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**Strengthening Russian,**

**East European and Eurasian Studies**

**in the Southwest**

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# Abstract

ASU’s Melikian Center for Russian, Eurasian and East European Studies (MCREEES) is submitting a proposal for the 2022-2026 Title VI NRC competition for recognition and funding as a Comprehensive Center, and for FLAS fellowships. The proposal highlights and addresses the vital importance that knowledge of Russia, East Europe and Central Asia (REECA) plays in understanding and addressing pressing global challenges, including great power competition; rising authoritarianism; the legacies of historical trauma; and environmental degradation. The Center’s proposed activities will build and maintain an open, resilient, and diverse network of educators, students (from K-12 to lifelong learners), local, national and international partner organizations and professionals to generate use-inspired research, increase the number of students and alumni with regional expertise, and foster civic dialogue and globally-informed perspectives among engaged and knowledgeable citizens**.**

The proposed program draws from the Center’s track record in teaching less commonly taught languages (LCTLs), conducting high-quality transdisciplinary research on the region, and taking knowledge public through programming for K-14 students and educators, as well as business and government constituencies. The program plan proposed will integrate, expand and scale-up ongoing activities and investments to:

1. Increase course offerings, enrollments and in-country program opportunities in 12 regional LCTLs, including proficiency-based instruction at the 300-level and beyond.
2. Infuse regional content into existing and new degree programs, and expand access to study abroad and student research opportunities.
3. Build a robust, inclusive infrastructure of academic and career mentoring and guidance to increase diversity in the next generation of REEE experts pursuing higher degrees and/or public service.
4. Engage partners and publics in the region and beyond in the conduct and dissemination of high-quality, innovative and transdisciplinary research on cross- cutting themes.

Leveraging ASU’s substantial investments and commitments to better understanding REECA, the Center will also have an integrative and catalytic role at ASU, making resources and opportunities visible and accessible across all ASU’s physical campuses, including the MSI- qualifying downtown and West campuses, as well as to ASU’s heterogeneous online student community. Regionally, the Center will serve public education priorities in the fast-growing Southwest states and advance broader understandings of Russian, East European and Central Asian history, culture and politics. Nationally, the Center will actively, participate in and contribute to national networks of excellence.

NRC support for these four lines of effort expand the Center’s impact in the next four academic years (2022-23 to 2025-26), which will be measured by:

* + Increase in numbers of students achieving OPI Intermediate High/1+/B1 in regional LCTLs (1)
  + Increase in numbers of students completing REES certificate, minor and major requirements, study abroad and research theses. (1 and 2)
  + Expanded engagements between alumni and professionals and students, including participation by students from underrepresented groups. Metrics include numbers of oral history and informational interviews; numbers of internships generated; numbers of national fellowship applications; statistics on post-degree placement; and demographic data on student participation (3)
  + Increase in number and productivity of institutional collaborations, measured in grant revenues and published outputs, and numbers of events and attendance. For K-14 collaboration, this number of courses and enrollments, and instructors participating in training programs (4).

All proposed activities are of high quality, appropriate and necessary to achieve the performance goals of the ASU NRC/FLAS Center. Over the course of the grant period, Title VI funding will combine with ASU and other external support to have a significant impact on more than 1,000 students enrolled in Russian, Eurasian and East European LCTLs, and more than 16,000 further students enrolled in REEES-related courses, including a projected 1,000 graduate students in professional and interdisciplinary programs. The expansion of partnerships domestically and overseas will provide study, internship or research opportunities for over 1,000 students; while timely, innovative outreach programming will engage a public audience of K-14 and lifelong learners which by 2025 will reach over 8,000 per year.

The Center will support research and knowledge networks for experts, and will also support course development and research on thematic issues that cut across regions and address their impact on contemporary world affairs. Students, faculty and the public will be informed of multiple perspectives and engage in debates (**AP1**).

The center will form an educational outreach network linking diverse levels of education from K-12 (including Phoenix, Tempe, Mesa and Chandler high school districts, as well as public charter schools); the Maricopa Community College District (in particular Paradise Valley and Glendale Community Colleges, both of which are MSIs); and a national coalition to support

BIPOC students in REEES (Thinktank, headquartered at Howard University). This network will provide teacher training activities (**AP2**) and be implemented in partnership with Community Colleges, MSIs and HBCUs (**NRC CPP).**

This will contribute to ASU’s equity, diversity and inclusion goals by enhancing knowledge of teachers and students, and drawing students from underrepresented communities to the study of Russia, East Europe and Central Asia. Additionally, the Center will create and strengthen ASU’s linkages with institutions in REECA and elsewhere to advance the University’s priority of greater global engagement, and add further diverse perspectives in thematic foci, educational programs and instruction (**AP1**).

The center will award AY and summer FLAS fellowships to eligible and qualified students from professional and other academic schools who enroll in performance-based language instruction and REECA content courses. Students whose research in any field has regional dimensions, and who commit to advanced language study, will also be considered. The FLAS selection process will give preference to students who demonstrate financial need (**FLAS CPP1**); all FLAS awards will be for LCTLs (**FLAS CPP2**).

With the support of NRC/FLAS funding, these initiatives will leverage ASU’s resources to increase the pool of knowledgeable, career ready graduates available for government service and other careers in areas of national need (**AP1**).

# Project Narrative

# Commitment to the Subject Area

Arizona State University’s commitment to Russian, Eurasia and East European studies (REEE, or REECA) is reflected in investment in professional staff, including library personnel, and over 100 faculty with regional expertise; the provision of physical and human resources to advance student success through global engagement; and significant support, through tuition waivers and fee reductions, to intensive summer REEE less-commonly taught languages (LCTL) learning and area studies.

The Melikian Center’s FY 2021 personnel budget from ASU funds was $488,811 ($376,625 in direct staffing costs, and $112,186 in ERE). This provides the bulk (90%) of salary costs for the existing 5 full time equivalent positions (FTEs), with the balance covered from external grants. ASU also provides over $7.2 million in salaries for Melikian faculty affiliates and other personnel who contribute area-specific expertise to the Melikian Center’s mission. These salaries support teaching and research faculty (including seven new tenure-track assistant professor hires in the past four years), dedicated library personnel, study abroad advising, and technical support staff for online teaching and outreach.

Staffing and faculty support is complemented by student fellowship and tuition support. This includes ASU’s long-standing commitment to waive tuition for all students enrolled in the Critical Languages Institute (CLI), which offers credit-bearing intensive summer LCTL classes. The value of the waiver is a $9,800 investment per student enrolled in 8-10 credits. In 2021, the value of the waivers was $1,470,000 in savings passed directly to 150 students.

ASU’s investments leverage scholarship support from federal programs for graduate students (Title VIII, $280,000) and for undergraduate ROTC cadets (Project GO,

$400,000), and from dedicated endowment funds, including the Melikian Family and the Doris Hastings Foundation. In addition to the waiver, 63% of CLI students in Summer 2021 received scholarship support totaling $479,420. These resources are available to undergraduate and graduate students.

ASU’s investments also include an annual programming fund of $25,000 and an annual library REEEE acquisitions budget of $67,000. ASU’s Research Incentive Distribution (RID) also provides the Center with a portion of indirect costs from successful grants, adding to annual grant revenues which in 2020-21, reached almost $1 million.

Besides the CLI grants noted above, the Center also won program support from the US Embassy in Armenia ($90,000) and the US Russian Foundation ($107,000). This does not include the affiliate-led research projects, including the three major multi-year projects discussed in section E.

In 2020-21, ASU provided further direct support for global engagement through an investment of approximately $6.2 million in renovating a new suite for international centers, bringing together the Melikian Center, the Center for Asian Research, the Chinese Flagship program and the Council for Arabic and Islamic Studies (CAIS). This space allocation permitted the Center to host long-term visitors from universities in Armenia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kosovo, reflecting ASU’s commitment to developing and supporting partnerships across the region. Besides long-term relationships with Yerevan State University (Armenia) and the University of Prishtina (Kosovo), and agreements with CLI partners in the Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Ukraine, and Bosnia-Hercegovina, the Center recently signed formal MOUs with Central

European University (Hungary/Austria) and Nazarbayev University (Kazakhstan). ASU now has a strategic partnership with Cintana Education to establish innovative new universities and empower and advance existing universities worldwide to meet the global aspirations of students and the needs of societies. Through this partnership, ASU faculty and students will have opportunities to work with counterparts at the American University Kyiv (Ukraine); Almaty Management University (Kazakhstan); Istanbul Bilgi University (Turkey); Luarasi University (Albania) and the University of Donja Gorica (Montenegro).

ASU’s broad coalition of support for Russian, Eurasia and East European Studies can also be seen in the letters of support from ASU President Michael Crow, and Deans Patrick Kenny (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences), Elizabeth Wentz (Graduate College) and Mark Jacobs (Barrett, the Honors College).

# Quality of the Center’s Language Instructional Program

*Languages and Enrollments*

During the full academic year 2020-21 (including summer 2021) 85 REE LCTL courses were offered with total enrollments of 590. These are listed in Appendix 2. Academic-year instruction was offered in Russian (levels 100-400), and in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BCS), Polish, Romanian, and Turkish (levels 100-200). Class enrollments in these five REEE LCTLs during Fall and Spring 2020-2021 totaled 280.

