general education in all programmes for the development of students' communication ability, critical thinking skills, quantitative reasoning, and professional ethics.

**Task I b / Instill a system of internal quality control, in accordance with the State's accreditation structure.**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Cultivate IB's quality by the reinforcement of continuous improvement, including corresponding procedures and organizational structure, and by defining the duties and functions of management.
2. Once per year, do a full self-appraisal of the branch's educational activities. The results of this appraisal will help in the process of improving IB's reputation for quality, as well as for the development of measures to correct and continually improve the quality of education offered at IB.
3. Be guided by new education norms and research in the Bachelor's programmes, accepting a national framework of these qualifications.

4. Apply criteria and procedures developed by YSU for the appraisal of IB personnel, corresponding to demands of the syllabi, the articulation of the educational goals, including monitoring and periodic revision.
5. Elaborate and apply the criteria of timeliness and the procedures for the appraisal of objective results of student education, including the mechanisms of revision and appeal, and the provision for public feedback.
6. Apply the means and criteria for assessment of the professional abilities and the pedagogical skills of the instructional staff.
7. Conduct internal informational reporting, which is necessary for educational programmes and for the productive management of the educational process.
8. Provide transparency of the internal appraisal of quality and the self-appraisal process, and correspondingly report to both inside and outside stakeholders the outcomes of this appraisal process.

**Task I c / Provide the application of the credit-based system in all IB educational programmes.**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Fulfill the changeover to a completely credit-based Bachelor's degree programme; flexible educational programmes must increase the number of optional study courses.
2. Try to achieve a substantial increase in the role of student's work by creating a productive relationship between the students' group work and their independent work during the improvement of this programme.
3. Create a comprehensive list of courses from which students may chose.
4. Create the needed conditions and systems to organize students' education within the individual programmes.
5. Create favorable conditions and guidelines for part-time education, including tuition costs that are relative to credit load.
6. Apply YSU's electronic systems to IB student registration and the academic bulletins that track student progress toward their diplomas.
7. Bring together programme syllabi, the contents of study courses, and the results of education appraisals with the wide experience of YSU and the different higher educational institutions of the Republic. Create an English-language version of IB's informational package.

8. Prepare students, faculty, staff, and the educational administration for the complete application of the credit-based system.

**Task I d / Create favorable conditions for and stimulate substantial improvements in education, teaching, and assessment and appraisal.**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Create IB's Centre for Teaching and Education, in support of teaching, and establish a series of working conferences and study courses related to productive and new methods of teaching and education—the goal being the substantial improvement in the quality of teaching of IB's faculty. Process a corresponding design and apply to YSU for the purpose of financing the creation of the Centre.

2. Develop the means of encouraging a superior pedagogical experience and promote use of the most contemporary methods and technologies of teaching. Encourage lecturers who successfully use innovative methods of teaching by defining yearly prizes.

3. Elaborate and realize a process of annual review for the purpose of continuous improvement of quality teaching, incorporate into lecturers' self-appraisal portfolio indexes of student opinion, along with the opinions of professional co-workers and the educational subdivision's chairman or chairwoman. To encourage dedication to the improvement of teaching, tie the results of the yearly review to the system of promotion and rewards for the faculty.

4. Reconsider student certification and assessment by instituting new forms of assessment based on a general, professional, or specialized academic calendar.

5. Secure further improvements and modernization, strengthen connections and the development of an educational methodical base, employ technology resources to teaching assessment, and increase the number of technology-ready classrooms.

**Task I e / Provide for the extended and productive use of information technology (IT) in IB's educational process**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Design an internal network with the technological capacity to serve classrooms and virtual laboratories wired for on-line teaching, and then encourage their use in IB's educational process.



2. In order to expand and encourage electronic teaching, create favorable conditions and the means to encourage wide-ranging applications of information technology (IT) in teaching. Provide training or retraining of the instructional staff to enable them to development online courses (for which electronic textbooks, lecture texts, and testing must be created).
3. Recruit necessary personnel and technological and methodical resources for the development and implementation of programmes using electronic forms of teaching.
4. Succeed in using electronic training materials to provide programmes through the correspondence teaching system.
5. Acquire and input a universal electronic system of Web-based or online teaching.
6. Provide accessibility to education, teaching, and consulting resources to all IB students through the use of electronic resources.

