



Leaders in International Higher Education

2022 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Why the Internationalization of
Higher Education Still Matters

Launching University Partnerships in Central Asia in the COVID-19 Pandemic

- [Ksenia Ivanenko](#), American Councils for International Education
- [Khanjan Mehta](#), Lehigh University
- Doug Hartman, Michigan State University

AGENDA

- UNICEN PROGRAM OVERVIEW
- WHY CENTRAL ASIA?
- CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED
- PIVOTS THAT WORKED
SUCCESSFULLY: CASE STUDIES FROM
LEHIGH UNIVERSITY AND MICHIGAN
STATE UNIVERSITY
- OPPORTUNITIES IN CENTRAL ASIA
- Q&A



U.S.-CENTRAL-ASIA UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM (UNICEN)

Funded by the Department of State
Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs

A dedicated platform of U.S. and Central Asian
higher education institutions that:

- Increases sustainable collaborations
- Builds expertise in
 - strategic planning
 - faculty and administrative policy
 - curriculum development
 - (virtual) student and faculty exchanges
 - joint research
- Advances mutually beneficial partnerships
with economic-based outcomes.

<https://unicen.americancouncils.org>



UNICEN KEY NUMBERS



69 UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS GRANTS



100+
HEIS IN CENTRAL ASIA
INVOLVED



9,000+ U.S. AND CENTRAL ASIAN
PARTICIPANTS



24
MoU SIGNED



52 PROPOSALS SUBMITTED
TO FUNDING AGENCIES



39
CONFERENCE
PROPOSALS



34
PAPERS IN PEER-
REVIEWED JOURNALS



WHY CENTRAL ASIA?

- 72 million people
- Ancient traditions and science legacy from USSR
- Recent political and educational reforms
- Poverty reduction shaping middle class
- Growing young population hungry for new knowledge and connections
- Entrepreneurial spirit from Silk Road
- Important geopolitical location
- Climate change, water disputes, insecurity
- Amazing culture and hospitality:

"We were treated as Hollywood stars" ©



DISPARITIES AND INEQUALITIES

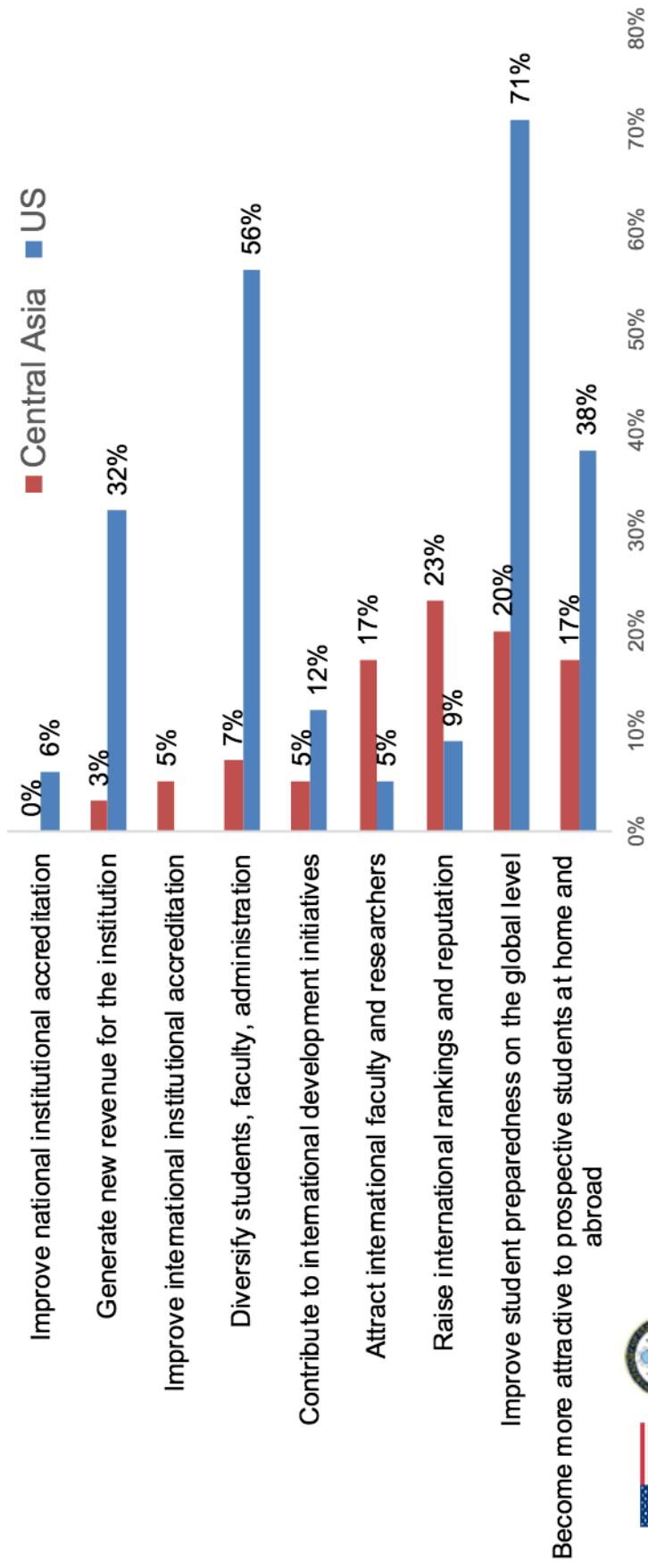


- Innovation-based economy
- Broadband infrastructure
- High technology and equipment
- A lot of autonomy
- Academic freedom and integrity
- English is lingua franca
- Internationalization is priority