A majority of REEE LCTL enrollments (310) for 2020-21 were in Summer 2021, in the Melikian Center’s Critical Languages Institute (CLI). CLI offers 8-10 credits (two consecutive 4- credit or 5-credit classes) in 7-8 weeks, with the option for first-year students to add a 4-week, 3- credit extension program. In Summer 2021, a total of 150 students (including 77 undergraduate and 55 graduate students) enrolled in 11 REEE LCTLs. During the most recent four-year period

2018-2021, CLI added three languages (Ukrainian, Macedonian and Kazakh) and two overseas partners (in Kyiv and Nur-Sultan), and enrolled 532 students in the languages of the region.[1](#_bookmark0) This represented a 22.5% growth in enrollments from the previous four-year period 2014-2017.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table B.1: CLI Summer Enrollments 2018-2021 (8-13 credits)** | | | |
| **Language (Year**  **Introduced)** | **Levels** | **Students by Level** | **Total Students** |
| Albanian (2003) | 100, 200 | 21, 4 | 25 |
| Armenian (2002) | 100, 200, 300 | 18, 7, 1 | 26 |
| BCS (2000/1992) | 100, 200, 300 | 34, 9, 5 | 48 |
| Kazakh (2021) | 100, 200 | 0, 2 | 2 |
| Macedonian (2019/1991) | 100, 200 | 13, 2 | 15 |
| Persian (2010) | 100, 200 | 38, 14 | 52 |
| Polish (2004) | 100 | 17 | 17 |
| Russian (2007) | 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600 | 130, 78, 30, 26, 11, 6 | 281 |
| Turkish (2014) | 100 | 21 | 21 |
| Ukrainian (2018) | 100, 200 | 24, 2 | 26 |
| Uzbek (2007) | 100, 200 | 14, 5 | 19 |
| 11 Languages | 11 languages at 100 level,  9 at 200 level,  3 at 300 level,  1 (Russian) at 400, 500, 600 level | 330 @ 100 level,  123 @ 200 level,  79 @ 300+ level | 532 |

*Advanced (300+) Language Training, and Additional Courses Offered in LCTL.*

Of the total of 590 enrollments in LCTL courses, 132 were at 300-level or above. Most of these enrollments were in advanced Russian language classes, with a smaller number of students taking offerings in advanced BCS, Polish, Romanian and Armenian. ASU currently offers a small number of non-language courses in Russian, primarily serving advanced students. In its immersive overseas programs, CLI also offers instruction in other subjects—including tailored classes in politics and history—in the target language.

1 We include Persian and Turkish as REEE languages. Persian and Tajik (as well as Dari) are closely related. Turkish is one of the official languages of the Republic of North Macedonia, and is also spoken by communities either still residing, or tracing family roots, in the Balkans and the Caucasus. Turkish also provides students insight into Turkic languages across the region, including Azeri, Kazakh and Kyrgyz. CLI currently also offers instruction in Indonesian and Hebrew.

In Summer 2021 (as well as Summer 2020), advanced level enrollments were reduced by Covid-19 restrictions on study abroad: many advanced students chose to defer study until in- country immersion was possible. Looking forward, the strength of introductory and intermediate enrollments in 2020-21 suggest that CLI will see increased demand from returning and new students for advanced LCTL instruction in the next four years.

With Title VI support, the Melikian Center will extend its partnerships in REECA countries to offer intensive and immersive 300+ summer instruction in all eleven current languages.[2](#_bookmark1) On the model currently available in Russian, Armenian and BCS, existing in-country hubs will be strengthened in Kyiv (Ukrainian) and Nur-Sultan (Kazakh), and new hubs launched in Uzbekistan in 2022 or 2023 (for Uzbek); North Macedonia in 2023 or 2024 (for Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish); and Poland in 2024 or 2025 (for Polish). 300-level Persian will be added in one of three sites where CLI previously offered Persian (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Armenia). CLI will also continue to add classroom capacity at 200 level as needed, to meet rising demand, including from ASU’s expanding professional programs; and will work with the Thunderbird School of Global Management, which has introduced language proficiency requirements for its masters’ programs, to develop further non-language courses taught in Russian.

*Faculty and Staff Resources and Performance-Based Learning*

For AY REEE LCTL teaching, ASU employs 8 FTE and 2 part-time instructional faculty. This includes four full-time core Russian faculty, of whom two are tenured or tenure- track (Hoogenboom, Olenina) and two are senior lecturers (Livingston, Moldabekova). For BCS and Polish, ASU has one tenured full professor (Šipka) and two (part-time) faculty associates

2 Title VIII funding from the US Department of State is supporting a pilot program to add 100-level Tatar in 2022. To further serve ASU’s proposal to work internationally across traditional area studies boundaries, CLI’s future plans include piloting 100-level Urdu/Hindi and Swahili.

(Filipovic, Krajdocha-Oginska). For Romanian, ASU employs three full-time teaching faculty (Almasan, Paulesc, Orlich), of whom Orlich is a tenured, named professor. This team offers teaching to 300-level and beyond in all four languages, under the oversight of ASU’s School of International Letters and Cultures (SILC).

ASU’s core language faculty have won campus and national recognition for their contributions to language teaching nationwide. For example, Danko Šipka won the 2019 Dalton Award for lifetime achievement from the National Council on Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL), and served as President of the National Federation of Modern Languages Teachers Associations (NFMLTA) in 2020, while Saule Moldabekova has received multiple nominations for outstanding teaching.

CLI operations are overseen by the CLI Director (Levin) who also serves as Associate Center of the Melikian Center. The Director is assisted by a full-time program coordinator (Ho), and coordinates closely with ASU language faculty named above. For its summer intensive programs in REEE LCTLs, CLI directly employs a team of a further 18 language faculty, many of whom hold permanent university positions in their home countries. CLI’s instructors exhibit strong esprit de corps and deep commitment to student success, often serving as mentors for CLI students as they pursue more advanced study. All instructors are subject to yearly review and evaluation, based on student proficiency outcomes, classroom observations and student evaluations. In 2021, CLI’s instructors had between them taught almost 100 summers in the program. Five had 10 or more years’ experience, 10 had 3-9 years’ experience, and five were in their first or second year.

Besides their track record of proficiency gains across all languages (Tables B.2 and B.3) and alumni placements (Appendix G.1b), returning CLI faculty have published significant

materials for language learning and have received numerous awards and distinctions for their scholarship and teaching. One recent example is Borče Arsov’s 2020 Successful Youth award from the President of the Republic of North Macedonia.

All ASU and CLI language faculty have familiarity and training in performance-based learning. All course syllabi are proficiency-based, using ACTFL can-do statements. Classes currently offer 140-160 classroom hours, complemented by in-language co-curricular activities and peer conversation programming. Proficiency checks for listening, speaking, reading and writing are built into the curriculum. Authentic materials for reading and listening comprehension (primarily internet resources) are introduced as early as practical. Following national flagship best practices to accelerate learning, ASU encourages and supports greater intensitivity in first- and second-year courses. This includes switching AY introductory courses from a 4-credit to 5-credit standard: and in CLI, offering a 4-week, 3-credit in-country extension which adds 60 hours of classroom instruction as well as the proficiency benefits of immersion.

CLI provides methodology training online and in person for instructors, as well as feedback and mentoring based on classroom observation. CLI supports efforts to create and improve language-learning materials oriented toward measurable proficiency goals. Since 2020, when CLI prepared to switch to online delivery, faculty have met every month virtually to discuss approaches to online pedagogy and explore new technologies (including, for example, presentations on the use of VR/AR to introduce students to cultural material). These regular meetings have further reinforced a supportive working culture, and identified areas for professional development, including OPI certification workshops to support proficiency-based learning (proposed for FYs 2022 and 2024).

*Measurement of performance-based learning*

CLI evaluates the effectiveness of its instruction by conducting in-house and external proficiency examinations at intake and exit for students above the elementary level. Elementary students participate in exit examinations only. Official OPI testing is currently conducted for all Project GO grantees and Title VIII fellows—a total of 166 students from 2018-2021, or approximately 1/3 of all enrolled students in that period. Proficiency changes are shown in figures below. In aggregate, 164 (99%) of students receiving federal funds maintained or gained proficiency levels: 135 (81%) gained at least one level: and 103 (62%) both gained at least one level, and achieved survival fluency (1+ or Intermediate Low).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table B.2: Official OPI Assessments for 87 Title VIII-Funded Graduate Students Studying Group IV Regional LCTLs at CLI 2018-2021** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Intake Proficiency** | **Outcome Proficiency** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **ACTFL** | **0** | **NM** | **NH** | **IL** | **IM** | **IH** | **AL** | **AM** | **AH** | **S** |
| **0** |  | **6** | **2** | **14** | **4** | **5** | **1** |  | **2** |  |
| **NM** |  |  |  | **1** | **2** |  |  | **1** |  |  |
| **NH** |  |  | **1** | **4** | **1** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **IL** |  |  |  | **2** | **4** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **IM** |  |  |  |  | **3** | **3** | **5** |  |  |  |
| **IH** |  |  |  |  |  |  | **8** | **1** | **1** |  |
| **AL** |  |  |  |  |  |  | **6** | **3** | **1** | **1** |
| **AM** |  |  |  |  |  |  | **1** | **1** | **1** |  |
| **AH** |  |  |  |  |  |  | **1** |  | **1** |  |
| **S** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Table B.3: Official OPI Assessments for 79 Project GO-Funded Students Studying Turkish and Russian at CLI 2018-2021** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Intake Proficiency** | **Outcome Proficiency** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **ACTFL** | **0** | **0+** | **1** | **1+** | **2** | **2+** | **3** | **3+** | **4** | **4+** |
| **0** |  | **1** | **21** | **24** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **0+** |  |  | **2** | **1** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **1** |  |  | **5** | **8** | **2** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **1+** |  |  |  | **9** | **3** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2** |  |  |  |  |  | **1** |  |  |  |  |
| **2+** |  |  |  |  |  |  | **1** |  |  |  |
| **3** |  |  |  |  |  |  | **1** |  |  |  |
| **3+** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **4** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **4+** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

*Adequacy of Resources and Language Proficiency Requirements*

Across ASU’s AY and summer intensive programs, resources are in place to retain skilled, experienced teaching personnel and instructor-student ratios of 1:12 or better. LCTL instructors and students also draw on ASU’s support structures for professional success, including library resources, media services, and training in pedagogy or study skills. Current CLI costs are met by ASU core support for staff and the tuition waiver; program fees paid by all students (currently a flat $1,500, often paid by one or more scholarships), grant support from Project GO and Title VIII, and philanthropic support to maintain language instruction. NRC and FLAS support will permit the proposed expansion of the range of in-country 300-level programs while maintaining quality and access for diverse students. CLI enrollment will continue to be capped at 12 per classroom; and language proficiency targets and requirements for all levels of instruction will continue to be based on Language Flagship standards.

