



430 Pembina Hall, University of Alberta
Edmonton Alberta T6G 2H8 Canada
Tel: 780.492.2904
Fax: 780.492.4967
ulec@ualberta.ca
www.ualberta.ca/ulec



ULEC presents its Vision to supportive stakeholders – and brings the Ukrainian language education community together

The Ukrainian Language Education Centre (ULEC) presented its Vision to over 50 people this past weekend at St. Peter Centre in Edmonton. The event was filled with community stakeholders, including Ukrainian community leaders from four provinces (via skype), teachers from Edmonton's Ukrainian schools, parent advisory group representatives, school consultants and University of Alberta colleagues. After an introduction about the Ukrainian Language Education Centre by Dr. Alla Nedashkivska, Acting Director of ULEC, Dr. Olenka Bilash, Senior Advisor, presented results of the Vision research project. The two researchers together spear-headed the process of steering ULEC's future course.

The event was entitled "ULEC 2030 – the future of Ukrainian language education" and, indeed, that is what the discussion became. About the impressive reception Nedashkivska said: "We were planning to hold a closing event to present our Vision to those who had contributed to the process, but as the attendance list grew we realized we would be bringing the community of Ukrainian language educators and community leaders together... and that support for our initiative is immense."

The victim of staffing cuts and reduced funding, ULEC strives to accomplish its goals, while relying heavily on volunteer time and expertise. Critical technology knowledge is required to adapt and build language resources for the future, and the work that this and fulfilling the new vision requires is considerable. At the same time, ULEC is a unique institution that can provide the leadership and the 40-years-worth of experience and community networks to get the work done. One participant noted that "ULEC reflects incredible expertise on teaching Ukrainian. It should be seen as an international Centre of Excellence."

ULEC was established in 1976 as part of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (CIUS). The first Director of CIUS, Dr. Manoly R. Lupul, set an early vision for ULEC: it was "designed to become the place in Canada where all the materials important to teaching Ukrainian at the pre-university level could be accessed by teachers and researchers" and housed a variety of print and audiovisual resources and teaching aids (Lupul, n.d., p. 46-47).

Since that time, ULEC has made significant and fundamental contributions to Ukrainian Language education in curriculum and resource creation from pre-school through post-secondary, professional development, as well as research across the country and diaspora around the world. In truth, "the Ukrainian Canadian community depends on this stream being sustained, rejuvenated and expanded" wrote Bilash in the 40+ page vision report, and added, "ULEC strives to form relationships with other language groups across the province to advocate for the use and maintenance of small but significant language groups."

The Vision project, which took place over the past year, was designed to solicit feedback about ULEC's future and its role in the community from a broad perspective. The process included an environmental scan, literature review, focus group meetings, and a widely circulated draft and final report. "It is a synthesis of the multiple face to face and online consultations with over 50 people including parents with children in the Ukrainian Bilingual Program and in *Ridni shkoly/Kursy*, teachers, administrators, consultants, government personnel, university faculty and students, and community leaders from four provinces. It was vetted by all those who participated in the visioning process and revised accordingly."

The ULEC visioning project “arose at a moment of acknowledgement of historical change. A decade of re-visioning, branding, economic downsizing and restructuring at the University of Alberta, almost 40 years of ULEC’s existence within the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (CIUS), the rise of social media and technology in knowledge transformation and communication, the emergence of STEM elitism (i.e. in science, technology, engineering and mathematics studies and research), renewed unity and percolated unrest in Ukraine as well as increased opportunities to collaborate with Ukraine, the closing of Alberta’s Learning Resource Centre, and the retirement of long-term Director Marusia Petryshyn collectively offered a timely opportunity for reflection and imagining where ULEC might be in 2030.”

Groups that have a vested interest in ULEC’s success are numerous, ranging from the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (CIUS), the Institute that ULEC is nested within, to the school boards, teachers, and parent groups that ULEC supports. And the end-users of ULEC’s materials is broad as well – what first started out as materials produced for the local community now touches Ukrainian language teachers and students across Canada, and indeed the international diaspora community and Ukraine, in addition to other second-language programs which have learned from the Ukrainian Bilingual Program example.

The Vision event was structured to benefit from having multiple and diverse audiences of supporters in the room. Stakeholders were invited to attend not only to add input to the process but to recognize their place in the Ukrainian language education community and what they could do to support ULEC in its future endeavours. “Their presence strengthens our resolve to enact the new vision, and we hope that people in the room have identified ways in which they will be able to contribute to its realization,” comments Bilash.

The consultation does not stop with establishing the Vision. Event attendees were able to converse and contribute to the process both in small group discussions and then by sharing those results with the entire group. Discussions revolved around the next steps for ULEC, and attendees provided input to such questions as how to tap into ULEC’s research capabilities, how to contribute to the digital age of learning resources for teachers, parents, students, administrators and community, and how to develop a pan-Canadian online professional community of practice. As Nedashkivska informs: “Stating a new vision for ULEC will guide our goals and future direction. It serves as a foundation and motivation to all stakeholders. At the same time, though, our work continues, and the input we received today from our supporters will be used to consolidate future steps toward many components in the vision.”

Dr. Alla Nedashkivska
alla.nedashkivska@ualberta.ca
ulecdir@ualberta.ca

Dr. Olenka Bilash
obilash@ualberta.ca
(780) 492-5101

The Ukrainian Language Education Centre promotes and develops Ukrainian language education in Canada and abroad by: supporting bilingual programs and professional development of Ukrainian-language teachers and instructors; creating learning and teaching resources at both the secondary and post-secondary levels; conducting research on topics related to Ukrainian-language education and related fields; and fostering international links and community engagement. If you would like more information on the Centre, please visit [our website](#), [facebook page](#) or contact us by [email](#).



Методичний центр української мови сприяє розвитку україномовної освіти в Канаді й за кордоном шляхом підтримки двомовних програм і підвищення професійного рівня учителів української мови, створення навчальних і методичних матеріалів для середньої і вищої освіти, проведення досліджень на теми україномовної освіти і суміжних ділянок, а також плекання міжнародних зв'язків і громадської підтримки. Детальнішу інформацію про центр можна знайти на [веб-сторінці](#), [сторінці фейсбуку](#) або через [е-пошту](#).