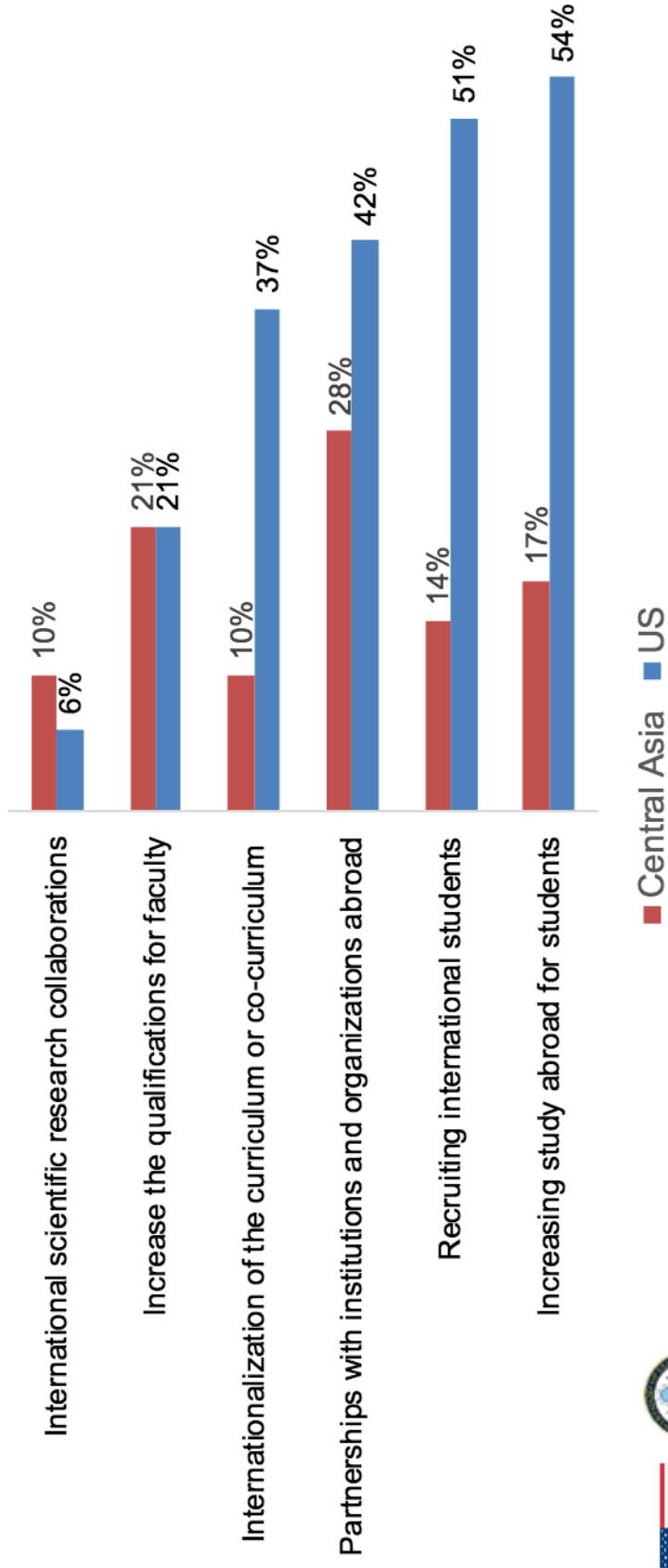
- Commodities and agriculture economies
- Unstable connectivity, especially in regions
- Lack of know-how
- Centralized higher education systems
- High levels of plagiarism
- Russian is lingua franca
- Limited level of internationalization