# Quality of Non-Language Instruction

*Quality and Extent of Course Offerings, Including Availability to Professional Schools*

During the academic year Fall 2020-Spring 2021, ASU offered over 85 non-language courses with substantial (25%+) REECA content, including over 20 graduate-level courses. A class list is provided in Appendix 2, which also includes classes offered in summer 2021.

Region-focused courses were available on all four of ASU’s physical campuses, as well as in growing online degrees like the Master’s degrees in Global Security and World War II Studies. Faculty in professional schools already offer regional material in select courses, and several have proposed adding more, including opportunities for law students to participate in the multi-year applied learning project Ukraine on transitional justice, funded by the Department of State.

All classes at ASU are approved by curricular committees of the respective instructional units. The quality of ASU’s REEE course offerings is further built on the subject matter expertise of the faculty, as well as their commitment to high-quality classroom and online teaching and pedagogical innovations. Among recent markers of distinction, Amanda Hess was named as 2019 Outstanding Early Career Teacher in the College of Integrated Sciences and Arts (CISA). In 2021 Michael Ostling (BHC) was one of three faculty across all ASU to be awarded the Centennial Professorship by the Associated Students of ASU. Melikian faculty affiliates also lead and contribute to collaborative curriculum development projects like Geographies of the Holocaust (Holian), Teaching Medieval Slavery and Captivity (Barker), and the SSRC’s Anxieties of Democracy project (Qubaiova (2020 GTF), Lassin, Brown).

*Depth of Specialized Course Coverage in One or More Disciplines*

History, political science and literature have the greatest depth in specialized course coverage: the largest course counts were in History (32) and Politics and Global Studies (20). These fields also have the strongest records of undergraduate progression to graduate study, and career placement for recently graduated PhDs. These disciplinary strengths are complemented by strengths in Music and Musicology, boosted since the hire of Peter Schmelz and David Fossum, and growth in the PhD program in Educational Policy and Evaluation, where Iveta Silova’s 2016 appointment and subsequent faculty hires are building a highly-qualified cohort of doctoral students. A sample of recent placements, for undergraduates and graduate students, is provided in Appendix G.1.

ASU now has particular strengths in the comparative politics and twentieth-century history of the region, across a range of countries that gained sovereignty at the end of the Cold War. Besides enduring strengths in Russian studies, particular area clusters which align with

CLI and study abroad opportunities, include Poland/Germany (Benkert, Cichopek-Gajraj, Flaws, Holian, Holman, Lozinski-Veach, Ostling); the Western Balkans (Berisha, Brown, Hess, Hristovski, Moore, Pout, Niebuhr, Peskin, Polt, Sivak, Šipka, Williamson); and the former Soviet states of Central Asia (Fossum, Grossman, Hanson, Kefeli, Popova, Silova, Unver, Vosieva).

ASU has long experience and engagement in the Caucasus, especially focused on Armenia, where ASU faculty are actively collaborating to build an American Studies program at Yerevan State University, with support from the US Embassy, as well as neighboring Turkey.

In terms of research themes which bring these country and sub-region experts into conversation, three clusters stand out. First, the Center convenes a cluster of researchers working on issues of **migration, displacement and resilience** and examining how diasporas and transnational communities, as well as those whose homes are most endangered by climate change or political instability, maintain their identities and memories across generations, while addressing traumatic histories. This cluster of expertise drives a number of ongoing and proposed initiatives and collaborations, including collaborative NSF-funded work on cultures at risk in the Russian Arctic and in Central Asia, and the proposed expansion of genocide awareness education and training in Arizona.

Second, ASU faculty focused on REEE contribute to ASU initiatives on **civic activism, human rights and democratic institutions** in different political and economic contexts. The Melikian Center and its affiliates already offer public programming in collaboration with ASU’s Center for Jewish Studies and the Phoenix Committee on Foreign Relations (PCFR). In the next four years the Center will work closely with ASU’s new Human Rights Hub, and with the School of Economic Thought and Leadership, the Sandra Day O’Connor School of Law and the McCain Institute to advance data-driven research, teaching and outreach on political pluralism,

the causes and consequences of totalitarianism, and the dynamics of accountability and the rule of law in society.

Third, Melikian faculty affiliates share interest and expertise in **geopolitics and the cultural dimensions of great power rivalry**–including attention to the practices of hybrid warfare, economic policy and citizen diplomacy. As well as infusing undergraduate and graduate courses with regional content, the Center will collaborate closely with the Center for Asian Research, the proposed new Center for the Study of a Changing World, and external partners, with an emphasis on exploring and engaging perspectives that may foster de-escalation and cooperation and reduce polarization and confrontation. In particular, area studies expertise can bring to light forgotten or overlooked stories of successful negotiation, diplomacy or transition in which small countries played an outsize role. Examples include Estonia’s prominence in cybersecurity initiatives; Tajikistan’s leading UN role in addressing issues of water and sustainable development; and the Republic of North Macedonia’s management of interethnic power-sharing.

In all three research themes, ASU will further develop partnerships in the region. Templates include recent and ongoing collaborations in North Macedonia (UKIM, NGO Metamorphosis), Kosovo (University of Prishtina), Armenia (YSU) and Estonia (Ekspress Meedia). We also anticipate involving more ASU as well as Community College faculty in the Center’s expanded teaching and outreach. Two areas of emphasis will be professional development and pedagogical training for graduate students and early career scholars through an annual 3-day workshop; and the development of an oral history project with broad participation from students and a range of globally-oriented interviewees, including members of heritage communities in greater Phoenix and members of Phoenix Committee on Foreign Relations.

*Sufficient Numbers of Faculty, and Availability of Pedagogical Training*

Excluding SILC language instructors (6) and the summer LCTL faculty (18), the Melikian Center currently has over 70 faculty and staff affiliates with substantive teaching or research interests in Russia, East Europe and Central Asia. The list of project participants includes a further 15 prospective affiliates, of whom 13 are faculty who teach classes with substantial area content. Between current and projected new hires, ASU has sufficient numbers of instructional faculty, including 30 tenured professors, to support a large number of undergraduate courses with regional content, region-focused tracks within masters’ programs; and doctoral supervision in a number of academic and professional programs.

ASU Continuing and Professional Education, EdPlus and Learning Management Systems provide pedagogical training to instructors of all ranks as well as teaching assistants. Formal programs cover course design and management, classroom technology, and best practices in distance, online and hybrid teaching. ASU’s Graduate School additionally provides a multi- session training program and other resources for all Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants. The Graduate College also offers all graduate assistants participation in the CIRCLES group mentoring program, which is peer-led, and designed to serve members of

under-represented groups. Additionally, ASU is a member of the network of HEIs served by the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning: a National Science Foundation Center for Learning and Teaching. Oriented toward STEM, the network also provides resources relevant for the ongoing and projected problem-focused and team-based research, teaching and outreach projects at the Melikian Center.

These central resources for graduate assistant training are supplemented by pedagogical support systems at the unit level. SILC, for example, offers seven-day training in August for all

new Teaching Assistants, which integrates returning TAs who attend for new or refresher training. SILC also offers every fall a pedagogy-focused course SLC/CHI/SPA 596, Second Language Methodologies, which is required for all new TAs. Graduate students in other units receive faculty-led training and mentoring, including co-teaching and co-design opportunities.

The Melikian Center is committed to augmenting ASU’s capacity in pedagogical training, with three particular region-focused initiatives. Since 2019, the Center has participated in the Open Society University Network (OSUN), including hosting and supporting one- semester Global Teaching Fellows (GTFs) from Central European University (CEU) as they embark on undergraduate teaching. In 2020 and 2021, CLI piloted opportunities for former students to serve as classroom aides in Ukrainian and Uzbek, gaining skills in language pedagogy. In 2021, the Center offered former Title VIII fellows a professional development workshop on techniques in translating research for broader audiences, in the curriculum and beyond.

NRC support will expand and formalize two of these initiatives.[3](#_bookmark2) GTFs will spend a full academic year at ASU, building skills in teaching in the thesis advising/tutorial, seminar and lecture format and also curriculum design, and collaborating with Community College instructors. The expanded 3-4 day early career workshop for REEE specialists will broaden professional networks, and provide tools and resources for taking academic knowledge public. *Extent of Interdisciplinary Courses*

As part of its charter to understand and address real-world problems and challenges which are not confined within neat academic silos, ASU has pioneered the creation of

3 In parallel CLI will use non-NRC funds to launch and evaluate a pilot *language aide program* at CLI to provide advanced learners extended, documented experience-based pedagogy training in the introductory language classroom.

multidisciplinary schools, and corresponding majors. The College of Integrative Sciences and Arts, for example, attracts undergraduates looking to combine the perspectives of two or more disciplines in their studies, while Barrett, the Honors College offers HON courses which bring students from different majors into conversation, and are interdisciplinary by design. Global Studies majors in particular pursue area-focused opportunities through the Melikian Center. At the graduate level, programs such as Sustainability (SOS), Social Justice and Human Rights (JHR), or Global Technology and Development (GTM) have dedicated course codes, and fuse materials and perspectives from multiple disciplines.[4](#_bookmark3)

In the attached course list (Appendix 2) we have identified 16 cross-listed classes as interdisciplinary classes with significant REE content. Using the criteria of 1) classes with at least one course code from an interdisciplinary degree program (for example HON. GTM) and 2) classes where the syllabus draws less than 50% of its content from any single discipline, raised the number to over 25 interdisciplinary REEE classes. This list does not include cases where the only claim to interdisciplinarity is the instructor’s assessment.

