In June 2017, a delegation from the University of Iowa (UI) journeyed to Plekhanov Russian University of Economics in Moscow, Russia. The esteemed group included Doug Lee, Assistant Provost for International Programs, Russell Ganim, Director of the Division of World Languages, Literatures and Cultures, Bill Reisinger, Professor of Political Science, Kerby Boshee, representative of the UI's International Programs, Dimy Doresca, Director of the Institute for International Business, Alexandra Niemi, instructor at the Department of the Russian Language, and was led by Irina Kostina, the coordinator for the UI Russian Program. The purpose of the trip was to discuss the details of the Summer 2018 Intensive School of Russian Language for American university students, which included institutional agreements regarding programming, exchanges, and dormitory facilities. Representatives from PRUE who hosted the meetings included D. Shtykhno, vice-rector for development, A. Koshkin, head of Academic Department of Political Science and Sociology, I. Skorobogatykh, head of Academic Department of Marketing, D. Epifanov, head of IBS-Plekhanov dean's office department, E. Lavrushina, head of Academic Department of Russian Language and Culture of Speech, V. Badulin, deputy head of International Office, and T. Kornilova, senior instructor of Academic Department of Russian Language and Culture of Speech, coordinator of American students programs. As part of their stay, the UI delegation explored Moscow through cultural excursions as well. After their return to the United States, the group expressed their confidence in the new program:
UI Delegate Impressions of PRUE Program:

“The collaboration between the Russian program and Plekhanov Russian University of Economics (PRUE) is part of a UISFL (Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language) grant funded by the United States Department of Education. Our initiative is interdisciplinary in that it involves not only the Russian program, but the Department of Political Science as well as the Tippie College of Business. The goal in establishing collaboration between various units on campus is to show how the study of Russian language and culture can lead to multiple career paths. This past summer, a delegation of seven faculty members from the UI traveled to Moscow to conduct a site visit of the Plekhanov campus. The delegation was very impressed with the academic, residential, and cultural components of the program. We stayed in a nice dorm right across the street from campus. The campus is in a great location, with an adjacent metro stop, and the neighborhood is attractive and home to many restaurants and shops. I think students will very happy there.

At the heart of the program are the PRUE language instructors. We hosted several last spring when they visited Iowa City and we were able to meet again in Moscow. They are all very impressive and dedicated to helping students improve their Russian language skills. This immersive program, offering both classroom instruction and everyday language training, should be a great opportunity for UI students. We are extremely pleased that everything is on track for the program next summer.”

-Douglas Lee

“Moscow’s clean and efficient subway, which has a stop only a block from the university. The university’s complex of buildings are connected or accessible through a courtyard. They include large and small technology-enabled classrooms, cafes, a swimming pool and other amenities (ATMs, etc.). The student dormitory is right across the street.

While at Plekhanov, I was able to meet with the head of the Sociology and Political Science Faculty. They are preparing a course to be taught in English for Iowa students who want to spend an academic semester at Plekhanov. It will be POLI 3514, Regional Peace and Security. The course will be of particular interest to students majoring in International Relations or Political Science. It can be used toward either the Conflict and Foreign Policy track or the Regional Politics track of the International Relations major. It also counts toward the Political Science major. We hope to attract students who will benefit from deepening their mastery of Russian, which the U.S. government considers a “critical language,” and getting to know the culture of a different major country while continuing progress toward their degree.”

-William Reisinger
“My overall impression of the summer program that we have set up at PRUE is positive. I have full confidence that students who wish to study in Russia and improve their Russian language skills will fully accomplish this on our study abroad program at PRUE. The location is excellent; the dorms are located around the block from the entrance to the main campus, with convenience stores and restaurants only a few feet away.

The official title of the summer program is: PRUE Summer Intensive Russian Program. This will make the program easy to identify for students: Where? PRUE. When? Summer. What will I study? Intensive Russian.

The staff at PRUE are one of a kind. I was thoroughly impressed with the PRUE staff, both the summer program/language staff as well as the International Office staff. They are eager to help us and help our students, and will go the extra mile to make sure our students are well situated and have what they need to be successful.

