

IMPACT-DRIVEN UNIVERSITIES: EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP AND SOCIETAL CHANGE

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS (IAUP)
CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL CONFERENCE

11-13 JUNE 2026

Hotel Kazakhstan,
Almaty Management University
iaup2026.almau.edu.kz

11 June 2026 Pre-Conference Abay Restaurant | Terrace

17:00 Departure to Kok-Tobe from Hotel Kazakhstan
17:00 – 17:45 Transfer to Kok-Tobe
18:00 – 20:00 Welcome reception at **Abay Restaurant** (Kok-Tobe)
20:00 Departure to Hotel Kazakhstan from Kok-Tobe

12 June 2026 Main Conference Hotel Kazakhstan | Grand Ballroom

9:00 – 10:00 **Registration** and coffee time
10:00 – 10:10 **Official opening and traditional Kazakh performance**
10:10 – 10:30 **Opening ceremony and welcoming remarks**

€ **Assylbek Kozhakhmetov** Founder and President, Almaty Management University, IAUP conference host (Kazakhstan)
Shawn Chen IAUP President, Founder and Chairman of the Board, Sias University (China)

Video address

€ **Sayasat Nurbek** Minister of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Kazakhstan)

10:30 – 11:00 **Keynote presentation**
Universities in the Age of Turquoise Zones
Norbert Csizmadia Geopolitics & Geoeconomics Strategist

Former President of the board of trustees of John von Neumann University (Hungary)

11:00 – 11:10

Group photo

11:10 – 11:30

Coffee break

11:30 – 12:20
(50 min)

Plenary session: Global standards and the future of impact-driven universities (in partnership with British Council)

Chair: Fernando Leon-Garcia President, CETYS University System (Mexico), Board Chair, International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), Former Commission Member of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (USA)

Speakers

- € **Alibek Madibekov** Director, National Center for Higher Education Development, Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Kazakhstan)
Samgat Yermekbayev Non-executive advisor to the Minister of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan; First Vice-Rector, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (Kazakhstan)
- € **Rob Stroud** Executive Director, Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education (UK)
- € **Miras Daulenov** President, Coventry University Kazakhstan (Kazakhstan)
- € **Lawrence M. Schall** President of the Commission, New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) (USA) - *remotely*

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12:20 – 13:00
(40 min)

Panel session 1: Entrepreneurial universities driving economic and societal transformation

Chair: Amir Reza Dean, Babson College (USA)

Speakers

- € **Zhenis Taishytaev** Deputy Chairman of the Management Board, Atameken National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Kazakhstan)
- € **Yerkin Tatishev** Founder and Chairman, Kusto Group; Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Almaty Management University (Kazakhstan)
- € **Hikmat Abdurahmanov** CEO, Team University (Uzbekistan)
Tariq Qureishy President & CEO, Future Readiness Forum and Xponential Group (UAE)

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- 13:00 – 14:00** **Lunch**
- 14:00 – 14:10** **Musical performance**
- 14:10 – 14:50**
(40 min) **Panel session 2: Higher education and sustainability imperative: universities the world needs** (in partnership with QS)
Chair: Zoya Zaitseva Head of Partnerships, QS Impact, Future17 SDG Challenge Global Lead, QS Quacquarelli Symonds (UK)
- Speakers**
- € **Sibrandes Poppema** President and Vice-Chancellor, Sunway University (Malaysia)
 - Meirgul Alpysbayeva** Education National Professional Officer, UNESCO Regional Office in Almaty (Kazakhstan)
 - Sarvarbek Rakhmatillaev** Head of International Relations Department, Central Asian University (Uzbekistan)
- 14:50 – 15:40**
(50 min) **Panel session 3: Private higher education in Asia: diverse models, shared challenges**
Chair: Anel Kulakhmetova Provost, inVision U (Kazakhstan)
- Speakers**
- Eun-Joo Lee** President, Seoul Cyber University (Korea)
 - Tatsuro Tanioka** Vice Chancellor, Tanioka Gakuen Education Foundation, Secretary General, IAUP (Japan)
 - € **Ayşegül Komsuoğlu Çıtıptıoğlu** Rector, İstanbul Nişantaşı University (Türkiye)
 - € **Davronzhon Gaipov** Executive Deputy-Rector, SDU University (Kazakhstan)
- 15:40 – 16:10** **Coffee break**
- 16:10 – 17:00**
(50 min) **Panel session 4: The rise of Central Asia: a new voice in global higher education**
(in partnership with Rectors' Club: Central Asia+)
Chair: Nariman Shelekpayev Assistant Professor, Central Asia Program, Yale University (USA)
- Speakers**
- € **Assylbek Kozhakhmetov** Founder and President, Almaty Management University (Kazakhstan)
 - Meruert Zharmagambetova** Chairman of the Board, Rector, ALT University (Kazakhstan)
 - Chynara Ryskulova** Vice-President of American University of Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan)