WHAT ARE THE MAIN FACTORS DRIVING INTERNATIONALIZATION AT YOUR INSTITUTION?*

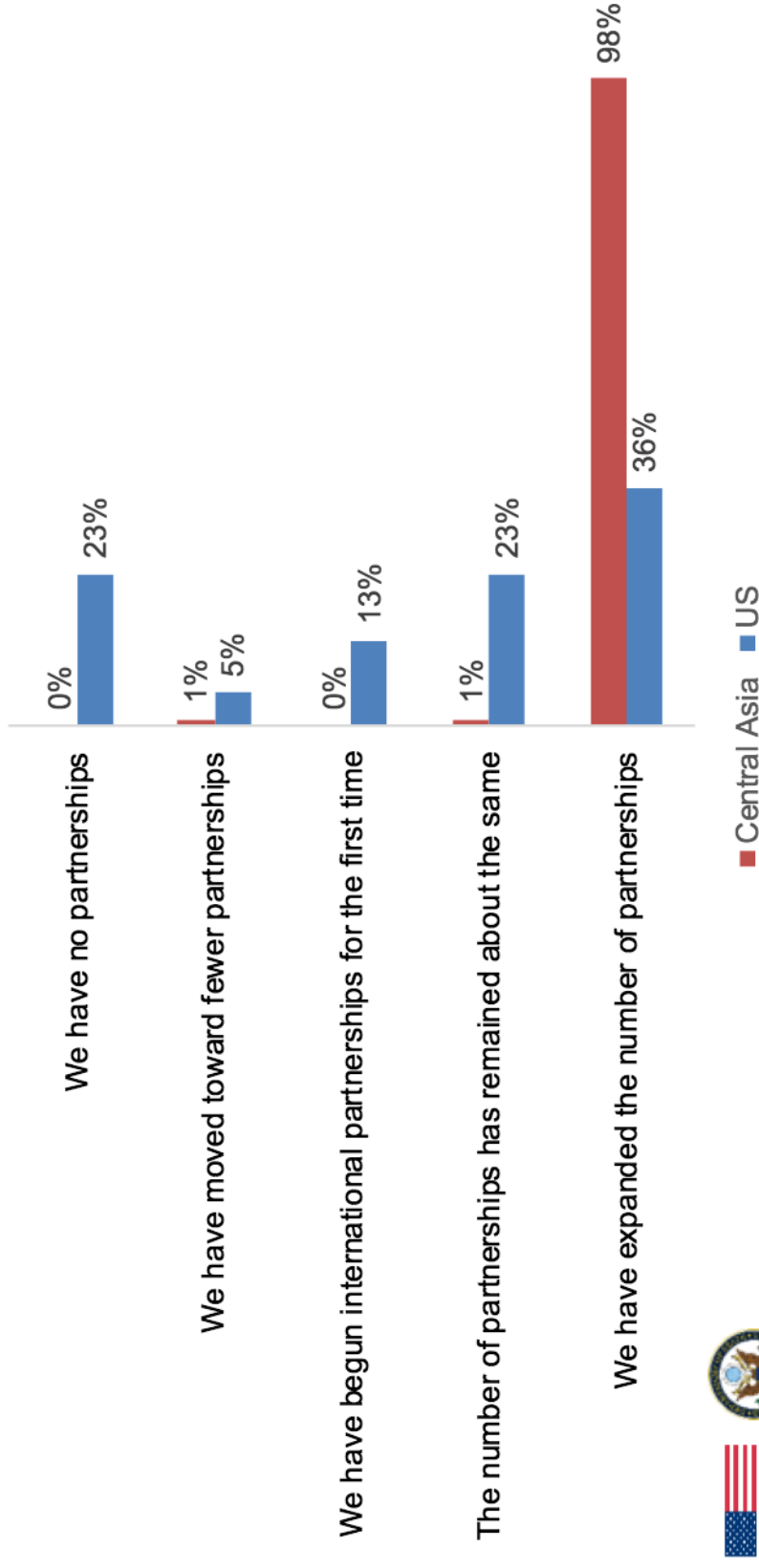


*ACE Mapping Internationalization on Campus Survey;
AC UNICEN survey of 99 HEIs in Central Asia

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE HIGHEST PRIORITY INTERNATIONALIZATION ACTIVITIES AT YOUR INSTITUTIONS?



WHICH BEST DESCRIBES INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP GROWTH?



U.S.-CENTRAL ASIA COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES



- ❖ Systems of higher education are still highly centralized
- ❖ High hierarchy and power distance
- ❖ Huge degree of uncertainty, high turnover of staff
- ❖ Lack of confidence and decision-making power
- ❖ MoUs are often requested to start activity
- ❖ Some universities want everything right away: double-degree programs, faculty and student exchanges, etc.
- ❖ Resources: time and money
- ❖ Time dimension and time management
- ❖ Asynchronous sessions due to time difference and internet connectivity
- ❖ “*Tell us what we need to do*” approach

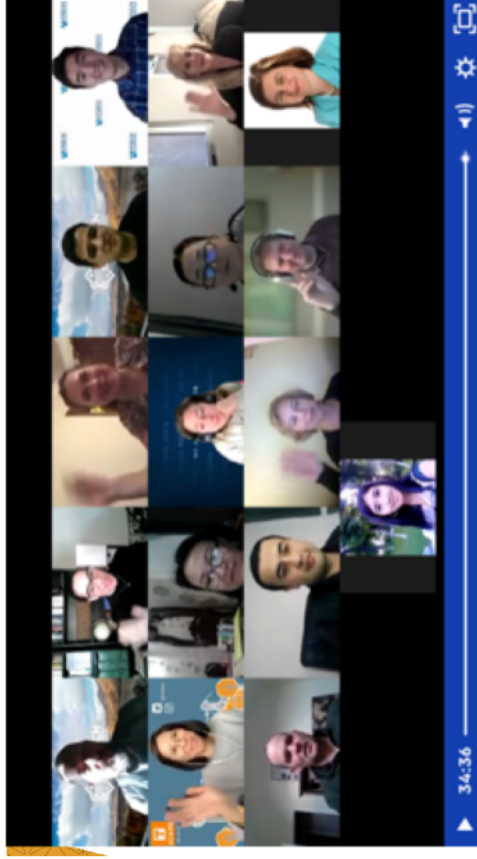


HOW DID AMERICAN COUNCILS ADJUST?

