

# ARETÉ

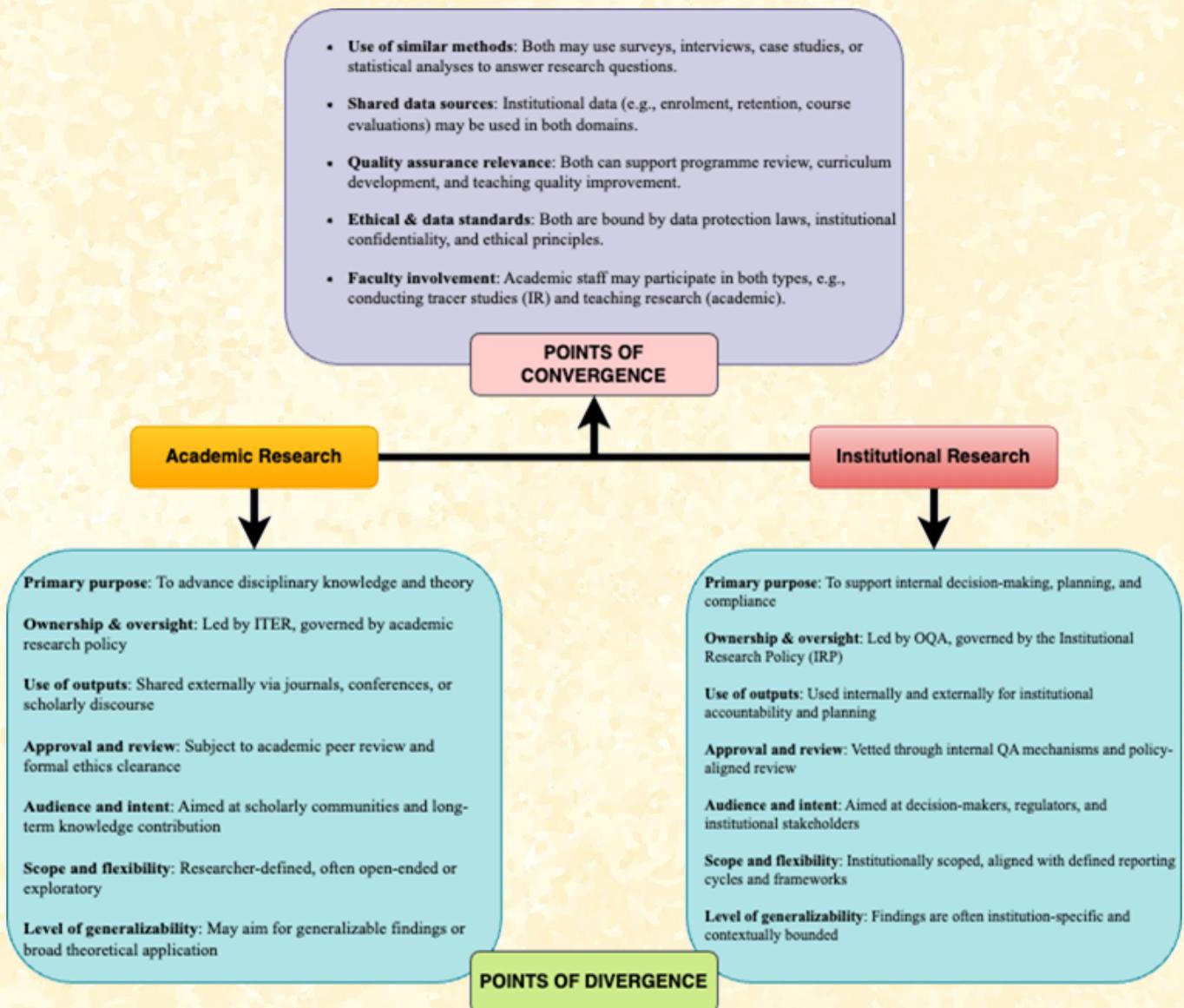
Advancing our Reputation of Excellence in Training and Education

The newsletter of The Mico University College's Office of Quality Assurance

Happy summer!

Despite the heat and the Sahara dust plume that impacted us last month, we hope you have been able to enjoy some quality time with family and friends, good quality rest and refreshing, and – for those who are still on campus every week – an enhanced “quality” of your workday due to the reduced activity on the campus.

In our April issue, ARETÉ focused on Institutional Research (IR), with a brief treatment of the differences between IR and Academic Research (AR). The following graphics continue that discussion, highlighting what they have in common (points of convergence) and comparing specific ways in which they differ (points of divergence).



Though the word “research” occurs in both, we are careful not to treat them as interchangeable or synonymous.

#### WHY WE SHOULD NOT TREAT THEM AS SYNONYMOUS

##### **Different governance and accountability structures**

Academic research is **researcher-driven**, governed by peer norms and academic rigor; institutional research is **institution-driven**, anchored in strategic and operational priorities.

##### **Distinct functions in institutional architecture**

Academic research is a **core scholarly function**; institutional research is a **decision-support function**, often embedded in planning, QA, or executive offices.

##### **Different measures of impact**

Academic research is evaluated by publication, citation, and scholarly contribution; institutional research is measured by its **utility, accuracy, and influence** on institutional effectiveness.

##### **Policy separation matters**

The ITER Research Policy and the Institutional Research Policy are not interchangeable because they define **different accountabilities, scopes, and standards**.

##### **Confusing the two creates risk**

Treating them as interchangeable can lead to misapplied ethics protocols, misaligned oversight, or conflated data quality standards, undermining both academic freedom and institutional credibility.

The box above highlights the major function of IR in supporting decision-making by providing the evidence that forms the basis for decisions. Discourse continues this quarter with a brief look at the bigger picture of Institutional Assessment.

## INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

Some institutions focus institutional assessment (IA) on the improvement of academic programmes. However, for many others, including The Mico, IA is a quality assurance function for all facets of the institution.

### INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

a coordinated institution-wide process for evaluating the adequacy of the institution's systems and services for achieving its mission and goals.

Reports, surveys, performance appraisals, etc. are activities that provide data that can be used to determine the adequacy of our operations, systems, and services. Other types of IA data-collection include external examiners' reports and course evaluation questionnaires. Some of these do not involve the research rigor of IR activities, but they allow us to measure what we are doing and compare it against what we should be doing (e.g. a standard) and against what we want to be doing (e.g. a strategic goal). Consider, for example, The Mico 12's Standard 4 – Teaching, Learning, and Assessment – Indicator 4.12 “The institution facilitates the requisite support for students needing remediation or upskilling in areas critical to their academic success.” A Faculty looking at students' grades in all its courses for three consecutive years can identify the courses in which students consistently underperform. That IA activity contributes to an evaluation of the courses'

performance and students' academic success. A deeper look into the matter requires IR in collaboration with the OQA to determine, for example, the level and effectiveness of support that was facilitated for those students. This research (IR) provides evidence to inform decisions about future efforts to enhance student success.

## INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The analyses from several IA activities give an overall picture of how well the institution is doing considering its mission and goals. That cumulative picture is a measure of Institutional Effectiveness.

As expressed by the [Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness](#) at Stony Brook University, there are five key questions to be answered:

1. What are we doing?
2. Why are we doing it?
3. How well are we doing?
4. How do we know?
5. How do we use results to improve?

Our regular work routinely contributes to IA and impacts the effectiveness of the institution, so it is critical that we work in accordance with established procedures and accurately record and represent what we do.

### UPCOMING IR LED BY OQA

- ✓ Graduate Tracer Survey

