

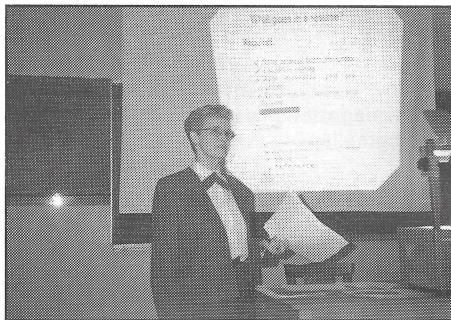


Grant McEwan-Kyiv

FIRST CAREER CENTRE ESTABLISHED AT NaUKMA

Three Edmonton volunteers were sent by Grant McEwan Community College (GMCC) to the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (NaUKMA) to help set up a career and job centre last spring.

The Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre (URDC) at the college drafted the project proposal, and funding was made available by the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) through the CUP Program, funded at that time by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. Canadian project volunteers spent from four to ten weeks in Kyiv. The volunteers chosen were Wendy Coffin, Director of Career and Placement Services at the University of Alberta; Dianne Allen, Director of Public Affairs at Edmonton Power and former Executive Director of the GMCC Foundation; and Georgina Lufkin, former Manager of the Canada Employment Centre at GMCC.



Edmonton volunteer Georgina Lufkin presents a workshop on job search techniques in Kyiv.

Their first task was to familiarize university administrators and students with the concept of career counselling and then set up the centre on-campus. "The idea of applying for a job and getting it on the basis of merit and experience is still new to most people," says Coffin. "Under the Soviet regime, most positions were assigned by the state, or gained by influence or appointment."

Before leaving for Ukraine, Coffin and her colleagues pulled together the basics needed to set up a full-service career centre including a computer, instructional manuals and publications, and a detailed 'files and records' system. Through a step-by-step training process, the volunteers explained the functions of a centre to NaUKMA students and staff, including how to get employers interested in recruiting on-campus, how to set up job postings, how to search

for jobs and write resumé's, how to interview and shortlist, and how to match up qualified students with prospective employers.

"We had to counteract assumptions that a career centre would make something magical happen - that international jobs would suddenly materialize, for example," she adds. "We had to explain that a lot of groundwork has to be done to make it work."

The project team was fortunate in being able to work with Kateryna Smaghiy, a political science student at NaUKMA. At the end of the project, Kateryna was invited to Edmonton by the college where she had a chance to experience the day-to-day functions of a career and job placement centre during her work/study placement. Since her return to Kyiv, she has become instrumental in the establishment of NaUKMA's first career and job centre. "If anybody can make the centre work, it will be Kateryna," says Coffin. "She's an extremely hard worker. Young students like her really believe changes can happen."

Three other NaUKMA students also completed a two-month work/study placement at GMCC in May and June. They took courses at GMCC, as well as working in various administrative departments of GMCC and U of A. Their costs were covered by the Ukrainian Foundation for College Education, which paid for accommodation, transportation and a stipend, while GMCC's Arts and Science division handled tuition and books. GMCC's Kyiv office raised additional funds to cover the students' airfares.

After working with GMCC's Community Relations Department, Hanna Rudyck, a history and theory-of-culture student, was impressed with the way the college markets its programs and facilities. "I can see many opportunities for NaUKMA to work with businesses and the general public," says Rudyck, who is involved with the academy's public relations department.

Anton Shmagin, a physics student who switched to computer sciences when NaUKMA opened its first program of computer studies this year, learned how computerized informational systems are organized at GMCC and U of A. He would like to help set up an instructional centre at NaUKMA to develop computer literacy. Institutions of higher learning in Ukraine are hooking up to the global network, Shmagin said, but they remain isolated from each other and need to share data.

Canadian project volunteers also set up contacts with international corporations doing business in Ukraine. Dianne Allen shared her fundraising expertise with NaUKMA administrators who rely on private as well as public support for the independent university. She sees the job and career centre as a cornerstone of the university's future fundraising efforts. "The centre will give corporations a first-hand opportunity to assess the quality of the university's students and programs" she says. "There's

an important, lead-in fundraising component."



In front of the ornate bell tower of St. Sophie's Cathedral. L-r: Georgina and Roger Lufkin, and Wendy Coffin, the first crew of NaUKMA.

Oksana Medvedeva, a comparative literature student, gained additional fundraising expertise as a result of her placement with the GMCC Foundation, where she helped organize special events. She'd like to see NaUKMA improve its system of raising money. "We don't have a tradition of fundraising because the educational system was completely supported by the government in the past," she said. "However, our university wants to be independent."

Current plans are to have the Job and Career Centre fully operational by this Spring to help launch 140 new graduating students into the job market.

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