



Fulbright in Action

# Fulbright Ukraine Discusses the Idea and Relevance of the University

October 10-13, 2003

With a growing alumni, an increasingly proactive group of incoming Fulbrighters, and name recognition in the media and academia, Fulbright Ukraine is addressing topics that go beyond the Fulbright community and reflect overall societal and academic problems. The theme of the 6th Annual Fulbright Alumni Conference was "The Idea of a University." Participants received a stack of materials that provided various views on university education. These materials formed the basis of discussion. There were no formal papers. The conference began on Friday, October 10, 2003 with a press conference attended by Ukrainian and American Fulbright participants, JFDP Alumni, representatives from Ukrainian universities and the media. Saturday consisted of four series of workshops and panels. Sunday was a day for reflection, discussion and looking ahead at how these themes will continue to be addressed by Fulbrighters and other communities in Ukraine. The real value of the conference will be seen in the months to come, as the more than 130 participants raise these issues in their home institutions, with local political leaders, and within the virtual Fulbright community.

## What is a University?

The conference was opened by Olha Homilko, President of the Ukrainian Fulbright Association Board and a Ukrainian Fulbright Scholar. Ms. Homilko gave her vision of the

Ukrainian university, which has taken on characteristics that make comparisons with European university standards difficult. She posed a series of questions that would continue to come up in the discussions: How does the university exist within the Ukrainian cultural context? Is it a social institution that allows an individual to understand his or her own existence? Do the universities develop a society that has both skills and knowledge?

Lisa Heller, Cultural Affairs Officer of the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv, discussed the immediacy and importance of the role of the university in creating a democratic society.

The opening session set the tone for the entire weekend with a panel of distinguished representatives of the academic community. The session was divided into three parts, each addressing a different question.

In the first part, participants raised the question: What is a University? Director of Fulbright Ukraine Dr. Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak opened the session by referring to the origins of the university in Bologna, Italy. In the US, Bologna is most often identified with a type of meat as well as a bunch of nonsense. Citing the Yale academic Jaroslav Pelikan, Dr. Chomiak mentioned that in addition to soccer, the university is the most widely exported product of the Western World. So, has the West cre-



Opening of the 6<sup>th</sup> Fulbright Conference in Ukraine

ated and exported something digestible and useful, something which is intellectually nourishing, or has it led to the proliferation of irrelevant academic institutions?

Vilen Horsky, a professor at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, asked the panel whether issues of higher education in Ukraine were being discussed in terms of real ideas or real illusions. In the ideal university, he said, students should come to learn, not to be taught. But, with no student-teacher relationships, we are witnessing a complete deterioration of the university, as it develops into a corporation whose goal is to certify specialists.

Maria Zubrytska, Pro-rector of the Lviv Franko National University, a Fulbright Senior Scholar, and the editor of a Ukrainian-language anthology "The Idea of a University" that was distributed to all the participants, noted that her primary objective was to bring to the forefront the principles of the autonomy of a university and how they relate to society. She asked, is a university an island, a peninsula, or is it a part of its surroundings? Only after a university has decided its mission and vision, only then can it select its teachers and student body. And only then can it adequately reflect society, the past, present and the future.

## In the ideal university, he said, students should come to learn, not to be taught

Myroslav Popovych, Director of the Institute of Philosophy at the National Academy of Science of Ukraine, first referred to the primary role of education in the university. Then he looked into the future of the university, suggesting that using American universities as a basis of comparison or model for Ukraine was inappropriate. It's important for universities to be bastions for democracies and centers of democratic movements, but universities should not become political parties or affiliations.

The final speaker to address the question What is a university? was Serhiy Proleyev, President of the Philosophy Fund of Ukraine. For Dr. Proleyev, the main role of the university, which is currently being threatened, is to develop an autonomous mind and independent thinking. A university should form a person to be an intellectual leader in the area of society that he or she chooses. Prof. Proleyev believes that in Ukraine there is no estab-

lished culture of intellectual autonomy, and so by definition the university is threatened and can not provide intellectual leaders. Dr. Proleyev concluded by asking if the Ukrainian nation were ready to respond to the demands of intellectual freedom and autonomy of the mind?!