Dilara Rasulova Dean, School of Economics and Management, Khazar University (Azerbaijan)
Emma Harden-Wolfson Assistant Professor, McGill University (Canada)

17:00 – 18:30
(90 min)

Inaugural book launch session:

“Universities after AI”: introduction to book and presentation of key findings

Pavel Luksha Founder and Director, Global Education Futures, Associate Researcher, Learning Planet Institute; Editor (Serbia)

Official book launch ceremony *(ribbon cutting)*

Fernando Leon-Garcia President, CETYS University System (Mexico), Board Chair, International Association of University Presidents (IAUP)

Assylbek Kozhakhmetov Founder and President, Almaty Management University (Kazakhstan), Executive committee member, International Association of University Presidents (IAUP)

Pavel Luksha Founder and Director, Global Education Futures, Associate Researcher, Learning Planet Institute; Editor (Serbia)

Panel discussion

€ **Shawn Chen** IAUP President, Founder and Chairman of the Board, Sias University (China)

Fernando Leon-Garcia President, CETYS University System (Mexico), Board Chair, International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), Former Commission Member of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (USA)

€ **Sabur Khan** Founder and Chairman, Daffodil International University (Bangladesh)

€ **Kakha Shengelia** President, Caucasus University (Georgia), Former President, International Association of University Presidents (IAUP) (Georgia)

Natalia Cebotari Independent Education Advisor, Former Director of Research and Strategy, Yandex Education (Moldova)

18:30 – 19:30

Free time *(pre-gala dinner cocktail reception)*

19:30 – 21:30

Official Gala Dinner

9:00 – 10:00	Registration and coffee time
10:00 – 11:00 <i>(60 min)</i>	<p>Panel session 5: Global higher education: trends shaping impact in the next decade</p> <p>Chair: Noé Chirino-Hernández Director, International Strategic Initiatives, CETYS University System (Mexico), Executive Director, Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC), Coordinator, Executive Commission for Internationalization, Mexican Federation of Private Higher Education Institutions (FIMPES)</p> <p>Speakers</p> <p>Cheryl Matherly Vice President and Vice Provost for International Affairs, Lehigh University (USA); Former President of the Association of International Education Administrators (USA)</p> <p>Yerlan Shulanov Provost, Narxoz University (Kazakhstan)</p> <p>Dara Melnyk, Director of Global engagement, Higher Education Strategy Associates (Canada)</p> <p>Yhing Sawheny, Director of International Affairs, Siam University (Thailand)</p>
11:00-12:00 <i>(60 min)</i>	<p>Keynote presentation</p> <p>Universities as architects of tomorrow: Responsible AI. Skills. Impact (in partnership with QS)</p> <p>Zoya Zaitseva Head of Partnerships, QS Impact, Future17 SDG Challenge Global Lead, QS Quacquarelli Symonds (UK)</p>
12:00 – 12:20	<p>Closing ceremony and remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € Shawn Chen IAUP President, Founder and Chairman of the Board, Sias University (China) € Timur Buldybayev, Rector, Almaty Management University (Kazakhstan)
12:20 – 12:25	<p>Announcements for next IAUP event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> € Sabur Khan Founder and Chairman, Daffodil International University (Bangladesh)
12:25 – 12:30	Group photo
12:30 – 13:30	MOU signing and AlmaU campus tour <i>(optional)</i>
13:30 – 15:00	Lunch
12:30 – 15:00	Nomadic Artisans’ Bazaar and “ Uly Dala ” (Great Steppe) Cultural Showcase

13 -15 June 2026 IMPACTFUL LEADERSHIP FOR RECTORS

Impactful Leadership for Rectors & University Executives is a high-level executive program designed for university presidents, rectors, and senior leadership teams. The program is implemented in strategic partnership with the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), one of the leading global networks of university leaders.

The program serves as an **international leadership laboratory**, combining national governance contexts with global expertise and peer exchange among university decision-makers. Participants work on real strategic challenges facing their institutions and develop concrete solutions to strengthen institutional impact and competitiveness.