- A series of UniCEN Webinars to engage Central Asian university representatives
- Online Conference “COVID-19. What Do We Know and How to Act” in Central Asia
- International Virtual University Partnerships Fair to matchmake U.S., and Central Asian HEIs
- Online meetups for U.S. grantees and Central Asian institutional partners for peer-learning
- COIL Training Program – matchmaking and ongoing faculty mentorship to launch virtual exchanges



Community Learning



UNICEN CASE STUDIES



Attracting Ecotourists to Uzbekistan for Sustainable Growth



UNICEN HIGHLIGHTS

EDUCATING NEXT GENERATION AGRIBUSINESS SPECIALISTS



Deploying Digital Learning in Kyrgyzstan



<https://unicen.americancouncils.org/case-studies/>



<https://unicen.americancouncils.org/current-partnerships/>



LEHIGH
UNIVERSITY

Global Social Impact Fellowship: Learning, Research, and Entrepreneurship for Impact

Khanjan Mehta + Dinissa Duvanova

Lehigh University



Unicen
CENTRAL ASIA UNIVERSITY
PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

Global Social Impact Fellowship



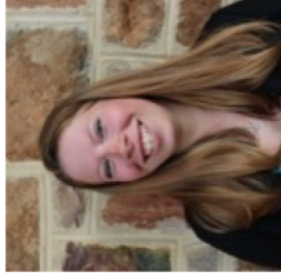
Air Quality in Almaty



Faculty Mentor:
Dinissa Duvanova



Nicholas Jones



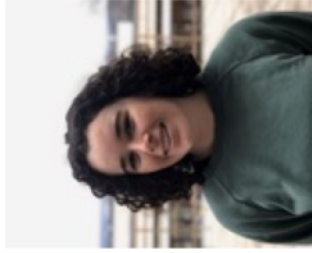
Kate Lyden



Hannah Moss



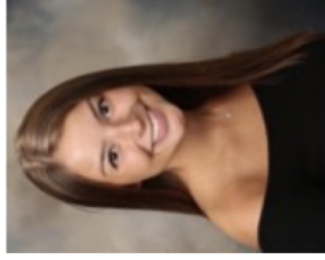
Alma U Faculty
Mentor: Aurora
Diaz Soloaga



Tess McGinley



Alua Bekbossynova

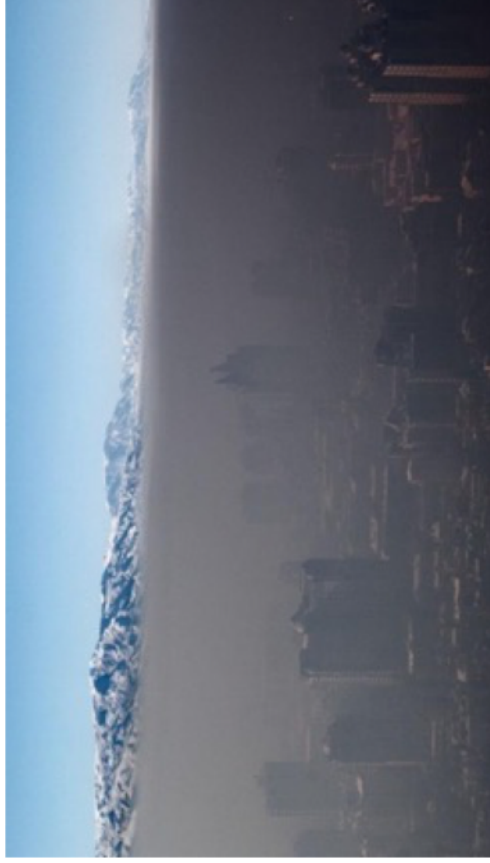


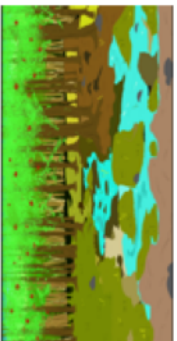
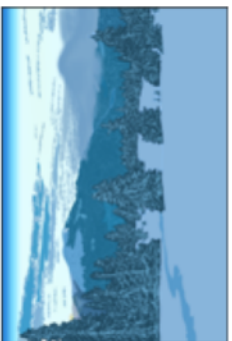
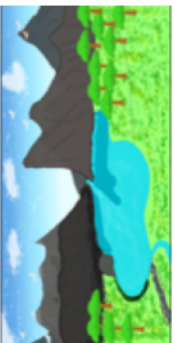
Kate Miller