The language instruction, in my opinion, will be of the highest quality. The instructors at PRUE are of a high caliber, and are among the best in their field. Students will have an opportunity to learn from skilled instructors, who teach from the heart with sound pedagogy and a real sense of passion for what they do.

My impressions of Moscow are also favorable. I felt safe, and the city was easily walkable or accessible by public transportation. The city was clean, and the many parks are beautiful. Students would be able to go to the theater, see live performances, go to concerts, play sports, and have access to libraries and other facilities.

Getting around without Russian would have been very difficult. I was thankful to have so many Russian speakers with us on the visit. I did pick up some Russian along the way, and am proud to say that I can still remember how to order a black tea in Russian at a café!”

-Kerby Boschee

What is the PRUE Program?

“PRUE” stands for Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, which is located in Moscow, Russia. The PRUE Summer 2018 Intensive School of Russian Language for American university students is a unique and exciting experience for language and cultural immersion. The program will take place June 20th through August 10th in summer 2018—a two-month exchange program. Students will take intensive Russian language and culture courses to improve Russian reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills and will gain an in-depth understanding of Russian culture and society through numerous cultural excursions to museums, theaters, attractions, and places of everyday life in Russia. During these eight weeks, students will earn eight semester hours of credit, the equivalent of a year of regular study. Essentially, the program is able to accelerate student knowledge, essential in today’s globalized world. Studying Russian has never been so stream-lined and attainable. By interacting with locals and other international students in an immersive environment, students will further enhance language skills and cultural competency in the heart of Moscow.

For further information about the program, please contact:

Study Abroad
1111 University Capitol Center (UCC)
319-335-0353
international.uiowa.edu/study-abroad
study-abroad@uiowa.edu

StarTalk Summer 2017 Highlights
by Maria Boscom

StarTalk is an immersive language learning program held in California State University of North Ridge. Students from around the country traveled to learn Russian with more depth and focus. For six weeks, students attended formal class every morning and evening. During these classes, time was spent reading, translating, learning new vocabulary, and making their own dialogues. Additionally, students individually worked on pronunciation with native Russian speakers. In this way, students were surrounded by Russian language, leading to a much more intense atmosphere and greater learning.

STARTALK STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

“My experience in the Russian immersion program in California was unforgettable. I learned so much about Russian culture though trips to a Russian...
Orthodox Church, classes in making Russian food, and performers teaching us about Russian folk music. There were so many great teachers facilitating our learning and understanding of the Russian language through a mix of classroom education, casual conversation, and weekly skits. I would recommend this program to anyone interested in the Russian language and culture.

-Nate

“During the StarTalk program I was in formal class every day from 9am-3pm and then in the evenings 5-8pm. During these classes a majority of the time would be spent reading, translating, and then creating our own dialogs based on the new vocabulary from these texts. With my TA I individually worked on pronunciation.”

-Sam

“During the STARTALK program in California I attended a lot of classes. We did roughly a week’s worth of material every day. It was a good experience that allowed me to become more comfortable with my Russian speaking skills.”

-Bryant

Kapustnik Spring 2017

by Valerie Drake

Each semester, the Russian program hosts a party to celebrate the achievements of students and faculty, as well as friends and family. As a tradition, Irina Kostina always invites students to her home to prepare wonderful homemade Russian dishes like salad and pancakes. The spring 2017 kapustnik was great fun—with skits performed in Russian by students, song, dances, and games. Not to mention great conversation! This celebration was also very special—Irina Kostina hosted four faculty members from PRUE, who also attended the kapustnik. The date for the fall 2017 celebration is Monday December 4th, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm, at 1117 International Programs in University Capitol Center. Everyone is encouraged to attend!
Thank You to Donors

As students, faculty, and administrators of the University of Iowa Russian program, we would like to sincerely thank all of our current donors who generously support the program. Currently, our program is growing at an increased rate, stretching the limits of our faculty and resources. To continue providing modern, effective language study through academic programs and study abroad experiences, financial support is vital. Please consider donating to the UI Russian program in order to ensure the success of current and future students of Russian language and culture.

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