## There is no working relationship between the Academy of Sciences and the universities.

Four speakers addressed the question: Do we really need a university? Prof. Stanislav Kulchytsky, Deputy-director of the Institute of History at the National Academy of Science of Ukraine, began by reminding the audience of the destruction of Ukrainian intellectuals and the Ukrainian institutional academia in the 1930's. There has been little, if any, rehabilitation of those destroyed institutions, and few people today understand that an intellectual is not just someone who is educated, but a person who is trained and brought up in the intellectual tradition. The problem with Ukrainian higher education today is that there is no working relationship between the Academy of Sciences and the universities. As a result, there is very little good academic work coming out of either, and there is no young generation ready to replace the older one. Prof. Kulchytsky was particularly critical of the

general university situation in Ukraine, saying that there are only a few intellectual centers in Ukraine (Odesa, Kyiv, Kharkiv, Lviv and possibly Dnipropetrovsk). As a result, education is increasingly plagued by mediocrity. Prof. Isajevych of Lviv University and the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine stressed that universities should unite learning and scholarship. Mikhaylo Minakov, doctoral candidate at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, and Mykola Rjabchuk, political scientist and Fulbright Scholar, concluded this session. Mr. Rjabchuk, a prolific commentator on current events, admits that he never completed the formal ranks of academia. But this formality has not stopped him from becoming a leading intellectual and winner of book awards. Mr. Rjabchuk believes that this paradox is partly due to the relationship between the university and the state. He said that as long as a university employee considers himself a civil servant, there can be no talk of a university or intellectual autonomy.

Mykhajlo Zahyrnyak (Fulbright Scholar and Rector at the Kremenchuk State Polytechnic University), and Hryhoriy Khomenko (Fulbright Senior Scholar and Pro-rector of the Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine) summarized by giving their visions of what kind of university Ukraine

needs. Then the audience was introduced to a new event for Fulbright conferences — Student Debates. Four law students from law academies in Kyiv came together to debate the "independence" of a university and what form it should take. They represented the government and the opposition. The government wanted a conservative and gradual reform of higher education while the opposition called for radical liberalization and reforms.

The evening concluded with a reception at which US Ambassador John Herbst, just returned from Washington, DC, mingled with the guests.

### Analyzing the University

The second day of the conference took a different turn and was designed to be a working session to provoke discussions and generate ideas. Feedback after the conference suggested success. The program was divided into four sections, including morning and afternoon discussion panels followed by working groups.

The first panel was devoted to the theme of the university and globalization, and each of the four moderators organized their discussion differently. Participants had a choice of sessions and many joined more than one. In all, twelve presenters from Ukraine and the US spoke on issues relating the university to globalization. These included:

- Internationalizing the curriculum
- The university as a core institution in globalizing a knowledge-based economy
- The effects of technology on the university
- The roles of national culture and psychology in globalization

Olha Homilko was moderator of one group which featured three presenters, starting with Roman Bazylevych, Chairman of the Information Technology Department, Lviv Polytechnic Institute and Fulbright Scholar Alumni. He suggested a program for transforming the Ukrainian system of education in line with global changes. Ukrainian universi-

ties can integrate into the international context by:

- Establishing independent professorship (tenure) which gives scholars status and independence;
- Removing institutions like the VAK (the Ukrainian Higher Certification Commission — “BAK” in Ukrainian), and abolishing the distinction between kandytat nauk and doctor nauk, replacing them with Ph.D. consistent with international standards.

Olha Homilko then discussed Literacy and Globalization, a topic that she recently presented at Ghent University, Department of Education, in Belgium. During the session, Ms. Homilko suggested that the Belgian conference was an example of international intellectual integration, which, by involving Ukrainian contemporary philosophers, helped break down borders. Specifically:

- It was a step towards further integrating Ukrainian philosophical thought into international intellectual life
- Recognition of Ukrainian scholarship,

## There is no motivation in Ukraine for using American style syllabi

especially in humanities and social sciences, changes the negative image of Ukraine as a country with a heritage of Marxist ideology

- In spite of methodological chaos in Ukrainian humanities and social sciences there are strong intellectual results. These are found mostly in independent research projects, which do

not depend on previous ideological constraints nor on current theoretical weaknesses or stereotypes

- The conference was a step towards overcoming barriers between analytical (mostly American and English) philosophical traditions and continental metaphysics (mostly European)

Academic exchange programs play an important role in globalization. For example, a significant number of the Ukrainian scholars who work using international standards are alumni of various American programs. Unfortunately, opportunities to present their research results to the international scholarly community are limited because of lack of financial support on the part of their home institutions.