## **II. Scientific research and innovation**

Increase investment in the scientific potential of IB through research, especially in the areas of increased economic development and the welfare of the residents of the area; encourage the active involvement of IB's instructional staff in such research.

**Task II a / Create the prerequisites and means for growth in the volume of research, and for the inclusion of both instructional staff and students in research design.**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Include the instructional staff in research projects and relate the level of lecturer salaries to scientific success or results.
2. Stimulate interdisciplinary scientific programmes and directions.
3. Encourage management of students' scientific research work.
4. Encourage the applied research direction of students' practice.
5. Organize periodic scientific sessions and symposia on IB's campus.
6. Encourage the publication of articles in both Armenian and foreign scientific and academic magazines, and participation at different symposia

7. Support lecturers' scientific and academic participation in internships or training courses at external and foreign scientific research organizations and the subsequent active incorporation of these experiences into IB's programmes.
8. Encourage scientific research and experimental works with foreign collaborators.
9. Support participation of IB specialists in the **development and implementation** of local and international grant programmes.
10. Increase IB's publishing efforts through the publication of collected issues of "Akunq."

### **III. Public involvement and public service**

Support the educational, economic, scientific, and cultural progress of the residents of this region by furthering awareness of IB and by increasing outside assistance to the branch.

#### **Task III a / Secure further development of relationships with the society at large and of IB's increased involvement in public programmes.**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Develop and increase the branch's relationship with the community and develop active relationships and cooperation with mass media. Increase IB's exposure through broadcast and other media.
2. Enhance and expand IB's Web site by providing both official and general information.
3. Employ a variety of forms and means of information sharing and dissemination, concentrating on extensive use of contemporary information technology, and direct a shift in focus from the "internal" consumer' to the "external" consumer.
4. Systematize IB's new advertising and marketing abilities with information, which is directed at the strengthening of its positive authority and the improvement of its public reputation.
5. Organize public opinion surveys about the branch in order to respond to and align its activities with the contemporary demands of the community.

6. Systematize IB opportunities by creating a unified programme of services that incorporates all of its subdivisions and organizations.

7. Further the involvement of the branch in local, area, and state programmes directed at addressing public needs.

**Task III b / Develop the system of lifetime learning and ongoing education in the branch responding to a public need.**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Elaborate and realize the idea of lifetime learning and ongoing education by responding to society's educational demands. Highlight lifetime learning and ongoing education as an important component of university education by providing a wide variety of opportunities and forms.

2. Study the demand for lifetime learning and ongoing education according to student groups and supply it according to the university's professions and programmes; support the link between the supply and demand for lifetime learning and ongoing education by creating co-operative links between State resources, private enterprises, and public organizations of the area.

3. Provide opportunities for continuing their education to students, graduates, and lecturers through IB programmes of lifetime learning and ongoing education.

4. Develop quality control assurance processes for lifetime learning and ongoing education programmes.

5. Diversify lifetime learning and ongoing education programmes according to levels of professional education by clarifying the goals, hoped-for results, and the means of reaching these goals for such programmes.

6. Encourage the creation of a system of lifetime learning and ongoing education with nonformal ways of teaching in order to expand accessibility to lifetime learning and ongoing education.

## **Supporting Purposes**

### **IV. Qualified Personnel Potential**

Engage and retain high-quality instructional staff by providing them the opportunity for continuous improvement and a contemporary and positive work environment.

**Task IV a / Fill in and improve the instructional staff, corresponding to the university's assurance of quality.**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Conduct a multidimensional assessment of IB's instructional staff according to professional background and accomplishments, pedagogical mastery, personal qualities, age, etc.
2. Evaluate IB's existing faculty and staff, and future needs for staff, based on academic demands.
3. Develop a long-term programme of staffing and instructional staff improvement by
  - fine-tuning the requirements for and the process of hiring of lecturers, and
  - providing obligatory all-staff participation in the development of educational programmes
4. Encourage lecturers' self-education and scientific and pedagogical improvement.
5. Promote lecturers' re-training with encouragements to:
  - master and put into practice new educational methods and technologies;
  - learn about and implement electronic teaching;
  - to teach foreign languages and related subject in those languages;
  - incorporate new educational approaches and develop a culture of quality.
6. Create conditions and provide the means for lecturers to participate in the newest education programmes.

