

## Message from the Director of the Office of Institutional Research

Reforms and improvements based on self-assessment of a university's activities and analysis of the assessment results are essential to enhancing a university's functions. Accordingly, national university corporations have a legal obligation to undertake their own evaluation of the extent to which they have achieved the targets that they set for themselves based on their medium-term plans and to engage with the certified evaluation and accreditation process for quality assurance in education. To robustly support the fulfillment of these crucial duties, Kyushu University's Office of Institutional Research (IR Office) was established in April 2016, building on the experience of the organizations that preceded it.

In 2001, before it became a national university corporation, Kyushu University first established the Office for Information of University Evaluation to conduct university evaluation. As its duties subsequently expanded, the office was reorganized with augmented capabilities in 2004 under the name Office of Institutional Research, and it took charge of duties associated with "National University Corporation Evaluation" and "Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation." Although the office was able to deal with such evaluation-related tasks, it was barely equipped with any functions to support the analysis of the results of self-assessment and the promotion of university reform and improvement based on numerical indicators and qualitative indicators backed up with evidence. As such, making a fresh start in 2016 under a new name in Japanese while inheriting the previous English name, Kyushu University's Office of Institutional Research was given stronger functions in these areas. In addition to its evaluation-related tasks, the objective was to support a more substantial governance structure that permits the strategic management and administration of the University under the President's leadership.

According to the Universities Subcommittee of the Central Council for Education, IR is the "collection and analysis of data about university activities in such areas as education, research, and financial affairs, and investigative research for the purpose of supporting decision-making by the university." Setting out policies for reform and improvement based on "objective, carefully scrutinized, persuasive data" leads to the formation of a common understanding among committee members of the need for reform and improvement and assists in building consensus on policies for achieving these reforms and improvements. From this perspective, one of the most important duties of the IR Office is to accumulate "objective, carefully scrutinized, persuasive data."

Over the years, each of the University's departments have amassed a huge volume of numerical data of all kinds. This was accumulated in whatever form was easiest for the department in question—and sometimes, the staff member in question—to collect, use, or submit in response to requests for data. Furthermore, the definitions used in data vary in quite a few cases, even where the data covers the same category and the same period. Under these circumstances, merely collecting the data from the departments providing it is not sufficient to enable the IR Office to amass "objective, carefully scrutinized, persuasive data." With the assistance of the various Administrative Offices, the IR Office has accumulated data scattered throughout the University in order to convert it to "objective, carefully scrutinized, and persuasive data." At the same time, the disclosure of this data requires very careful attention. The category for the scope of publication has also been carefully scrutinized, and the IR Office has been moving forward while also discussing categorization with the provider of the data.

The *KYUSHU UNIVERSITY FACT BOOK 2020* contains only part of the data that we have accumulated. Our purpose in compiling it was to provide a snapshot of the current status of the University and its individual departments for use in making reforms and improvements as well as in formulating plans for the future. Displaying data "over time" enables readers to understand the University's "past," and to a certain extent, to infer its "future." It also contains an example of the analysis of the University's research ability. We hope that each department will refer to this and use SciVal or Pure to analyze their own research ability.

In addition, the current volume will be uploaded to the IR Office's website as PDF and Interactive versions. The Interactive version will be updated with the latest data, and since it is possible to view and select information that suits the user's needs, we hope that users will make use of it.

Since, as stated above, it is published online, we hope that members of Kyushu University as well as all the external stakeholders who support Kyushu University will also take this opportunity to look over its current status. Moving forward, we hope that they will provide their assistance and guidance so that we can enhance the functions of the IR Office in evaluating Kyushu University and supporting its reform and improvement.

Sincerely,



Director of the Office of Institutional Research

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