



## From Editors

Dear Readers,

Higher education has expanded rapidly throughout the world for over a century. Many nations started to invest heavily in the higher education sector after World War II in order to enhance their socio-economic development and international competitiveness. The rapid increase in the number of institutions, students, and faculty created many issues and triggered discussions on different aspects of higher education such as institutional autonomy, accountability, academic freedom, shared governance, quality, and diversity. Today, globalization and the knowledge economy not only have increased interest in higher education, but it also has added new dimensions to ongoing discussions about higher education, such as entrepreneurship, internationalization, and privatization.

Developments in the higher education sector during the last century also increased research interest in issues of higher education. As a result, especially after the 1950s, higher education studies started to be acknowledged as an independent academic field in many countries, such as the United States, Germany, China, and the United Kingdom. Today, research on higher education is well established in many Western and Far Eastern countries, but not so well established in many Eastern European and Central Asian countries. In Turkish universities, for example, until recently, there have been very few studies of higher education in academic programs. Since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, several higher education research centers have been established and a few universities have started to offer advanced degree programs in higher education administration.

In such a context, an international conference on higher education, the *1<sup>st</sup> International Higher Education Studies Conference (IHEC)*, was organized with the partnership of the Turkish Education Foundation (TED) and Boğaziçi University on 14-16 October, 2015 in Istanbul. The main goal of the conference was to share and discuss emerging trends, research findings, and theoretical perspectives in the context of today's higher education. More importantly, this conference promoted collaboration among higher education scholars and increased interest by academe in general to issues of higher education research in the region.

We believe that IHEC 2015 significantly contributed to the higher education field in the region, particularly in Turkey. Many abstracts from Turkey and different countries, such as Azerbaijan, China, Malaysia, and North Cyprus were submitted. The conference was very productive with keynote speeches, panels on key higher education issues, and approximately one hundred paper presentations. This special issue is another significant outcome of the conference. Although this issue is not limited to conference papers, most of the submissions for the issue were presented at the conference.

For this special issue, we received more than 50 manuscripts. After careful consideration by the editors, most of the papers were sent to two referees. In the editorial review process, we rejected a few manuscripts which were mainly lacking in either methodology or conceptualization. During the blind peer review process, we only rejected papers where both referees suggested that the text should not be published. If the reviewers suggested minor or major revisions, we decided to continue the review process and sometimes sought advice from a third reviewer. For those articles that needed to be revised one of the special issue editors also offered substantial feedback on how the manuscript needed to be edited. The result is that most of the manuscripts went through at least 2 and usually 3 rounds of revision. Finally, 22 articles were accepted for publication. We believe the review process was rigorous and beneficial for the manuscripts, and the published papers have been significantly improved because of this process.

We are also happy to see that the accepted papers represent almost all aspects of higher education. The topics include the more traditional higher education research areas such as access, academic freedom, finance, and quality, and then more current discussions such as internationalization, leadership, and privatization. We are confident that this special issue not only makes a significant contribution to the field's development in Turkey, but also is an important addition to the international higher education literature.

We would like to thank all the authors who submitted their work for this special issue. We particularly appreciate the contribution of all referees who showed significant effort and spent their valuable time reviewing manuscripts. Last but not least, we thank Asst. Prof. Dr. Mehmet Palancı and Hüseyin Körpeoğlu for their invaluable support during the review and publication process.

Sincerely,

Special Issue Editors

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fatma Nevra Seggie

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sedat Gümüş

Prof. Dr. William G. Tierney