

**Professional Development Grant Report**

**Immersion Course in Russian Language and Culture in Moscow**

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09/016/2010

Arkansas Tech University

Russellville, AR

### **Restatement of problem researched, creative work, or professional enhancement opportunity**

The main purpose of this professional development grant was to improve my knowledge of the Russian language and culture, in order to be able to better respond to the teaching requirements in my department (History and Political Science). I am happy to report that the outcome of my study in Moscow not only reached the stated goal but also opened new possibilities for improving my teaching and research at Arkansas Tech. My main goal, as stated in the grant proposal, was to “to achieve full proficiency in Russian in a short period of time, in order to be able to use primary sources and especially archival material from Russia.” I can proudly say that the goal has been achieved and I have attached to this letter a certificate of the successful completion of the Russian language course. In my classes this semester, especially the upper and graduate level classes, our students are already noticing improvements. I have already incorporated new knowledge and skills in the classes that I teach. My trip proved especially beneficial to our graduate student taking a European History Seminar with me this semester, as I am able to provide them with an array of primary sources.<sup>1</sup>

### **Brief review of the professional enhancement opportunity, creative work, or research procedure**

My typical day in Moscow included 4 hours of study in classroom, plus several hours of homework, and practice outside of the classroom. I managed to cover in a month what is usually covered in a yearlong language course. The rest of the day I would spend visiting not just tourist sites in Moscow, but also museums, libraries, and historical archives. I also visited several of

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<sup>1</sup> Because it is very complicated to obtain a Russian visa for more than 30 days, I had to limit my stay in Moscow to 4 weeks, instead of planned 6 weeks, as it was originally planned in the grant application. Therefore, a substantial amount of already approved funds have been returned to the Faculty Development fund.

Moscow's Universities, and established some scholarly contacts there, especially with the Russian State University for the Humanities. The Russian State University for the Humanities has a very active International Center, and it organizes regular (annual) courses and visits for the US students. It is, in my opinion, a program that Arkansas Tech should take an advantage of, and I will be working toward that goal in the near future.

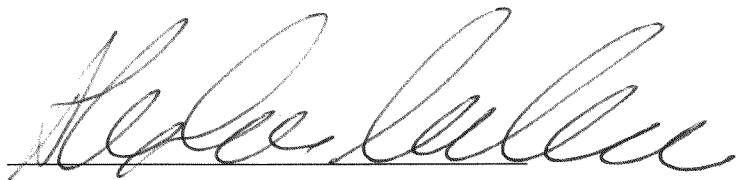
### **Summary of findings, outcomes, or experiences**

In short, my trip to Moscow not only improved my fluency in Russian language and culture, but it also helped me and our university in several ways. First, it improved my teaching skills. Second, it helped me create a research agenda on the History of Russia that will bear significant fruit in the future. Finally, it created a possibility to organize research and study trips to Russia for Arkansas Tech students and I intend to pursue this possibility in the future. I am profoundly grateful to all the people at Arkansas Tech who made this possible.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

Russia is a country with problem, but also with enormous possibilities. I was able to witness this in Moscow first hand. For example, most of students who were taking classes with me in Russia were business executives who needed to learn Russian in order to do their business there. This fact made me aware of job possibilities that our students and graduates might find in Russia or in companies dealing with Russia. For example, during my stay in Moscow, Arby's and Wendy's announced the agreement to open over 300 restaurants in the Russian Federation. Delta Airways

now flies daily to Moscow, not only from New York, but also Atlanta. Other airlines offer daily non-stop flights to Moscow from Washington DC, Chicago, and Los Angeles. In this era of globalization, economic ties with Russia are increasing. With its abundant natural resources and a great need for modernization, Russia is ideal for US investment and the US companies already top the list of foreign investment. This means, in very practical terms, potential jobs for our graduates. With my offerings of History of Russia on regular basis, and of several upper level and graduate classes to cover Russia, I hope to increase the employment potential of our graduates. Furthermore, my trip gave me enough experience and skills to establish academic contacts in Russia. In the future, I intend to work on deepening these ties, and possibly organizing trips, courses, and study abroad sessions for our students.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alexander Mirkovic', written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Alexander Mirkovic, Assistant Professor of History

September 16, 2010, Russellville, AR

(Attached please find a copy of the certificate issued by Liden and Denz, internationally recognized language school in Moscow and St Petersburg. It states that I achieved a level in Russian proficiency equivalent to 3 years of college level studies)



est. 1992

**LIDEN & DENZ**  
ST. PETERSBURG · MOSCOW

# Сертификат

Настоящий сертификат удостоверяет, что

**Александр Миркович**

окончил

**КУРС РУССКОГО ЯЗЫКА**

В период с 05.07.2010 по 30.07.2010

Количество уроков: **80** в группе

Наименование аспекта русского языка	Уровень владения
Говорение	A2
Аудирование	A2
Письмо	A2
Чтение	A2

Москва, 30.07.2010

**Юлия Пагашева**  
Директор

**Марина Волошина**  
Старший преподаватель



International Association  
of Language Centres