Oleksandr Nedbalyuk, a professor at Vinnytsia State Agrarian University and Fulbright Senior Scholar argued that the impact of globalization on syllabi and the curriculum is limited by Ukrainian government standards of education. There is no motivation in Ukraine for using American style syllabi and curricula and there is no coordination between universities on teaching methodology. Furthermore, he complained that the internet is being underused, universities do not have internal e-systems, and motivation for conducting information searchBaA0.BPGz.zBis APGz.zBbeing ormatABdg.Gz.zBinfo own computers.

### Administration and Education in the University Structure

The second half of the morning was devoted to the workshop “University Organization and Administration as a

Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak, Director of the Fulbright Office in Ukraine; Hon. John Herbst, U.S. Ambassador in Ukraine, with Halyna Zaporozhets, Oleksandr Meshchaninov and Volodymyr Romakin from Mykolayiv Petro Mohyla Humanitarian University



## Balancing power and representation in the university will help develop quality in education

rUdIta hUOaUsaurOautPmWuO aUn  
WO nWdatPIuOasPOt PuPO aPs  
etIs PuPUsIdaUWsutPO ivaatiaQ?P a WyT  
yO uOBaurIuamUuraurOaaIsBatIPsO  
nIOaIamtIPsaBtIPsvaUnaWIdPnPOBaIBoPs  
P utIuUt aIsBahtUnO Ut iaasamUuraI O  
oItOuaBOoIsB aIsBarPyrOta IdItPO  
BOhdOuOaurOaWIdPnPOBa?UtnUtOaPsaIIT  
BOoPi  
aOaId UaBP W OBaurOaIdWOaUnauOsWtOaPs  
IIBOoPIatOdIuPsyU U C&@raIsB  
urahtPsPhdO a?rPra uIuOaurIuaurOahtPT  
oItCaoP PUsaUnaurOaWsPOt PuCaP aWIdP  
uCaUnadOItsPsyIsBaurIuarPOtItrPIda C T  
uOo atOWPtOaIUWsuImPdPuCiaaOanOdu  
urIuauOsWtOa?I aIaIdWImdOaoUBodaUn  
oOtPIsaIIBOoPautIBPuPUsa?rPr

### Is a University Without Borders a University?

During this presentation, "The University without Borders," Dr. Chomiak was joined by Dr. Jeffrey Wills (The Catholic University of Lviv), Olena Fomenko (Kyiv Shevchenko University), and Prof. Volodymyr Manakin (Kirovohrad State University). Dr. Wills had given up his tenured position at the University of Wisconsin after being a Fulbright Scholar in order to help set up the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv.

His introduction raised these points:

- Even organizations claiming to have no borders have some boundaries or regulations that limit their activities. This does not imply that borders are evil. Borders are important for establishing discipline and for avoiding chaos;
- Borders designate priorities and provide guidelines and frameworks. Even though the international Fulbright community is in fact a community of scholars with no borders, it does require academic freedom and excellence for membership.

POhdPOBatO hUs PmPdPuCasUuaUsdCaUm  
OWtPuCiv ohdUCoOsua OWtPuCahtUT  
PBOBaIamIdIsOaUnahU?OtamOu?00sanIT  
WduCaIsBaIBoPsP utIuUt a?rU OahUdPuPI  
IsBaOUsUoPatO hUs PmPdPuPO aUohOuO  
?PuraIuuOsuPUsaUsaWIdPuCaUnadOItsPsy

Prof. Olena Fomenko agreed that borders are not a bad thing, but that they should be fluid and easy to cross when necessary. Prof. Fomenko asked her students what an ideal university without borders would be like. The majority responded that this is a university with open student exchanges, communicative lecturers, and access to research materials and curriculum. Prof. Volodymyr Manakin added examples of how international educational exchanges have improved the quality of learning in regional centers.

tiaIWnoIssaUooOsuOBaurIuamIdIsO  
UnahU?OtaP atPuPIdaUaurOa WO aUnaurO  
WsPOt PuCiaa7U uaoOtPIsanIWduC  
mOUoOa ?IohOBaPsaurOaBIPdCauI aUn  
dI tUuOauOIrPsyIsBatO OItriaOtPsy  
UsaWsPOt PuCaUooPuuOO arI aoIBOanIWdT  
uCa W hPPUW aUnaurOautWOaPsuOsuPUs aU  
oIsCaIBoPsP utIuUt i s uPuWuPUSIdPPsy  
UtyIsPIuPUsIdaoOurUB anUtamIdIsPsy  
hU?OtaIsBatOhtO OsuIuPUsaPsaurOaWsPOt P  
uCa?PddarOdhB00dUhaWIdPuCaPsaOBWIP