# Quality of Curriculum Design.

*Curriculum design and Graduate training options*

Title VI funds will continue and expand Melikian Center leadership in high-quality undergraduate and graduate training on Russia, Eurasia and East Europe. Title VI funds will infuse area studies content across ASU’s undergraduate curriculum, provide expanded intensive summer language offerings, and diversify study abroad opportunities. This will broaden access to area studies for students in multiple programs; and deepen the training available to students in

4 Currently, over 305 undergraduates have declared Global Studies as their major. These students, together with MA students in World War II Studies (227), Global Security (165), Social Justice and Human Rights (150+), Global Technology and Management (50+) and Thunderbird’s management and business programs (600+), constitute a critical mass of demand for more region-focused course content.

ASU’s high-quality region-focused certificate, minor and major programs. At the graduate level, Title VI funding will provide additional resources and training for PhD students, and create area-focused courses and tracks across 5 or more Masters programs that are currently introducing new content to serve growing constituencies.

Currently ASU offers a Russian major (established 1968), and minors in Russian, Romanian and Slavic studies (established 2009). These programs require students to complete 300-level language courses (with the Russian major also requiring 400-level coursework). In July 2021, these programs of study had a total of 44 students.

ASU additionally offers a Russian and East European Studies certificate designed to increase access to high-level regional content for students in a wide range of disciplines, with little previous exposure to the region’s history, culture and languages. The certificate was first offered in 1984, primarily as an adjunct qualification for students majoring in political science, history or language and literature. A major redesign was approved by the Dean of Students, the Faculty Senate, and the Arizona Board of Regents in 2019. Students must complete a total of 20 region-focused course credits. At least 6 credits, in at least two disciplines, must be taken from a short list of core classes with 75% to 100% focus on the region, taught by Melikian faculty affiliates. The balance of credits (at least 2 further 3-credit courses) is filled with region-focused electives. Students can count up to 8 LCTL course credits toward the certificate requirements: the credit hour count is secondary to the primary goal, for certificate awardees to demonstrate survival proficiency (ILR 1 or ACTFL Intermediate Low) in a language that is not their native language.

The final requirement is to take a team-taught capstone class convened by the Melikian Center. Students either propose and pursue their own independent research, or participate in a

group project with a regional focus. The group project could focus on a faculty-led case-study linked to major ongoing research, such as foreign disinformation in the Balkans, transitional justice in Ukraine, or indigenous resilience in Arctic Russia. In either case, the certificate student will work closely with at least one Melikian Center affiliate as well as NRC staff to develop professional writing skills and learn more about specific career or grant opportunities.

The certificate leverages the broad disciplinary and professional experience of ASU’s faculty, as well as ASU’s distinctive capacity in proficiency-based LCTL instruction. The non- language component of the curriculum is built around courses on the region’s social, political and economic development. Students taking the certificate acquire understanding of the geography, history, societies and politics of Eurasia and Eastern Europe. This includes but is not limited to the role of Russia, the region’s super power, and the twentieth-century creation and dissolution of the Soviet Union. By requiring students to take 2 out of 6 core classes in different disciplines (and therefore from at least two different instructors), they will necessarily encounter diverse perspectives. New courses developed and taught in the past four years, and those courses projected to be added in the coming four years, add course options in thematic areas including human rights, business, science and technology studies, and environmental sustainability, with substantial regional content. A list of recently added, planned and proposed undergraduate and graduate courses is provided in Appendix D.1.

The certificate’s lower language course load requirement complements language-based majors or minors, and provides STEM, professional and pre-professional students pathways into foreign area studies. It emphasizes proficiency rather than measuring credit-hours. In these first two years offering the redesigned certificate, most of the 22 certificate students have opted to take at least two years’ equivalent of regional language study, either during the academic year or

through summer programs. Our expectation is that summer FLAS awards will especially encourage diverse students to take 200- or 300-level language courses overseas, either with the Critical Languages Institute or with other providers, and achieve or exceed proficiency targets. *Graduate Training*

As a Carnegie R1 Institution, ASU supports high-quality faculty and graduate student research across the sciences, social sciences and humanities, as well as in professional programs and cross-cutting fields. Approximately 25 current ASU PhD students are affiliated with the Melikian Center, which supports doctoral student training through support for travel and research, fellowships to attend the Critical Languages Institute, and professional development opportunities, including presenting work in a regular interdisciplinary works-in-progress seminar. Additionally, masters’ students already represent an important constituency for the Center; including those in ASU’s diverse programs, and those from REECA-focused programs elsewhere in the USA who receive Title VIII fellowships to attend the CLI.

The Melikian Center proposes to broaden and strengthen the pool of graduate student area expertise by developing further training programs and courses. Following positive student evaluations of the pilot Post-Soviet Geopolitics class, offered since 2019 to Title VIII students and in Spring 2022 to all MA students in the Global Security program, the Center will contribute regional expertise to the introduction or enhancement of REECA content and perspectives in number of globally-oriented thematic masters’ programs. As with undergraduate efforts, the goal is to introduce diverse perspectives, spark curiosity, and provide pathways to gain foreign language and area studies expertise for motivated students.

This work will be conducted in close coordination with faculty and leadership from at least five graduate programs operated by different schools including Global Security (SPGS),

World War II Studies (SHPRS), Social Justice and Human Rights (SBS), Global Management (Thunderbird) and Global Technology and Development (SFIS). Melikian affiliates will provide subject matter expertise and support for curriculum development to enhance existing courses, build new modules or classes, and construct new region-focused tracks, or pathways for masters’ students to integrate the certificate into their course of study. Center staff will alert students to FLAS opportunities, and connect them with CLI alumni whose experience shows the added value of LCTL training for careers in areas of national need.

*Advising*

In the past four years, the Melikian Center has invested effort and resources in building an ecosystem of mentoring and guidance to advance student success. This has included work with the STARTALK program, Tempe Sister Cities, and local High Schools and Community Colleges. The Center expands its reach by coordinating with student advisors in different ASU colleges and schools, and at Barrett, the Honors College, to alert ASU students at all stages of their education about opportunities at the Center and especially at CLI. Melikian faculty affiliates also play a critical role as teachers and mentors by guiding students on the career and fellowship opportunities available for students of foreign languages and area studies.

The Melikian Center’s Associate Director and CLI Director Irina Levin currently serves as the primary contact point for prospective and declared certificate students. Working closely with faculty and the Office of National Scholarship Advising (ONSA), she identifies courses, events and grant opportunities of likely interest, and connects students with faculty advisors for their capstone projects. Where feasible, students are matched with faculty whose linguistic, geographic or thematic expertise matches their stated interests.

As well as offering in-depth focus on the region, and providing opportunities for peer

learning, the certificate program also emphasizes academic and career advising for ASU undergraduates. With the expectation that recent rapid growth will continue in take-up of the certificate program, the new position of FLAS and Internships, Mentoring and Partnerships (IMP) coordinator will enhance the Center’s capacity to serve students–especially in providing contact with an expanded network of alumni and organization partners for career advising.

The certificate program, by design, brings together students from diverse degree programs. Each student will interact with one or more LCTL instructors, ASU faculty in at least two disciplines, Melikian Center leadership, an assigned faculty mentor, and (through the work of the FLAS and IMP coordinator) alumni or other professionals with experience in the region. This academic and career advising network will foster diverse perspectives, strengthen students’ applications for advanced study or careers in the field, and encourage investment in foreign language and area studies.

*Research and Study Abroad*

The Center has a strong track record of establishing and formalizing opportunities for student research and study abroad. This commitment includes support for PhD and Masters’ students conducting original research, consolidating or adding language skills, or making professional connections. The Melikian Center offers ASU graduate students travel and research funds from internal funds, as well as U.S. students in any national or international graduate program Title VIII fellowships to attend CLI, especially its immersive overseas programs.

At the undergraduate level, the Center’s commitment works closely with ASU’s Global Education Office, offering faculty-led study programs ranging from Global Intensive Experiences (GIE), which are short in-country modules incorporated into semester-long campus- based or online courses); through stand-alone credit-bearing courses operating over 3-8 weeks; to

full semester abroad programs at partner universities. In addition, ASU has piloted Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) classes, which connect students and professors in different countries through a common curriculum; and currently offers honors students experiential and service learning opportunities overseas through ASU’s GlobalResolve Program. ASU also has existing arrangements for academic year student exchange with partner institutions in Prague, Budapest, Warsaw, St. Petersburg, and Yerevan; and ASU’s Global Education Office advertises, and facilitates student access to other U.S. institutions’ study abroad and exchange programs.

In AY 2018-19 (before Covid), Melikian faculty affiliates led ASU study abroad programs to the Baltics (Hess); Bosnia-Hercegovina, Croatia and Serbia (Hess); Romania (Orlich); and Greece and North Macedonia (Polt and Sivak). These offerings, combined with ASU faculty-led programs in the Czech Republic, provided study abroad opportunities for approximately 150 ASU undergraduates. When travel restrictions allow, these programs will resume, and be complemented by a new faculty-led program in Poland/Germany (Holman) and by a start-up suite of 2 GIE, 2 stand-alone study abroad, 2 COIL and GlobalResolve opportunities, drawing on and extending ASU’s network of collaborators in Russia, Eurasia or East Europe.[5](#_bookmark4) Prospective COIL partners, for example, include the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek and other regional members of OSUN; and the Aleksanteri Institute for Russian and East European Studies in Helsinki.

Additionally, Department of Education support will expand CLI’s offerings for regional language learning abroad. Over the years of CLI’s operation, over 750 students have spent 4-8 weeks overseas, with the largest numbers of students studying Russian in Bishkek, Kyrgyz

5 Title VI funds are requested for faculty supplemental pay or travel costs to launch GIE, non-language study abroad and COIL classes: GlobalResolve opportunities will be developed drawing on existing resources at Barrett, the Honors College.