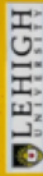
Air Quality in Almaty

We are working to mitigate exposure to air pollution in Almaty, Kazakhstan, through recommending healthier and safer actions via a mobile application.





MOUNTAINTOP: from inquiry to Impact



Bethlehem, PA
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#Lmountaintop



Energy, Pollution & Birth Outcomes

Clarify the causal contribution of fossil-fuel related air pollution on childhood illnesses, including adverse birth outcomes, asthma, obesity, and intellectual impairments

- **Objective 1:** Calculate the asthma risk resulting from early-life exposures to PM2.5, NO2, and ozone
- **Objective 2:** Build multiscale geospatial database by integrating environmental (e.g., satellite remote sensing, ground-level air monitoring, and meteorological) and health outcome data (e.g., birth outcomes, maternal health, and infant mortality and morbidity).
- **Objective 3:** Expand and strengthen the web of collaborators.



COVID Pivots

- Virtual Teaming
- Universities, Non-profits, Schools
- ~~Government Agencies~~
- Weekly WhatsApp Call: Extreme Specificity

- Research & Proposal Development
- ~~Primary Data Collection~~
- Sec. Data, Lit Reviews, Case Studies



Pivoting a Professional Development Project During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Yuliya Novitskaya

Douglas K. Hartman

Farkhat Yesenbayev

Peter De Costa

Rebekah Gordon

Curtis Green-Eneix

D. Philip Montgomery

David Landis



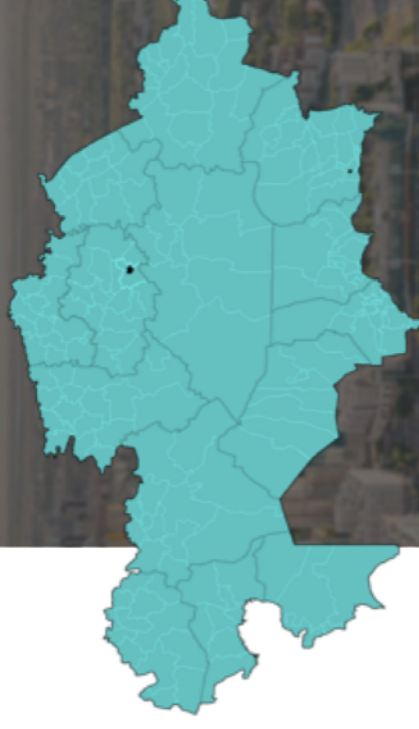
Kazakhstan

- ***Transforming higher education***

(Ahn et al., 2018; Aitzhanova et al., 2014)

- *Enacting a trilingual education policy (MoES, 2010, 2015)*

- *Reimagining STEM education (Tompieva, Azhigenova, Mayasarova & Zhantuganova, 2019)*



How do you reimagine
STEM curricula in HE
given the language policy ...
while pivoting online?



Team



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Michigan State University



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Professor & Dept. Head
Kazakh-Amer. Free Univ.