## The main crisis: ethical misconduct and corruption in the university

erOaInuOtsUUsamOyIsa?PuraurOahtO OsT  
uIuPUsaUnaurOaPtIdIsBatUytIoaIahtUytIo  
OuaWhamCaurOaUdP raWdmtPyrUaUooP PU  
IsBa WhhUtuOBamCaUdP ranWsBPsyiaaerO  
UmOuPOaUnaurOahtUytIoaP auUaIuutIu  
rUdIt antUoasOPyrmUtPsyUWsutPO auU  
uWBCaPsaUdIsBi hOIOT aPsdWBOB  
rUdIt antUoaOdItW aW PIatIPsO  
IsBa2urWIsPIa?rUarIBahItuPPhIuOBaPsaurO  
htUytIoi tiarUoPIaI OBaurOaIBWPT  
OsOauUaUs PBOtaaOsa?PddatIPsO  
mOyPsaUtyIsPPsya UoOurPsy PoPdItauUaur  
PtdIsBatUytIoaUamTPsyaoUtOatOyPUSId  
rUdIt auUatIPsOanUtaB00dUhpPsyIamOuT  
uOtaWsBOt uIsBPsyUnatIPsO erP a?Pdd  
mOaIarIddOsyOanUtaurOaWdmtPyrUadWosPa  
B00dUhahtUOu auUaurP aOsBia

### The University in Permanent Crisis?

The final session of the day included three sections, each discussing "The University in Permanent Crisis?" If this was intended to be a question, then the answer was an overwhelming "yes." A summary presented by Prof. Myroslava Antonovych's panel identified the main crisis to be ethical misconduct and corruption in the university. The primary reasons for faculty "bad behavior" (taking bribes, not being forthright in expressing personal opinions, not giving realistic and interesting tasks) are due to principles of the post-Soviet government system, the administrative structure of the university (which allows bureaucrats to dictate programs and

curriculum), and limited financial resources given to faculty as salary and for research opportunities. Student “bad behavior” stems from:

- A non-existent culture of ethics (in society and in the university)
- An overwhelming course load (30-40 hours of classroom lectures per week)
- Unrealistic and irrelevant assignments (up to 8 required papers a week on irrelevant topics)

One law student mentioned that their professor wanted to teach them what it was like to work in the legal world, where everything including exam grades could be bought, and personally encouraged corruption during exams.

The following recommendations were made:

- Establish priorities, specifically, which critical issue to address first
- Define terms to put the responsibility of cheating directly on the violator. For example, the words *shakhrivannia* and *obdurjuvannja* are specific violations whereas generic terms describe the general state of society and do not link direct responsibility to the student (i.e., *koruptzija*, a generic term; *neprozorist*, a general tendency; *spysuvannia*, a verb which is used in contexts other than corruption)
- Design cheat-proof tests. This may include asking broader questions and having higher standards for answers by allowing open-book tests; formulating questions so that they do not sound like the questions discussed in class; creating standardized tests which require demonstration of thinking skills and knowledge (such as the TOEFL);
- Take initiatives at the student level. Students should take the lead in fighting for a change in their workloads and for more academic freedom (such as the right to select courses);
- Document legal procedures and develop investigation and appeals processes for handling violations in ethics. The session

- The university should have a more active role in the community, especially at the primary and secondary education levels, to set the standards for academic excellence and send signals to students early in their educational careers that honest and hard work are the only ways to succeed in higher education;
- To organize professional associations of professors actively committed to eradicating corruption;
- To make the issue of ethics violations publicly discussed.

Dr. Amy Frykholm, a current U.S. Fulbright Lecturer, looked at the role of “cheating” in different systems. If the American system favors “critical thinking” and the Ukrainian system favors “knowledge,” does dishonest academic work look different in different systems? This began a discussion of the relationship between students and faculty, the roles of evaluation and various grading systems, and the use of different teaching methods. Comments included:

- Dishonest academic work happens when there is a gap between students’ needs and teachers’ demands;
- Students tend to be focused on the degree. They don’t want the knowledge offered by professors, only enough to graduate. So, the motivation to cheat is high;
- In democratic societies, should “knowledge” be imposed on students who don’t want it?

Ukrainian participants generally agreed that their institutions were not prepared for honor codes and were reluctant to discuss them. One American participant said that he solved the problem of cheating by presenting his students with problem-based activities that encouraged critical thinking in the classroom. Instead of lectures, he uses class time to cultivate critical thinking skills. Ukrainian teachers did not see the value in discarding lectures. For them, lecturing is perhaps the only means of communicating new information to students because many students have no textbooks or access to them. At the same time, all teachers agreed that different teaching methods could be used to decrease cheating in the classroom.