Republic (155 students from 2015-2019); BCS in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Hercegovina (67 from 2007- 2019) and Armenian in Yerevan, Armenia I (59 from 2004-2019).[6](#_bookmark5) In Summer 2019, a total of 79 CLI students studied at these locations, or in St. Petersburg (Russian), Kyiv (Ukrainian) or Tirana (Albanian). The Center proposes to use its established and successful template to add CLI programs in 3-5 languages in Uzbekistan, North Macedonia and Poland.

# Quality of staff resources

*Qualifications, Participation and Professional Development Opportunities*

As of Fall 2021, MCREEES has 75 active faculty affiliates based on all four ASU metropolitan campuses in greater Phoenix and ASU’s Washington DC campus. This total includes 18 full professors (12 tenured, 6 appointments as professor of practice or clinical professor); 14 Associate Professors, 10 Assistant Professors, and 23 instructional faculty on long-term contracts. Additionally, in summer 2021, the Melikian Center directly employed 18 regional LCTL instructors at the Critical Languages Institute (CLI), all of whom have affiliate

standing. A further 12 emeritus faculty maintain affiliate status, and are not listed. Affiliate status is approved by vote of current affiliates, following either self-nomination or peer nomination.

The criteria for membership include meaningful interest, experience, and scholarly engagement in the region.

Affiliates represent multidisciplinary range, with concentrations of expertise in anthropology, history, political science, music and musicology, and literature. Affiliates also include staff who contribute to Center programs, and regional experts from ASU’s library and Global Educations Office. The vitality of the affiliate community is demonstrated in the steady

6 Data on CLI Study Abroad programs is available at the public Storymaps site, <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/38d72d751295464a994290d566e8987b> accessed February 2022.

increase in numbers since 2018, when membership stood at 47. The CV list in Appendix 3 includes a further 15 ASU faculty and staff who currently contribute to the Center’s mission, and have expressed intent to apply for affiliate status.

The teaching faculty and staff at ASU’s Melikian Center, with the new hires, collaborations and resources requested in this proposal, are highly qualified to undertake the proposed program. Besides the CLI summer instructors, a further 50 of the existing 75 faculty affiliates have worked with students through Center programs (including mentoring undergraduate fellows, advising honors theses or certificate capstone projects), served on MA or graduate committees, or taught core classes. 70 hold doctoral degrees, and over 50 have working fluency (ILR 3+) in one or more of the region’s languages.

The Melikian Center’s affiliated faculty and graduate students have won national and international recognition. Distinctions since 2018, include individual fellowships and grants from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, (Schmelz), ACLS (Barker), NEH (Holian, Manchester), NCEEER (Siroky, Bustikova, Manchester, Lassin, Palandjian), The U.S. Holocaust Museum (Benkert, Cichopek-Gajraj), the Wilson Center (Lassin, Kasikci) and Fulbright (Šipka, Fellner, Hristovski (declined)). Research excellence has also been recognized through a number of major national book awards (Barker, Bustikova and Olenina) as well as residential fellowships at the National Humanities Center (Cruse, Kefeli-Clay), Hokkaido University (Šipka, Olenina (deferred)) and the University of Helsinki (Brown).

Three Center affiliates also currently lead collaborative multi-year federally-funded research and training projects, with a total budget of over $7.2 million. Professor Abigail York (SHESC) is the P.I on a $3 million grant from the National Science Foundation to study arctic resilience in Alaska and Russia’s far north): Professor Clint Williamson (Law School) is heading

a project to build capacity to investigate and prosecute atrocities in Ukraine and South Sudan, with $2.6 million from the US State Department, and Professor Steven Corman (Hugh Downs School of Communication) has received a $1.6 million award from the Office of Naval Research to develop digital tools to diagnose and counter Russian disinformation tactics.

Ongoing information-sharing and collaboration among faculty affiliates is facilitated by the Center’s core staff, which currently comprises one tenured faculty member (Brown) ,one academic professional (Levin), and three staff members (Akins, Brokaw and Ho). The Center currently employs two half-time student assistants, one postdoctoral fellow (Lassin) and one CEU Global Teaching Fellow (Rizkallah), supported by the Advisory Board and external grant funds. Of this team, three (Brown, Levin, Lassin) hold area-focused PhDs, and three (Rizkallah, Akins, Brokaw) hold relevant masters’ degrees.

Information on Brown (Director since 2017) and Levin (associate director and director of CLI since 2019) is provided in the list of team CVs. Program Manager Marina Akins is a native Russian speaker and holds an MSc in Global Technology and Development. She has served in a number of roles at the Melikian Center, including work as national Project GO coordinator, as CLI program assistant, and as the Center’s business operations specialist. Brown, Levin and Akins provide leadership in grant activities and regular reporting and monitoring requirements..

David Brokaw holds an MA in Russian and an MBA. He originally joined the Melikian Center as Assistant Director in 2005, and now serves as events and program manager. He has played a lead role in grant management, participating in site visits to Bosnia and Kosovo, and continues to manage event and visitor program logistics, including collaborations with IIE and Fulbright, the American Councils FEP program, and partners from the University of Prishtina and Yerevan State University (2021).

Kristen Ho holds a BA in Political Science and Russian from the University of California Berkeley, and currently serves as the CLI Program coordinator.

*Adequacy of Center Staffing and Oversight, Including Involvement from Varied Units*

The Melikian Center's Director is a tenured ASU faculty member, appointed by the University Provost. Current director Keith Brown was appointed in 2017 through a national search.[7](#_bookmark6) The Director reports formally to the Dean of the Social Sciences in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, who reviews the Director's performance annually, and makes a recommendation to the Provost for reappointment or removal. In making this recommendation, the Dean draws information from the Melikian Center Advisory Board, established in 2014, and from affiliated faculty.

All ASU Centers undergo regular 7-year reviews, overseen by University Program Review and Accreditation (UPRA) in the Office of the Provost. The Melikian Center successfully completed its last review in 2015. The Melikian Center Director additionally provides a report on activities and finances each year to the Melikian Center Advisory Board, established in 2014, and to the Faculty Affiliates. Program Manager Marina Akins manages the Center’s finances, working closely with the Director for Fiscal and Business Operations in the Dean’s Office to assure compliance with all University, State and Federal requirements.

In response to recommendations by reviewers in the 2018 NRC competition, the Melikian Center integrated the leadership structure of the Melikian Center and the Critical Languages Institute in 2019. The CLI Director now formally holds the role of Associate Director at the Melikian Center, and reports to the Center Director.

7 Director and Proposal lead Keith Brown is on research leave as a core fellow at the Collegium for Advanced Studies at the University of Helsinki. He will return to ASU full-time in July 2022. Professor Craig Calhoun is serving as acting director for the Melikian Center in 2021-22, working closely with Associate Director Irina Levin.

Additionally, the Center added a mechanism of faculty participation and oversight. A Faculty Advisory Committee was constituted, meeting at least four times yearly to discuss new initiatives and set priorities, especially for the allocation of research funding and student support.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table E.1. Faculty Advisory Committee membership 2019-present | | | |
| Affiliate | Terms  served | Rank, home unit | Key portfolio/roles |
| Laurie Manchester | 2019-21 | Associate Professor, SHPRS  (tenured) | Research advancement, including  graduate student relations |
| Margaret Hanson | 2019-21 | Assistant Professor, SPGS (tenure-  track) | New initiatives on Central Asia |
| Gary Grossman | 2019-22 | Associate Professor, SFIS  (tenured) | Liaison to policy and professional  communities |
| Claudia Sadowski-Smith | 2019-22 | Full Professor, English (tenured) | Faculty professional development |
| Don Livingston | 2019-23 | Senior Lecturer, SILC. (non-  tenured) | Language pedagogy and summer  programs |
| Laurie Stoff | 2019-23 | Faculty fellow, Barrett, HC (non-  tenured) | National scholarship advising |
| Andi Hess | 2019-23 | Lecturer, CISA (non-tenured) | Study Abroad and internship  development |
| Iveta Silova | 2021-23 | Full Professor, MLFTC (tenured) | Teacher training and global partnerships |
| Victor Peskin (succeeding  Hanson) | 2021-23 | Associate Professor, SPGS  (tenured) | New initiatives on genocide and human  rights. |
| Agnes Kefeli-Clay  (succeeding Manchester) | 2021-23 | Clinical Professor, SHPRS (non-  tenured) | Research advancement and graduate  student relations |

The Faculty Advisory Committee reflects the disciplinary diversity of the Center, and includes representation from tenured and non-tenured faculty. The committee gives the most active affiliates a formal voice and role in the Center, and an opportunity to gain administrative experience in two-year terms.

The Melikian Center is also distinguished by its Advisory Board, established in 2014. As well as Gregory and Emma Melikian, who provided the initial endowment of $1 million to the Center, the Board includes a range of professionals, philanthropists and accomplished alumni with enduring interests in the region, as well as senior faculty from other institutions who serve as distinguished honorary members. The Executive Committee consists of President, Treasurer

and Secretary who serve two-year terms, as well as the Melikians and the Center’s Director. It meets at least twice each semester. The Board also has standing committees on publicity, strategic planning and board development.

The current Advisory Board President is David A. Merkel, Managing Director of Summit International Advisors, LLC, whose former governmental roles include service as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, and as senior foreign and defense policy adviser to the leadership of the U.S. House of Representatives.

*Non-discriminatory employment practices*

The Melikian Center commits to enacting University policies to provide equal opportunity through affirmative action in employment and educational programs and activities. These policies are stated and supported by ASU’s Office of Equity and Inclusion, and MCREEES fully complies with ASU’s EEO/AA policies. In accordance with ASU policy, all MCREEES personnel receive training and education including mandatory training modules on preventing harassment and discrimination, and on Title IX duty to report. The campus Disability Resources Center (DRC) provides support for employees at ASU who may require accommodation. In response to heightened national awareness of systems of systematic bias, ASU published the LIFT report in 2021, which outlined and launched further concrete steps to identify and address barriers to equity.

All proposed ASU advertisements of vacancies and potential hires are reviewed by the Office of Equity and Inclusion. ASU specifically encourages women and minority applicants for staff vacancies, and the Melikian Center has followed university best practices in using Diversity job resources when advertising vacancies.