**Task IV b / Advance the satisfaction level of IB employees in order to decrease the risk of corruption.**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Create a monitoring system of IB employees and staff and periodically assess the level of workers satisfaction.
2. Develop a differential pay scale that is closely tied to faculty and staff performance and thus encourages enhanced professional accomplishment.
3. Increase the average salary of IB's instructional staff to 150% of the official average salary of the Republic of Armenia, until 2015.

4. Increase the balance of appropriations to fund and carry out IB's programme budget.
5. Enlarge the assortment of social programmes of the branch, create on-campus areas for food, rest, and socializing, and provide accessibility for all IB employees.

## V. Qualified substructures

Create a contemporary educational and work environment replete with technology and other means to encourage student and staff productivity.

**Task V a / Improve the material and technical conditions of the educational process and develop and modernize IB's educational and scientific laboratory facilities, corresponding to the needs of IB's educational and research programmes.**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Assess the current state of all IB classrooms and teaching and scientific laboratories and update and modernize, corresponding to new educational programmes.
2. Provide for the remodeling and modernization of IB's classrooms and laboratories by increasing the branch budget for that purpose.
3. Create new teaching and scientific laboratories to correspond to the development of educational programmes that will meet the demands of new professions.
4. Activate and expand cooperation with principal donor organizations, with the goal of joint refurbishment of IB's existing teaching and scientific laboratories and the creation of new ones.
5. Create specialized classrooms and language laboratories for foreign-language teaching so as to enhance the quality of language teaching in accordance with contemporary methods.
6. Provide IB's department offices and computer laboratories with wireless Internet access, digital devices, and other necessary accessories.
7. Encourage more productive use of the university's existing facilities (classrooms *and* laboratories) by improvements in educational programmes

**Task V b / Create a unified central information system for IB and make it accessible to students and staff.**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Create an internal computer network for the branch.
2. Create a unified information technology system of management for the branch.
3. Input an automatized system to manage IB's programmes and reporting.
4. Provide training for those who use the unified information system in order to make the system as productive as possible.
5. Encourage the use of electronic means of student-lecturer communications, in order to enhance independent work by students, to encourage the easy exchange between lecturers and students of information and educational materials, and to transmit grade and other assessment information to students.
6. Enlarge IB's technological system and access to the resources of the Internet.

## **VI. Qualified services**

Provide high-quality and productive services to satisfy the educational, professional, and social needs of the students and to enhance their chances of successfully completing their education.

**Task VI a / Raise the level of student satisfaction with IB's education and auxiliary services.**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Assess periodically student satisfaction with their IB education. Apply the YSU criteria of surveying student satisfaction with different aspects of their education, and continue in new ways the process of annual surveys of IB graduates.
2. Follow modern best practices in meeting the needs of auxiliary services for students. Plan, regulate, and gather data concerning graduates' employment by creating feedback mechanisms to reach both the graduates and employers.
3. Improve the practical preparedness of IB graduates by expanding and enhancing "practicum" programmes that provide practical work experience opportunities for

upper-level IB students. Work with employers and organizations where student can have these opportunities as part of their studies. Develop practical skills in all educational programmes.

4. Develop the means to maintain education programmes as fully as possible.
5. Assist students with job placement.
6. Develop means of material encouragement to be given to students, based on their educational progress and public activity.
7. Increase means to make greater use of the opportunities for State and institutional grants, student scholarships, and guaranteed student loans.
8. Establish a student ombudsman programme and make available the services of a defender of students' rights.

**Task VI b / Develop IB's information resources corresponding to contemporary needs, and provide for their productive use and accessibility.**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Advance the accessibility of internal and external information resources of the branch and enhance the ease of use by more efficient use of IB's library.
2. Expand IB's participation in international library networks.
3. Provide for student and professorial staff participation in the planning and development of information resources. Create an IB library council to secure productive cooperation between the IB library and IB's educational and scientific subdivisions.

## **Current Strengths**

### **VII. Varied admissions and correspondence**

Expand IB's public profile and build awareness of IB's offerings relative to the economic development and labor needs of the area.