Ukrainian participants suggested other causes of cheating:

- Cheating begins much earlier than the university. Secondary schools are very authoritarian and produce students who are not prepared to think;

## Ukrainian participants agreed that their institutions were not prepared for honor codes and were reluctant to discuss them

recommended an Honor Code to be signed by each student that includes standards for dealing with suspected violations. A code of conduct should also be developed for faculty and staff;

- Administrations are heavy-handed and do not support choice or change;
- There is a lack of access to high quality, modern educational materials.

All teachers were enthusiastic about their teaching. They felt that they communicated well with students using different approaches and that teaching was an important vocation.

The third workshop on the topic of honor codes in higher education was run by a U.S. Fulbright Graduate Student from the University of Massachusetts, Gregory Adams, who opened with a brief history of honor codes in the United States. The moderator distinguished between a code of conduct, which is simply a set of rules, and an honor code, which is defined by those who subscribe to it. Peers also enforce honor codes, students monitor students, and faculty monitor each other. The first honor code in the United States was introduced in the 18th Century by students at the College of William and Mary in Virginia and addressed lying, cheating and stealing. This was an example of investment on the part of the students in the reputation of their institution. Discussion opened with the question, "Are students capable of determining and adhering to their own expectations of community behavior?"

Observations by Ukrainian speakers included:

- Students could agree on a simple set of rules, and these could work only if they were self-enforced
- Plagiarism was the greatest transgression among Ukrainian students who feel no obligation to present their work honestly. External rules would not change this tendency. Dishonesty and plagiarism among Ukrainian students were at a critical level and a problem with no immediate solution (This speaker did not accept the distinction between university rules and an honor code determined by students)
- There is little plagiarism in Ukraine, and if there were, the attention given to it was a result of the West imposing its values across cultural borders. "What the West calls plagiarism," said one speaker (an author of a book on the topic), "is in actuality Ukrainian students helping one another." The scholar argued that this session topic was an artifact of western individualism clashing with eastern communalism. An American scholar presented the following perspective:
- The problems being addressed were not

limited to plagiarism, but included the acceptance of bribes by faculty and lying. These are issues of integrity, not only at the individual level, and they are threats to a society. There is a link between actions of small groups and

- Participants suggested creating a virtual faculty network and, perhaps, a "virtual university" as a university without borders
- Fulbrighters who represented the USSR but came from the Ukrainian SSR will be

## Plagiarism was the greatest transgression among Ukrainian students who feel no obligation to present their work honestly.

actions of the larger society  
**Conference Wrap-Up**

Saturday's sessions concluded with dinner and a theatrical presentation by Sophia Majdanska's group performing a play based on the 18th century Ukrainian philosopher and educator Hryhory Skovoroda.

Sunday was a day for reflection, discussion, and a trip to the Pyrohovo National Outdoor Park. In the morning, participants raised some suggestions for continuing the discussion on the Idea of a University and for next year's conference.

Feedback, General Comments and Recommendations:

- Participants appreciated the packet of reading materials given out before the conference. Books were distributed and included one on corruption in higher education (by Partnership for Transparent Society, a USAID project), a reprint of a book whose materials were included in the reading packet, a Ukrainian-language anthology of texts on the Idea of a University by Prof. Maria Zubrytska, and an English-language book by two conference participants (Darrell Lewis and Oleksander Demjanchuk)

- added to the Fulbright Alumni database
- Participants would like additional time to work in professional groups organized by specialization
- The conference idea needs to be implemented in a practical way, for example, through a series of follow-up conferences in regional universities and a series of articles in the press. Fulbrighters were encouraged to write to national and local papers, to raise this topic with their own universities, and to organize events that would explore the idea of the university and examine its crisis
- If the topic is visited again in Fulbright conferences it may be valuable to include an overview of different hierarchical university models such as Greek, Medieval, Renaissance, Soviet, and modern corporate. This is an ambition to be revisited in the future

Finally, all participants appreciated the format of this conference and the reading materials that had been sent to them ahead of the gathering.

Renata Kosc-Harmatiy  
Assistant to the Director of the Fulbright  
Program in Ukraine, 2003 — 2004



Hon. John Herbst, U.S. Ambassador in Ukraine, and Professor Volodymyr Monakin, Kirovohrad State University, at the 6<sup>th</sup> Fulbright Conference in Ukraine