# Strength of Library

*Strength of Holdings. Plus Institutional Financial Support, Other University Holdings Available*

Arizona State University Library vision, mission, and goals are aligned with the University Charter and Goals. As a partner that helps enable the success of learners, instructors, and scholars, the ASU Library provides services and access to resources that directly and positively impact academic and scholarly outcomes for Melikian Center affiliates and students.

The library’s overall 2021 financial commitment to staff support for REEES, including ERE, was $248,732. This includes full salary support for Alexandra Humphreys as subject specialist for Russian, Eurasian and East European Studies. As a professional librarian with substantial language and area expertise, she is also a Melikian Center affiliate and her CV is included in Appendix 3. ASU Library’s collection management experts support the Center’s language learning programs through the licensing, purchasing, description, access, and management of online and print resources.

The ASU Library has region-leading REEE holdings of approximately 220,000 imprints, including print materials and major electronic memberships and subscriptions. These include A/V, periodicals and books in over 25 REECA languages including Russian, Polish, Romanian and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian. The largest holdings (over 60,000) are in Russian. Since

2019, ASU has also received substantial gifts of Polish language materials (over 1,500 imprints) from Tony Kruszewski (Emeritus Professor, University of Texas El Paso), and materials in BCS, Slovene, Albanian and Macedonian from Elsie Ivanovich Dunin (Emeritus Professor, UCLA), which are awaiting cataloging.

In FY 2021 the library spent $67,357 on print acquisitions in REEE LCTLs. In addition, since 2018 the library has invested a further $11,500 specifically to obtain over 50 new physical

and streaming film titles from the region, including permanent performance rights. Funds are requested to expand that commitment in 2022-2026, to grow and provide access to A/V materials, that already include more than 1,300 titles in Russian language.

*Inter-institution availability of holdings, for and from ASU*

ASU Library participates in three active cooperative lending and borrowing networks: RapidR, Greater Western Libraries Alliance (GWLA) and Arizona libraries via AZNET. ASU borrowers have access to millions of volumes and articles held across our partner libraries: 38 libraries’ holdings through GWLA, 82 Arizona libraries via AZNET, and resources held in hundreds of institutions worldwide through the innovative RapidR fulfillment service. These services are available free of charge to ASU affiliates, which include students, faculty, researchers, instructors, and staff. Researchers from other institutions in our borrowing and lending networks likewise have access to ASU collections.

ASU also borrows and lends resources through OCLC’s (OCLC.org) WorldShare ILL resource sharing groups. ASU users thus have access to over 10,000 libraries’ holdings worldwide. ASU has group affiliations with the Center for Research Libraries (244 institutions), the North American Coordinating Council on Japanese Library Resources (280 institutions), and the Western Regional Storage Trust (161 institutions). ASU holds a partnership with 144 other institutions to support the Hathitrust Digital Library that provides millions of digitized archival scans of print resources. ASU Library is also a member of the Slavic and East European Materials Project (SEEMP) within the Center for Research Libraries, enabling it to acquire copies of unique research materials pertaining to Russia, East Europe and Central Asia.

# Impact and Evaluation

The Melikian Center’s core mission is to enhance contextual expertise and cultural awareness in the constituencies it serves, including ASU, the metropolitan Phoenix area, and broader academic networks and public audiences. Since the Center’s establishment in 2007, staff, faculty and (since 2014) the advisory board have applied design thinking to advance that core mission, and conducted monitoring and evaluation (M & E) to measure success and direct the effective pursuit and deployment of resources. Additionally, several of the Center’s externally-funded programs have specific monitoring and evaluation requirements, including Project GO and Title VIII targets for proficiency gains. Current M & E practices will be continued and augmented in the next four years.

*Metrics of Impact on University, community, region and nation*

At the heart of the Melikian Center’s impact is faculty expertise, in research and teaching.

The overall course enrollments provided in Appendix 2 demonstrate the broad reach of the Center, with almost 8000 unique enrollments each year indicating more than 2,500 students take one or more courses each year with REEE content.[8](#_bookmark7) Non-language offerings include a number of courses introduced by new ASU faculty with significant interest and expertise in REES, including 9 new tenure-track assistant professors (Barker, Fossum, Gonzalez-Dogan, Goodman, Hanson, Lozinski-Veach, Olenina, Oranli, Thomson). Their engagement, in conjunction with the leadership of Associate Center Director Irina Levin, has also driven a rise since 2019 in students subscribing to the REES certificate program (22, from 2 in 2018) and completing either the new undergraduate fellows program (19, from 0) or honors theses supervised by Melikian faculty

8 The enrollments to individual student conversion ratio used here assumes that the median number of REEE courses per student each year is 3 or less.

affiliates and with significant focus on Russia, East Europe or Central Asia (17, from 12 in 2016- 2018). These metrics show the impact of Center programming on ASU undergraduates.

The Center also tracks data on CLI’s 30-year history and 2400+ student enrollments. This data forms the basis for a 2021 [storymaps site](https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/38d72d751295464a994290d566e8987b), created through a professional internship.[9](#_bookmark8) CLI

serves students from universities and colleges across the United States, with over 65% enrolled in degree programs outside Arizona when they attended CLI. This national impact is reflected in the data collected for the 161 graduate student recipients of Department of State Title VII fellowships since 2011. Of 94 fellowships awarded in 2018-21, institutions in the Southwest (32%) and Midwest (23%) were most highly represented, with institutions in the Southeast, Northeast and West Coast-Northwest each receiving between 10% and 14% of awards.

Beyond impact through its for-credit offerings, the Melikian Center has over the past three years expanded the range of public programming, with a particular focus on foregrounding faculty expertise and addressing pressing global issues.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table G.1: Trajectory of event frequency and attendance Fall 2017-Spring 2021 | | | | | | | | | |
| Key/Year | Fall  2017 | Spr  2018 | Fall  2018 | Spr  2019 | Fall  2019 | Spr  2020 | Fall  2020 | Spr  2021 | Total 4  years |
| # public events | 9 | 14 | 15 | 23 | 14 | 5/ 5 | 0/12 | 0/27 | 124 |
| # participants, semester/AY | 207 | 391 | 471 | 837 | 470 | 467/100 | 428 | 1,109 |  |
| 598 | | 1,308 | | 1,037 | | 1,537 | | **4,480** |
| Mean attendance | 23 | 28 | 31 | 36 | 33 | 57 | 30 | 41 |  |
|  | 26 | | 34 | | 43 | | 39 | |  |

The split numbers show the shift from in-person to online programming, which reduced event and attendance numbers during calendar year 2020. Those same restrictions gave impetus to

9 [https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/38d72d751295464a994290d566e8987b.](https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/38d72d751295464a994290d566e8987b) The site was created through an internship by Nick Gayer, a student in ASU’s MAS in Geographical Information Systems (GIS).

new online event collaborations, including “Creative Horizons,” a joint speaker series with the Havighurst Center (Miami University, Ohio) and the USF Institute on Russia (University of South Florida), featuring diverse artists working in the post-Soviet context.

*Placements into Postgraduate Employment, Education or Training in Areas of National Need, and Efforts to Increase Numbers*

Alumni are powerful advocates for the quality and impact of ASU’s programming in Russian, Eurasian and East European Studies. They are also key contributors to the Center’s network of expertise and mentoring that will serve students as they craft their academic and career paths. Interviews with alumni make clear the importance they attach to the mentoring support they received, and their willingness to help the Center scale up its capacity, especially for first-generation and other students from historically under-represented groups. Through the work undertaken by the new FLAS-IMP coordinator, we will enlist alumni in an integrated campaign to inform and energize a broad base of students to pursue education and employment in areas of national need.

Placement data is provided in four tables in Appendix G.1. This includes selected data on PhD students graduating from ASU in the past decade; a sample of outcomes for diverse CLI alumni, with a focus on government and education careers focused on the region; and placement data for recent graduates from Barrett, the Honors College who wrote theses on REECA themes. It also includes an alumni survey of all 161 Title VIII fellows who attended CLI since 2011 was conducted in December 2020 and updated in December 2021. This provides data for 148, or 92% of all awardees. Over 40% are still in full-time graduate education. Of the remainder, 41 (28%) are employed at organizations focused on education and teaching: 24 (16%) work in the

private business sector, and at least 17 (11%) work for US governmental agencies. If ASU is awarded FLAS fellowships, we anticipate maintaining similar data on outcomes for all awardees.

As well as bringing more entry-level students into the study of the region, the Center will increase the numbers of students with the language and area studies skill-set to successfully pursue education and employment in areas of national need. Barrett, the Honors College (BHC) will be a key partner. BHC offers a liberal arts-style curriculum for students in any major, with the Human Event as a key humanities/social sciences core and a senior thesis requirement. The table of selected thesis writers in 2019-2021 shows that 4 had attended CLI at least once. 3 of those 4 students have begun or are bound for graduate school to pursue internationally-oriented degrees (Jamie Horowitz, Tatum James, Madeline Stull), and have won two Fulbright awards (James, Stull); and one fellowship for public service (James). Their success demonstrates the potential for the Melikian’s combination of mentoring, LCTL training and area studies teaching and research to advance student success. NRC and FLAS support will provide increased capacity to accelerate ASU’s production of graduates pursuing further degrees, and entering public service.

*Address National Need and Generate Information*

Committed to taking knowledge public, the Center solicits input on programming from faculty affiliates and advisory board members, and seeks balanced representation of topics, regions and perspectives. In 2020-21, the biggest draw was “The Russia Disruption” series co- convened with the Phoenix Committee on Foreign Relations and the Santa Fe Council on Foreign Relations, with a mean of 114 attendees at each of 4 online events. Other events over the past three years have addressed emerging global issues including authoritarian and populist pressures on independent media; the geopolitics of new transportation infrastructure in REECA

(including Nordstream 2, and China’s Belt and Road Initiative); and the politics of contested memory and invented grievances. A list of events for 2020-21, and of high-attendance events from 2018-2021, is provided in Appendix G.2.

