

Thank you! That is my very first word for all my sponsors, including Fulbright, Alpha Delta State Ohio Educational Foundation of Delta Kappa Gamma, and Kent State University.

Back in Azerbaijan, when I got a letter from the U.S. embassy in Baku regarding my new sponsor-Delta Kappa Gamma, I was confused. The very first question was *"Why are they sponsoring me if they even do not know me?"* I made a research and the very first sentence I read about Delta Kappa Gamma was *"The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International promotes professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education."* I saw that it is right about me, my life goal, and my education. It made me honored. Diving deep into my research, I felt privileged to be part of a society that supports women all over the world for almost a century!

Azerbaijan is famous for being the first Muslim country to enfranchise women back in 1919. This fact always encouraged and strengthened me to study, work, and be part of education in Azerbaijan. After ten years of teaching and at the same time pursuing my tertiary education in my home country, I felt a deep need to become a global learner, global educator, and global citizen. That is the main reason I headed towards the exchange program which encountered me with amazing and lovely people in the USA.

Dearest Marilyn Slusser, her husband, respectable Harold Slusser, and all other Delta Kappa Gamma family became my American family. The first letter from my dearest friend on July 11, 2020, was so positive, warm, and supportive that I felt my family and I would not be alone in Ohio. Our email communication was so favorable that I thought the Chairman of the Alpha Delta State Ohio Educational Foundation is 30 years old graduate student who feels and understands me so well.

Since then, we are in close contact with my friend Marilyn and she was one of few people who was strongly engaged in my moving, settlement, and adaptation in Ohio during cold January days. In the example of Marilyn, I see how valuable and supportive is Delta Kappa Gamma to all international women students and educators. This society is fully paying off its mission, values, and objectives. In my case what they ask is simply -pay it forward! To the question - *"What can I do to this society?"* Marilyn always replies *"Forward what you learn at Kent State University and impact on Azerbaijani Education System to help more and more to the next generation."*

Our hourly phone conversations with Marilyn and in personal meeting helped me a lot to adjust to American life, understand this totally new society and people easily, see differences and do my best choice. Marilyn patiently

answered my curious questions, engaged me when I missed my Azerbaijani family, and cheered me up. I could see how the chairman should be!

I was honored to participate and have a short speech during the DKG/Ohio 2021 State Convention where I met a lot of strong, impressive, independent, and supportive women of all ages. Every speech and every word, every action, and plan presented in that Convention impressed me a lot. It was a palette of talented women whom the world is in deep need in every country. Those two-day meetings exhibited the reality that regardless of your nationality, race, age, religion and all bunch of useless clichés-YOU are valuable because you are a woman!

It is not even a year that I know Delta Kappa Gamma Society, dear friend Marilyn, Susan Brueggemeier, and other supportive members, I feel as if they are my family, my relatives, and friends. I know that I can rely on these ladies, write and ask any kind of question, and get a positive reply all the time. All these show that Delta Kappa Gamma supports women not only financially, but also emotionally which is extremely important these days.

This kind of attitude, support, engagement impacted my education a lot. I felt that I need to do my best in my courses, conduct research, participate in conferences and seminars and get the utmost benefit from my American education. I completed my terms excellently and was happy to ask Delta Kappa Gamma for the extension of the treaty. How lucky I am to have this society as a sponsor for one more term!

I wish Delta Kappa Gamma to expand its activities, have resources to support more people from all over, and by their help change the world into the right place. I just want to say one more time- THANK YOU!