**Task VII a / Increase the on-going marketing of IB, especially during the application and entrance periods, in order to offset declining enrollment.**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Expand and activate an IB marketing campaign, maximizing the exposure of all educational subdivisions and student organizations, to potential employers and other interested organizations.
2. Enhance the marketing of IB's educational programmes and professions, providing easy press accessibility and free distribution of YSU's university study/preparation guides to all local educational establishments.
3. Expand awareness of IB's programmes to high school pupils by sponsoring a yearly Open House, and offering visits to the branch, thereby giving potential students the opportunity to meet faculty, staff, and current students and to get acquainted with IB's syllabi, campus, and available educational opportunities.
4. Form a partnership with Ijevan's high school as an experimental step
5. Create IB-sponsored Olympiads in different subjects for upper-level high school pupils.
6. Form a wide selection of preparatory courses according to IB's educational programmes and forms of teaching, and provide a flexible schedule of implementation.
7. Sign long-term agreements relative to collaborations on educational activity with the high schools, colleges, and lyceums in the area.

**Task VII b / Align IB entrance requirements with the needs of both students and the labour market.**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Analyze IB's internal and external surroundings to assess the demands of the professional labour market and trends, to assess the professional orientation of applicants and their educational needs, and to align positive external opportunities and underutilized internal abilities.
2. Develop IB's entrance requirements by acknowledging the importance of economic development in creating entrance guidelines, taking into consideration current and changing needs for certain professions and the intellectual potential (financial, material, etc.) of those professions.



## **VIII. Financial stability and productive management**

Undertake a search for alternative sources of financing of the branch. Raise the quality of IB management and the efficiency of its administrative services.

### **Task VIII a / Increase IB's income and diversify its sources.**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Expand and develop the marketing of IB's programmes in order to demonstrate its educational and scientific merits, and its benefits to the local and regional area.
2. Contribute to the design and implementation of off-budget means of raising funds by and for the educational subdivisions of the branch, and stimulate these initiatives for the creation of independent financial means. Cultivate external co-operative relationships as a source of potential development.
3. Systematize opportunities of marketing the paid services of the branch and increase the assortment and volume, in order to expand the means of securing income.
4. By following the YSU example, adopt the criteria of profitability and economic efficiency in IB's programmes for the purpose of planning and increasing economic efficiency.

### **Task VIII b / Increase graduates', donor organizations', and individual investments in the development IB programmes.**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Strengthen relationships with IB graduates and create an electronic system to capture graduates' contact information and other data.
2. Expand on-going relationships with graduates and to build and enhance graduate loyalty to their educational subdivisions as a way of encouraging graduates' financial, informational, and other support of Ijevan Branch.
3. Create and organize an IB graduates association and direct its activity to create positive co-operative relations with the branch.

4. Sponsor periodic gatherings and programmes to announce donations, grants, and investments in IB by graduates, benefactors, and others. Develop and keep long-term relations with all graduates and benefactors.

**Task VIII c / Increase the efficiency of the accounting of and use of IB's financial resources**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Improve the financial management of the branch.
2. Work up and put into place a system of assessment of IB's use of its financial and material resources. Improve the accounting system of all material values.
3. Continue the further improvement of quantitative and qualitative indexes of IB's service and administrative staff.
4. Increase the efficiency of all IB administrative services with the introduction of a formal system of material encouragement for exceptional work.
5. Strive for consistent thrift of resources; establish and announce a plan relative to the conservation of material resources, including both technical and organizational means.

**Task VIII d / Increase IB's managerial efficiency by decentralization and the extended application of information systems.**

To implement this strategic task, it is necessary to:

1. Import and institute methods of contemporary management, and form subsystems of the management of teacher training, management of scientific innovations, and management of the financial and personnel domains of the branch, including retraining of IB leadership and its administrative staff for the productive application of such methods and systems.
2. Provide for the further development of the principle of decentralization of management, designate the authority and responsibility between IB leadership and faculty levels of management.
3. Expand the application of the system of appraisal of the efficiency of all fundamental domains of the branch's activity and recognize that as a basis for the analysis and the accounting of IB's annual activity.

4. Improve the security of IB's information systems of management, put network information systems in place in all domains of the branch, and provide for intercommunication and the sharing of such databases.

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