The Center has invested in media training and support for public engagement, drawing especially on the expertise of faculty affiliate Steven Beschloss who directs ASU’s Narrative Storytelling Initiative. Foci for public engagement in 2021 included enduring challenges around transitional justice (Goodman, Peskin, Williamson), as well as political tensions in Kazakhstan and Ukraine (Hanson, Lassin). The Melikian Center seeks to foster a climate of open knowledge exchange by encouraging, acknowledging and valorizing faculty affiliate contributions to print, online and other media.[10](#_bookmark9) The outreach and communications specialist will add capacity in both public outreach (mobilizing faculty to engage pressing issues), and documenting impact.

*Evaluation Plan*

The Melikian Center is committed to the principles and practices of a learning organization. Since 2017, the Center has consistently collected data and invited or sought out input and feedback from diverse stakeholders, to guide ongoing planning and implementation and identify areas of opportunity. Besides tracking OPI scores, class enrollments, event numbers and participation, and gathering student course and instructor evaluations, the Center has gathered more granular data from its Title VIII and Project GO grantees. Surveys have been conducted with faculty and graduate student affiliates as well as the Advisory Board. In cases where grant applications have been unsuccessful, the Center has sought feedback from program officers, including access to reviewers’ comments. In 2019, Dean of Social Sciences Elizabeth

10 The Center website provides a partial picture of faculty and graduate student affiliate outreach efforts, at <https://melikian.asu.edu/news/in-the-news> and [https://melikian.asu.edu/news/taking-knowledge-public.](https://melikian.asu.edu/news/taking-knowledge-public)

Wentz piloted her model for 360 degree evaluations of Centers with the Melikian Center, and shared her observations with the Director and Advisory Board Executive Committee.

Having drawn on these sources of data to inform internal discussion and planning, the Center in 2021 began a formal evaluation exercise in consultation with an external company, MBM Learning and Evaluation Strategies, in preparation for the proposed NRC/FLAS application. The consultation generated an evaluation plan to chart progress on the program plan, including milestones and indicators for implantation of initiatives in teaching and curriculum; knowledge production; public programming, and for short-term and longer-term impact. The plan is attached in Appendix G.3, and will guide monitoring and evaluation over the course of the project. MBM personnel will conduct two site visits and in-depth evaluations during years 1 and 3.

*Equal Access and Treatment of Traditionally Underrepresented Groups*

In the years 2018-21, the Melikian has maintained its commitment to equity and inclusion, as enshrined in ASU’s charter. All events and programs are broadly advertised and accessible to all. CLI’s tuition waiver extends to all participants, opening access that is especially welcome to returning and lifelong students. Center leadership and staff have undertaken anti-bias training and are pursuing an implementation plan to contribute to University-wide efforts.

Current initiatives recognize that students and faculty in Slavic studies, despite commitments to inclusion, exhibit less racial and ethnic diversity than the broader university community of which they are part. As a start-point, responding to external evaluation received during the 2018 application for FLAS fellowships, the Center secured Advisory Board support to introduce need-based financial aid alongside need-blind merit scholarships, and began collecting

demographic data on CLI enrollment. This has permitted staff to track lower-income student representation in the applicant pool, and their rates of acceptance and attendance.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table G.2: Serving Financial Needs at CLI | | | | |
|  | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
| Applicants declaring Pell eligibility | 35 | 19 | 8 | 40 |
| Students receiving need-based award | 5 | 4 | 8 | 23 |

CLI began collecting demographic data on accepted students’ declared ethnic and racial origins in students in summer 2020. 85% of participants self-reported as white; in 2021, that percentage was slightly lower, at 81%. Across the two years, an average of 8% of participants reported as Hispanic or Latino, and smaller percentages as Black (3%) or Native American (1.3%). This provides baseline data: pursing the proposed initiatives, the goal is to reach or surpass ASU percentages (20% Hispanic or Latino; 3.5% Black or African American; 1.5% Indigenous or Native American) and close the differential from statewide percentages (31% Hispanic or Latino; 4.5% Black, and 3.9% Indigenous in 2019).

Targeted outreach efforts already launched include strengthening relationships with school districts with high Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) enrollments to raise the profile of foreign language and area studies. This includes current programming on Indigenous Russia at Westwood High School. Additionally, the Melikian Center proposes closer coordination with the USRF-funded Thinktank project, spearheaded by Howard University’s Russian program, to support BIPOC students in Slavic studies (see letter of support in Appendix 1). The Center is additionally identifying and involving BIPOC scholars and professionals, especially alumni from CLI or ASU, to assist in outreach and mentoring activities. This includes alumni sharing their career stories; guest speakers discussing systemic racism, and strategies for overcoming it; and faculty from underrepresented groups contributing to mentoring efforts. The

Center will continue to expand its repertoire of outreach and support, and continuously assess the effectiveness of programming.

FLAS fellowships will increase the overall scholarship support available for students in CLI, allowing for an increase in both merit-based and needs-based support. Impact will be evaluated by tracking both absolute increase in enrolled numbers, and a relative increase in the numbers of underrepresented groups, including BIPOC students and students with demonstrated financial need. Mentoring resources will also be directed toward sustaining engagement in language study; advising for national fellowships; and career guidance. Placement data will be collected and tracked, on the template used for Title VIII recipients since 2011.

# H (NRC). Outreach Activities

As part of its effort to change the landscape of public higher education to better serve diverse students, ASU has identified eight design aspirations. These include the goal of enhancing local impact and social embeddedness, including as a target to “strengthen Arizona's interactive network of teaching, learning and discovery resources.” The Melikian Center advances that goal through collaborations with a range of partners, including local high schools and other organizations focused on K-12 education; with Maricopa Community College District, as well as other post-secondary institutions in and beyond Arizona; and with non-profit, government and business organizations who seek to advance public understanding of the region. *K-12 Outreach*

Since 2018, the Melikian Center’s K-12 direct outreach has included work with over 200 high school students. This includes 50 8th-12th graders who took 3-week introductory Russian language and culture classes through the Department of Defense-funded STARTALK program in 2018 and 2019; and approximately 120 Tempe high school juniors and their international

exchange siblings from nine countries, who attended in-person leadership summits in 2018 and 2019 coordinated by the Melikian Center in collaboration with Tempe Sister Cities, and focusing on urban implementation of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) around the world. Both programs were suspended during Covid-19, and are projected to resume when international travel and in-person instruction are feasible. The Center continued collaboration with TSC by employing four high school interns in a public history project on the history of citizen diplomacy in Arizona, which will culminate in a museum exhibit at Tempe History Museum.[11](#_bookmark10)

From Fall 2021, the Melikian Center has partnered with Westwood High School in Mesa to develop and pilot classroom materials focused on Indigenous Russia, with the goal of broadening perspectives in Russian studies, and providing a pathway for engagement and dialogue with Native American students, a significant demographic in Arizona. Melikian Center postdoctoral fellow Jacob Lassin has already introduced new curricular modules in three classes at Westwood. The Center plans to extend this project (funded by the US Russian Foundation) to other high school districts, especially those in the Southwest serving BIPOC populations.

*Outreach to Postsecondary institutions*

At the post-secondary level, the Center collaborates with regional and national partners.

A key local partner is Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD)—the largest community college system in the USA, with ten campuses across greater Phoenix, nine of which are designated as Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). One goal of collaboration is to support MCCCD students who pursue either the Maricopa-ASU Pathways Program, which facilitates the transfer of associate degree credit toward ASU’s 4-year baccalaureate programs; or the Global

11 The Melikian Center initiated this project, because Tempe’s longest-running Sister City exchange program is with Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia. The Center took the lead in compiling a digital exhibit through Storymaps, at <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/8caf601743dd410eb026853964809e4a>

Scholars Distinction program at Paradise Valley and Glendale Community Colleges (both MSIs), built around requirements with a focus beyond the U.S.A.

The Melikian Center collaborates closely with MCCCD’s Department of International and Intercultural Education on instructor professional development and curricular internationalization. Through two day-long sessions in 2018-2019 on *The Silk Road: Past and Present Iterations*, and the four-part Fall 2021 online series *Central Asia: Global and Local Wisdom,* more than 50 instructional faculty at MCCCD Center and local high schools interacted with Melikian Center affiliates and subject matter expertise. Title VI support will deepen and extend relationships between ASU and MCCCD, by formalizing an MCCCD affiliate fellows program for 8 instructors, and providing mentoring, support and experiential opportunities for MCCCD students in the Global Scholars Distinction Program or seeking to take CLI classes.

The Melikian Center also collaborates with Arizona’s other public universities to address Arizona’s need for genocide awareness education, affirmed in legislation passed in Summer 2021. In the face of resurgent anti-semitism and denialism or amnesia regarding the Holocaust, the Melikian Center is key ally in initiatives built around Genocide Awareness Week, first held in 2013 at Scottsdale Community College. Hosted at ASU from 2022, GAW includes teacher training workshops co-designed and run by ASU history and education faculty, which have attracted an average attendance of 90 K-12 teachers each year. We anticipate that Arizona’s new legislative mandate to teach the Holocaust and other Genocides twice between 7th and 12th grades will increase demand.

*Outreach to Business, Media and the General Public*

MCREEES programming is free and open to the public. The Center maintains a mailing list of over 500 recipients, and additionally is expanding its communications to the 2,300+

alumni and friends of the Center and its Critical Languages Institute. Event e-announcements are sent to school teachers, businesses, media centers, community leaders, as well as students and faculty*.*

In recent years, two key local relationships have been with the Phoenix Council on Foreign Relations (PCFR) and with the Arizona National Guard. PCFR is Arizona’s leading organization for international affairs, with approximately 400 members, and strong connections to the business community in particular. The Melikian Center and PCFR have co-hosted several speakers and events in the past two years, and the Center is currently a gold sponsor of PCFR, extending many benefits of membership to faculty affiliates and students. PCFR and the Center will collaborate to implement the proposed oral history project which will generate intergenerational learning, and raise awareness of Phoenix’s ties in the region.

