



News Release

Contact: Mykola Soroka
Tel: (780) 492-6847
E-mail: msoroka@ualberta.ca

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Looking Back: Two Decades at CIUS

24 January 2012 — My appointment as director of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies ends as of June 30, 2012, and currently the University of Alberta is conducting an international search for a successor. I have served as director for almost two decades (eighteen years as director and one as acting director). As my term is coming to an end, I would like to look back and note some of the transformations, accomplishments, and difficulties of the past two decades.

When I arrived in March 1992, everyone at CIUS was working at fever pitch. As Ukraine gained its independence, CIUS became a clearing house of information for the Canadian government and for Western academic, political, and business elites. New opportunities presented themselves for undertaking academic projects in Ukraine. At the same time, CIUS had to fulfill its mandate in Canada by continuing projects such as the *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, the curriculum for bilingual schools, and providing resources for the Ukrainian community.

It was clear that the demands of newly independent Ukraine were overwhelming the Institute. If CIUS was to achieve measurable long-term results, it needed greater systematization, with a clear delineation of priorities, functions, and responsibilities. Thus, Dr. Frank Sysyn, Dr. Danylo Husar Struk, and I worked out a plan for a fundamental reorganization of CIUS into separate components, each with its own director, personnel, allocated funds, and programs. In essence, we created a template not only to serve current needs but also to take on new projects in an orderly and consistent manner.

The seeds planted in the early 1990s were carefully cultivated for the next two decades. CIUS promoted Ukrainian studies by awarding undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate scholarships, fellowships, and grants. It became a leading publisher and developer of publications in Ukrainian studies. Its Ukrainian Language Education Centre developed, published, and distributed an outstanding Ukrainian language acquisition program. Not only did CIUS research, organize and publish the five-volume *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, but it continued the project as an Internet publication.

Without doubt, CIUS has become a leading centre for the study of Ukrainian history. Much activity was centered on the translation, editing, and publication of Mykhailo Hrushevsky's classic ten-volume *History of Ukraine-Rus'*. The Hrushevsky Translation Project required extensive research, as each volume was provided with an updated scholarly apparatus and an in-depth analysis by a leading historian. Other history projects included the researching, writing, and publication of a comprehensive multi-volume interpretative history of Ukrainians in Canada, the development and completion of a *Historical Dictionary of Ukraine*, the initiation and publication of fundamental works on Russo-Ukrainian relations, the support of publications and centres of historical study in Ukraine, and the participation of CIUS scholars in the national and international development of Ukrainian historical studies.

In undertaking this leadership role, CIUS fostered the expansion and globalization of Ukrainian studies. It initiated or participated in major projects with Columbia, Cologne, Bar Ilan, Vienna, Harvard, Munich, St. Petersburg, Cambridge, and East China Normal universities. It was through CIUS that the University

of Alberta became a focal point of Ukrainian studies beyond Canada and established an international reputation in the field. The University of Alberta acknowledged the stature of CIUS by recognizing it as a centre of research excellence in 1998 and as part of an emerging area of research excellence in Central and East European Studies in 2001.

The challenge of newly independent Ukraine extended well beyond academia. CIUS was expected to provide leadership in assisting Ukraine's transition to a democratic society and a free-market economy. Thus, CIUS initiated several large-scale projects. Through a series of conferences, the Canadian Ukrainian Business Initiative attempted to establish contacts between Ukrainian and Canadian businesses. Two large-scale projects funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) attempted to reform the legislative process in Ukraine. Senior parliamentary, government, and other Ukrainian participants came to Canada in order to gain broad knowledge of Canadian public-policy approaches and processes. Another effort, the Ukrainian Transparency and Election Monitoring Project, sent Canadians to Ukraine in 2004 in order to give seminars on election laws, policies, and procedures for local officials; some also acted as international observers.

Considering the current difficulties in Ukraine, one may question the impact of these projects. Recently I asked the opinion of Senator Raynell Andreychuk, who served on the governing board of the CIDA project. She assured me, on the basis of her extensive experience not only in Ukraine but also in Africa, that these projects are the necessary "bricks" for the construction of a more democratic society. I certainly hope that the senator is correct and that our considerable efforts to "reform" Ukraine have had some effect.

In academic matters, however, there is little doubt that CIUS has left a considerable imprint. In fact, it has helped shape the emergence of post-communist Ukrainian studies. In Lviv, our close relations with the Ivan Franko and Ukrainian Catholic universities was further reinforced by the establishment of the Jacyk Program for the Study of Modern Ukrainian History and Society, including sponsorship of the journal *Ukraina moderna*. In Kyiv, CIUS is collaborating with the Kyiv Mohyla Academy National University and with the institutes of History and Ukrainian Archaeography of the National Academy of Sciences. The shaping of Ukrainian studies in eastern Ukraine has been the primary focus of the Kowalsky Program for the Study of Eastern Ukraine. The Program's Kowalsky Eastern Institute of Ukrainian Studies, housed at the Karazyn National University in Kharkiv, has engaged in numerous research projects, conferences, and scholarly publications. Its Zaporizhia branch continues to carry out one of the most extensive oral-history projects in Ukraine. The annual archaeological excavations in Baturyn have become widely known in Ukraine and in the diaspora. In addition, the Program currently supports three important journal publications: *Skhid-Zakhid* (Kharkiv), *Kyivs'ka Akademiia* (Kyiv Mohyla Academy), and *Kur'ier Kryvbasu* (the only Ukrainian literary journal in the Kryvyi Rih region).

The many initiatives and accomplishments of CIUS would not have been possible without an unprecedented fund-raising effort. When I came to CIUS, most of the budget came from funds allocated by the university. Currently, less than 30 percent of the budget is provided by the university: the rest comes from endowments, donations, and grants. Over the years, CIUS has pursued a vigorous and coherent fund-raising strategy based on developing a close personal relationship with Ukrainian educational foundations and major and minor donors. This was not an easy task for me, for I admit that even today I am a bit uncomfortable asking for money. The response from the foundations and the community, however, has been outstanding. We are privileged to be working in a field that enjoys such broad support. It is the donors who make us feel that what we are doing is vital to the maintenance of Ukrainian culture and identity. Such support has gone far to ameliorate the many financial crises of the last two decades.

It is my belief that the seeds of academic ambition and restructuring planted in the early 1990s have come to fruition. The Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies is now indeed the foremost Canadian and a

leading world research institute dedicated to the discovery, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge about Ukraine and Ukrainians. I am grateful that I was able to participate in the shaping of the Institute's multifaceted programs and activities. Needless to say, CIUS could not have achieved its current stature without excellent colleagues and staff. CIUS was blessed by a resourceful and hard-working staff that was able to adjust to changing priorities without losing sight of long-term goals. I thank not only them but also my family, friends, and donors who have given me such support. I wish the new director every success and offer any assistance that I can provide when he or she faces the challenges of a new generation and era.

Photo: Zenon Kohut, CIUS director.

The Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (CIUS) is a leading centre of Ukrainian studies outside Ukraine that conducts research and scholarship in Ukrainian and Ukrainian-Canadian studies. If you would like more information on the Institute, please visit our website at www.cius.ca or contact Dr. Bohdan Klid at (780) 492-2972; cius@ualberta.ca.

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