

Звіт Директора The Director's Report



Dramatic political events, confirmed by a relatively free and honest election, placed Ukraine at least temporarily on the front pages of world media. Now more people have heard about Ukraine and more pay attention to its development. Behind the headlines we can see less dramatic but more substantive changes as the society struggles to overcome its totalitarian past. The exchange programs and the various activities that the Fulbright Office in Ukraine either organizes or in which it participates can serve as visible markers of the changing society. As you leaf through this booklet you will notice how the two key Fulbright programs — scholarly exchanges and graduate student exchanges — serve as a backbone for other shorter but nevertheless equally important undertakings. Ukraine uses up its quota of Visiting Short Term lecturers, and has an active corps of junior faculty who seek to expand their horizons by participating in American university life. Ukrainian scholars take part in many other programs of the United States, including the Century Scholars. Ukrainian universities actively welcome US scholars and Ukrainian scholars share their varied experiences with their fellows. The Ukrainian Fulbright Alumni Association seeks ways of cooperating with the worldwide Fulbright community.

To gauge the rate of change we should recall that as the world scholarly community marked the sixtieth anniversary of the Fulbright programs, these programs were barely fifteen years old. A fully functional Fulbright office in Kyiv was set up only toward the end of the last decade. At the time many Ukrainians could not fathom why American scholars come to Ukraine. Ukrainians felt their own lives were difficult and a voluntary decision to spend a year or so battling erratic electricity supplies, a dearth of meat, and spotty Internet service by people who had no connection to Ukraine seemed at best highly commendable. I wrote a little piece explaining to Ukrainians some of the reasons why American scholars apply for Fulbright and look forward to challenging experiences. With very few exceptions Americans found the Ukrainian experience gratifying and continue to value it highly. And while life in Ukraine has become significantly more comfortable, the major reasons for coming to Ukraine still hold. Americans find Ukraine intellectually stimulating and the work here gratifying.

The Fulbright office in Kyiv has become a little US scholarly center. Here we deal with the three critical pillars of academic life — teaching, research and administration. Administration — because if scholars leave the running of their institutions to those who do not know the value and meaning of scholarship intimately those core values may be undermined. Research — because each year we see the expansion of interest in Ukraine by American scholars and the broadening of scholarly initiatives among Ukrainian faculty. And teaching — well, running any research program has didactic as well as Socratic elements that justify the hours of administrative tedium. We watch projects being fleshed out, students develop, ideas turned into valuable and readable publications.

Today, I see the Fulbright office and the Fulbright Alumni Association functioning as two complementary units. I note with pride how good and effective individual initiatives are. I can even sit back and know that the office will function smoothly. I rejoice in the beehive hum of pre- and post seminar discussions, in people stopping by just to say hello, and often to say thank you for this or that little service. Regardless of formalities, Fulbright has become an institution in Ukraine.

So I too, as my American colleagues, consider that my time in Ukraine was intellectually stimulating and personally gratifying. And I thank the hundreds of people both sides of the ocean who have made it so.

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