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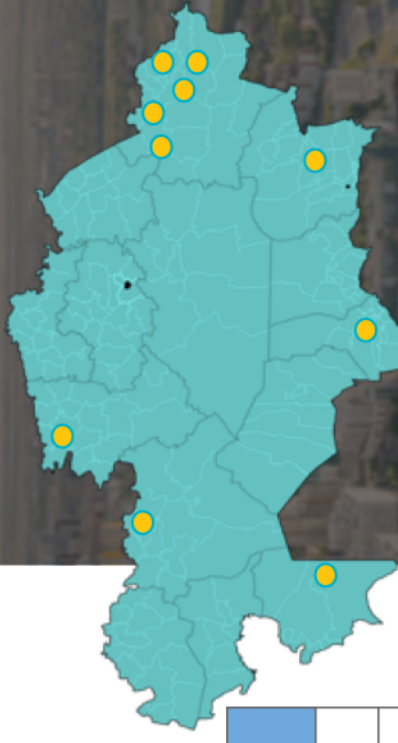
Farkhat Yesenbayev
Graduate Student
Kazakh-Amer. Free Univ.



Philip Montgomery
Graduate Student
Michigan State University

Partners

University	City	Region
Kazakh American Free University	Ust-Kamenogorsk	Eastern
East Kazakhstan State University	Ust-Kamenogorsk	Eastern
East Kazakhstan State Technical University	Ust-Kamenogorsk	Eastern
Yessenov University	Aktau	Western
Shakarim University	Semey	Eastern
Baishev University	Aktobe	Western
Kostanay State Pedagogical University	Kostanay	Northern
South Kazakhstan State University	Shymkent	Southern
Kazakhstan Innovative Academy	Semey	Eastern
 Zhilyayev State University	Taldykorgan	Eastern
 Pavlodar State Pedagogical University	Pavlodar	Eastern



Content & Language Integrated Learning (fCLIL)



Content



Language





Structure

A. Orientation to education

B. Key constructs in education

C. Enhanced professional learning

D. Professional inquiry





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slido.com
#Z210

The title of my dream STEM course is ...

Biology

New technologies for teachers

Jurisprudence

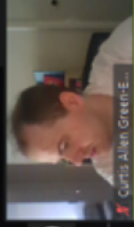
Biology in English

Physics

Environmental Economics

Foreign literature

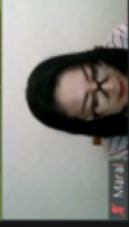
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Chris Allen Greene



