



Title: Welcome Letter from the Editor

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The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things,
but their inward significance. —Aristotle

On behalf of the editorial board, the peer reviewers, the authors, and the faculty and students at Nazarbayev University's Graduate School of Education, I would like to thank you for your interest in our work. This has been a project over a year in the making, involving NUGSE students, faculty, and alumni. As you will see, this is a time of exciting change, both in Kazakhstan and in the international field of educational research.

Scholarly research is as much a science as it is an art. The articles presented in this inaugural issue of *NUGSE Research in Education* reflect the high academic and ethical standards of educational research and policy analysis. All of our authors have completed graduate or postgraduate courses in research methods and educational policy studies. They have chosen and researched the topics themselves, topics which are relevant to education in Kazakhstan and which deserve a wider audience. This critical and analytical inquiry can and will bring positive change to schools, universities and governmental organizations, by placing value on passionate intellectual curiosity and meticulous evidence-based decision-making. The very act of writing, reviewing and editing these articles, we hope, will encourage students to tackle the big problems and wrestle with the big ideas in their field.

All of our authors have learned English as a second, third, or even fourth language. Aristotle's words should ring especially true for them, as they navigate the international landscape of scholarly work in English. Our hope in publishing a student journal is not only to produce writing with a pleasant "outward appearance," but to highlight the "inward significance" of our work in educational research. The writing and editing work will not be perfect, but I can assure you that the work within these pages is important.

This issue consists of two types of writing: articles and editorials. Articles are selected and approved through a blind peer review process involving graduate and post graduate students, alumni and faculty. Each article was reviewed by one faculty member and one student or alum. The three articles presented here are the result of several rounds of review, editing and collaboration between our authors, reviewers and editors. All the articles in this issue deal with large-scale, global issues in education from a Kazakhstani perspective. The first article problematizes quality assurance in higher education in Kazakhstan. Lyudmila Kovaleva walks the reader through the motivations and obstacles involved in monitoring and reforming universities which seek to develop high-performing, highly-qualified graduates in a competitive global economy. The second article outlines and deconstructs the concept of academic mobility in the labor market. Zhanna Jumabayeva argues that while there remains a tendency for Kazakhstani students to glorify and seek out international degrees, those degrees do not have a significant effect on their employability. The third article changes tracks, moving away from higher education and into the field of multilingual education. Rizagul Syzdykbayeva presents an overview of the important role language policy plays in promoting a plurilingual society.

The editorials come from our editorial board, the students and alumni responsible for shaping and guiding the creation of this journal. While these are not peer-reviewed, they do present unique and sometimes personal perspectives and insights into educational policy and practice in Kazakhstan and abroad. Our first editorial frames the journal itself in the larger field of educational research, presenting the voices of the student editors at NUGSE. Your appreciation and understanding of this project will be profoundly improved by reading this essay by Kamila Kozhabayeva and Aisulu Sanat. The second editorial, by Altyn Baigazina and Lyazat Gapbassova, offers advice from NUGSE faculty members about the research and publication process. Ziyat Abdykaimov then offers a critical view of Nazarbayev University's policies and efforts to promote inclusion and to support students with special needs. Finally, Aisara Yessenova shares an example of how NUGSE students are developing their English-language writing and argumentation skills in an academic blog.

These are just words—whether you are seeing pixels on a screen or lines of ink on paper—these are just words. But there is magic in the written word. By writing and reading, we have the ability to share ideas across time and space. However, the promise of that magic is only fulfilled when the reader really reads and mentally engages with the words on the page.

Philip Montgomery
Chief Editor