Douglas K. Hartman



Maral

Karlygash

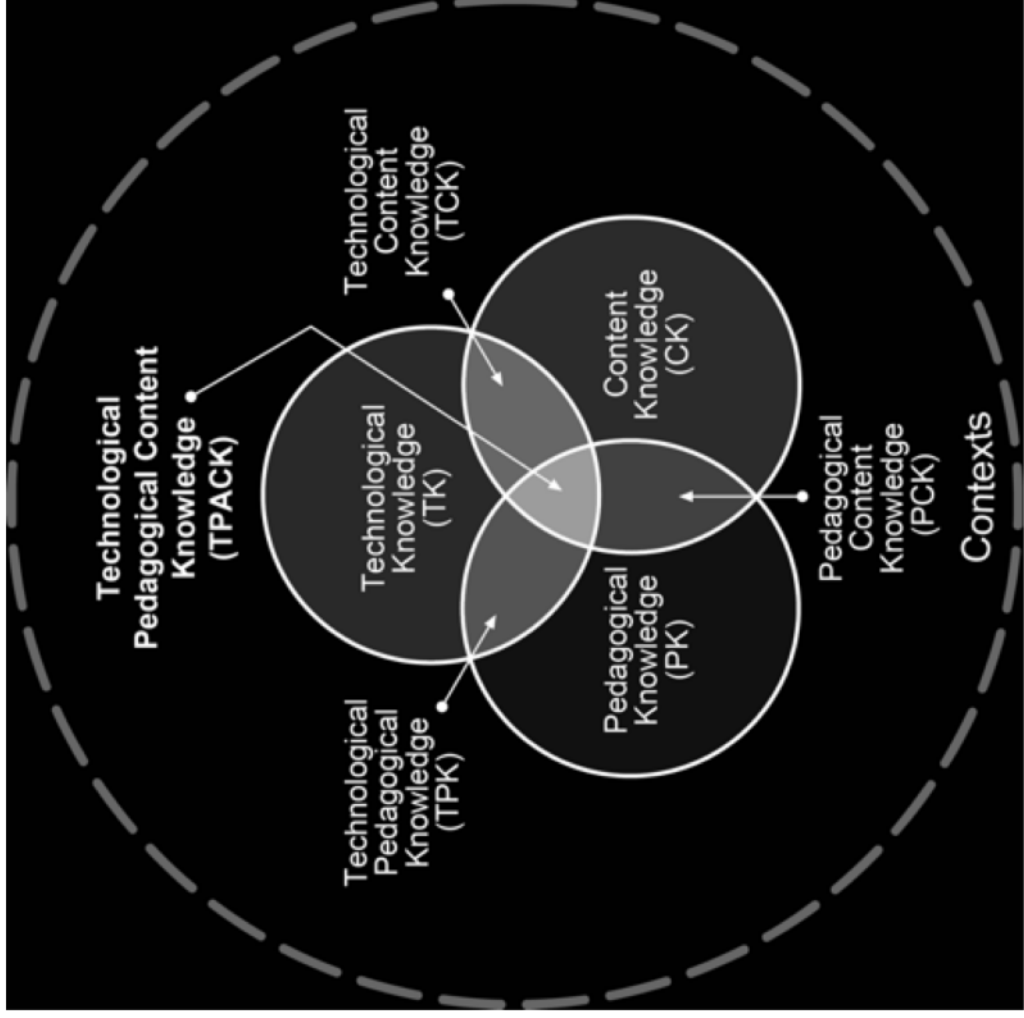


Zhinat YERNINAZOVA

Yulfiya



slido



Pivoting

- *Forward*
- *Reverse*
- *Chaine*
- *Round-About*



FINAL SURVEY FROM 47 U.S. UNIVERSITIES

1-10

How likely will you continue cooperation with your current Central Asian university partner(s) after the project ends?

8.8

Despite COVID-19 travel restrictions, how satisfied are you in meeting the outcomes of your partnership project?

8.3

How significant was your project in advancing your professional goals?

8.0

How significant was your project in advancing your department or institution's internationalization agenda?

7.3

How satisfied were you with the support provided by American Councils ?

9.7



LESSONS LEARNED

- Develops several categories – from individual faculty collaborations to institution-wide commitments
- Focus on agriculture, water resources, entrepreneurship, energy, STEM in English, public health, etc.; expand research projects that meet UN SGDs
- Involve international leadership to amplify efforts and the whole team to have a back-up
- Provide the framework giving broader meaning to individual PIs
- Share motivations, priorities and all expectations upfront
- Set, adjust and readjust your partnerships goals, implementation, timeframe, and M&E plans based on how partnership progresses
- Bring students into research activity
- Promote a greater understanding of value of this partnership to your institution



Share information about your project to provide visibility!

LESSONS LEARNED

- Good communication habits make partnerships successful: start monthly or bi-weekly planning invitations: Google calendar, Zoom, Whatsapp, Telegram
- Messaging apps (Telegram, Whatsapp, Facebook) more than email
- Be patient when it comes to different time dimension and time management and persistent with engagement
- Identify and discuss any challenges and issues with your Central Asian partners; even if they say that everything is fine
- Discuss sustainability - plans for future activity or funding beyond project end - early
- And ask about additional opportunities within Central Asia!



ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN CENTRAL ASIA

- Center for International Programs Bolashaq in Kazakhstan
- “El-Yurt Umidi” Foundation in Uzbekistan
- The Initiatives of the Ministries of Education and Science to bring leading foreign university campuses to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan
- Ministry of Innovative Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan
- Faculty Enrichment Program
- EducationUSA Virtual Fairs
- USAID/NAS-PEER Program, USDA - Agriculture, Food and Research Initiative, NIH Fogarty, NSF Advanced Technological Education, U.S. Embassies, Fulbright



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