One such tie is the 30-year State Partnership Program between Arizona and Kazakhstan.

Arizona’s National Guard has supported Kazakh security forces develop capacity in peacekeeping and emergency management, and is now assisting in efforts to foster positive military-military relationships among the Central Asian countries. The Melikian Center has provided briefings to AZ National Guard units deploying to Kazakhstan, and assisted in hosting Kazakh delegations in Arizona. The Center will scale up its contributions as Kazakh, Uzbek, Tajik and Kyrgyz security forces plan and work together.

The Center also conducts outreach involving the significant heritage communities in Phoenix from Bosnia, Armenia, Albania and Kosovo and Ukraine; and other international exchange organizations including Phoenix Sister Cities, Global Ties Arizona, People to People International. Collaborating on events with these community partners significantly enhances MCREEES’ public profile and impact, and with the input of the new Outreach and

Communications specialist, we hope to maintain existing relationships and audiences, and develop new ones.

# H (FLAS). Scholarship and Fellowship Selection Procedures

ASU requests Summer and Academic Year FLAS Fellowship support to fund ASU and other graduate and undergraduate students for intensive and/or advanced study in the following less commonly taught languages of Russia, Eurasia and East Europe (REEE LCTLs): Albanian, Armenian, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BCS), Kazakh, Macedonian, Persian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Tatar, Turkish, Ukrainian, and Uzbek. All FLAS fellowships will be awarded to students studying REEE LCTLs **(FP2)**.

For both summer and AY awards, the Melikian Center will employ proven application and selection procedures. For Summer FLAS awards, the Center will use the existing ASU Terra Dotta portal, supported by ASU Study Abroad and used by the Critical Languages Institute (CLI). For Academic Year FLAS awards MCREEES will adopt the procedures used successfully since 2018 by the Center for Asian Research (CAR) in making FLAS awards

Two systems are used because the eligibility criteria for the two awards, and the timing of the application process, are different. For summer FLAS awards, the Melikian Center will consider applications for FLAS support from ASU students seeking to study either at CLI or another intensive summer program. Due to CLI’s commitment to provide broad access to high-quality intensive training in REEE LCTLs, and especially students from underrepresented groups, the Center will also consider FLAS applications from students at other postsecondary institutions to take CLI courses. ASU will make summer FLAS awards available as a priority to students enrolled in programs at HBCUs and MSIs with more limited options for LCTL study.

For the AY FLAS awards, ASU students are eligible.

*Advertising*

The summer and AY FLAS fellowship competition will be widely advertised in CLI literature, on the Center’s website and social media, through relationships with College and School advisors, at Center events, and in ASU classes taught by Center faculty

affiliates. Additional ASU outreach will be conducted in collaboration with Barrett, the Honors College, to reach students in diverse degree programs, and with the Graduate School and the Graduate Student Association. The FLAS-IMP coordinator will additionally advertise and offer regular information sessions, from October through February.

Summer FLAS fellowships will be additionally advertised through the Melikian Center's national network of alumni and allies, with a particular focus on those working closely with members of underrepresented groups, such as the group heading the Howard University-based Thinktank project. These approaches have been successful in successfully promoting and recruiting applicants for Project GO and Title VIII funding for CLI study.

*Application procedures*

The application deadline for summer 2023 FLAS awards will be Friday January 27, 2023, and a similar date in subsequent years. Applications will be processed through ASU’s Terra Dotta application system, which CLI currently uses for both admission and awards, including other federally-funded fellowships. Students will be required to submit the following application materials: 1) a student statement describing application of foreign language training to their studies and career goals; 2) a statement detailing previous language training and funding received; 3) transcripts; 4) 2 letters of reference including a language reference; and 5) confirmation of admission to either the CLI or another summer program. Students will also submit materials showing expected family contribution, to indicate financial need.

The application rubric will include the stipulation that all FLAS recipients will be U.S. citizens or permanent residents, and will be asked to confirm their status before any award is made. Students may use summer FLAS awards for approved overseas language programs, including CLI’s hybrid intensive first-year classes that offer a 4-week, 3-week overseas extension module after 8-10 credits in Tempe.

For the proposed AY FLAS awards for the first year, an application deadline of Friday May 13, 2022, will be advertised “pending budgetary approval.” In subsequent years, the AY FLAS application deadlines will match the Summer FLAS deadline in late January. This timing allows applicants to receive notification of FLAS awards before the mid-April decision deadlines set by most graduate schools. The FLAS award letter will stipulate requirements regarding enrollment in REEE language and area instruction and post-award reporting.

For AY FLAS fellowships, ASU students will apply via the center’s website at <https://melikian.asu.edu/for-students/graduate-opportunities>. The Melikian Center will add

application materials, based on the template created and used for the past 4 years by CAR. Required selection criteria include transcripts, a proficiency assessment submitted by an ACTFL trained instructor, 2 letters of recommendation, SAT/ACT or GRE scores as applicable, a 300- word self-statement about career goals, evidence of class rankings or meritorious performance, and materials showing expected family contribution, to indicate financial need. All AY FLAS recipients will be U.S. citizens, nationals, or permanent residents. FLAS recipients must maintain all eligibility requirements during their award and provide placement data for 8 years after graduation.

Applicants will initially be ranked according to academic achievement (GPA 3.0 min.). At least 33% of AY FLAS awards will be made to students with demonstrated financial need,

making this the final sorting criterion for academically-qualified applicants (**FP2**). The FLAS committee will take into account demonstrated financial need regardless of other aid. Graduate students with the proficiency of an educated native speaker in the language for which the award is sought will receive lowest priority.

Qualified students in all fields may apply. Across the course of the award, at least 20% of FLAS fellowships will be awarded to qualified students in professional degree programs. During the academic year, FLAS recipients must enroll fulltime at ASU in at least one area studies course and one approved language. To use FLAS funding abroad, a student must remain enrolled or receive transfer credit at ASU. All programs abroad must be approved in advance by IFLE. Dissertation research abroad or dissertation writing awards will require extensive and sufficient use of the FLAS language.

The Center will each year convene a FLAS Awards Committee to review both summer and AY applications. The 6-member FLAS Awards Committee will be convened by the CLI Director and staffed by the FLAS coordinator, and will include at least 2 language instructors from ASU or CLI faculty, and faculty from at least 3 units or disciplinary fields, including at least 1 from Barrett, the Honors College and one from ASU’s professional schools. Members of the awards committee will ideally serve staggered 2-year terms.

Following the regular deadline of late January, the review committee will individually provide quantitative scores for applicants in the three pools to the FLAS coordinator, who will assemble a preliminary ranking. The committee will convene before the end of February to review and approve a final ranking list. The initial announcement of the 2023 summer FLAS awards and 2023-24 AY FLAS awards will be made by Monday

March 6, 2023. As awards are accepted or declined, the committee will continue selecting candidates from the ranked list until all funds are disbursed, or the list of qualified candidates is exhausted. For the first AY FLAS awards (2023-24), an accelerated decision timeline will be followed after the May 15 application deadline, and decisions announced Monday June 6, 2023.

# I (FLAS). Competitive Priorities

To meet FLAS competitive preference priority 1, for students demonstrating financial need as indicated by the student’s expected family contribution (EFC), the Center will, in collaboration with the ASU Office of Financial Aid and Scholarship Services (OFASS), incorporate a need-based provision into its FLAS Fellowship selection formula. To qualify for need-based consideration, FLAS applicants will be required to submit to ASU an electronic copy of their FAFSA form. The ASU Office of Financial Aid and Scholarship Services (OFASS) will provide for the Center’s FLAS selection committee the EFC figure for these FLAS applicants.

FLAS selection committee members will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement assuring the privacy of this financial information. Once all other admissions criteria have been met, including proof of a competitive grade point average and previous academic success in similar coursework, as applicable, the FLAS selection committee will give preferential consideration in the awarding of FLAS Fellowships to applicants who demonstrate financial need as indicated by the students’ EFC.

With regard to competitive preference priority 2, all academic year and summer FLAS awards will support students studying LCTLs, as defined by the Center for Advanced Research in Language Acquisition. All the LCTLs for which we seek support at ASU and CLI are NSEP- preferred languages, with Russian, Turkish and Persian defined as critical NSLI languages.

# I (NRC). Program Planning and Budget

***Plan of Operation***

The Melikian Center for Russian, Eurasian and East European Studies seeks recognition as a comprehensive NRC, and to provide FLAS fellowship support for the four-year period August 2022-July 2026. Besides serving undergraduate and graduate students, both at ASU and (through CLI) across the US, the Center will also commit resources to support lifelong learning, and career readiness. Accordingly, the Melikian Center seeks Title VI support for activities which serve K-12 and community college educators and early career regional specialists, as well as reaching diverse professional and public constituencies in greater Phoenix and beyond.

Title VI funding will expand capacity in advising, teaching and K-12 outreach to increase the number of students who gain an introduction to this important world region and its cultural and linguistic diversity. FLAS fellowships, in particular, will provide support for the subset of those students who choose to pursue foreign language and area studies further, through advanced language training, study abroad, or independent research. In parallel, expanded public and professional outreach programming, built around local, national and international partnerships as well as engagement with alumni and advisory board members, will bring different constituencies into dialogue. As well as offering diverse perspectives on international affairs, students at ASU and beyond will be encouraged to explore government service and other ways to apply their knowledge in the real world.

In designing this development plan, the Melikian Center has drawn on the broader mission and vision of Arizona State University. Over the past fifteen years, ASU has sought to increase access to higher education while pursuing excellence in research and teaching. Total

enrollment has expanded to over 120,000, while four-year graduation rates have improved, graduates rank high for employability, and students achieve success in national fellowship competitions, matching up to Ivy League competitors in their success rate for Fulbright, Boren and other awards.[12](#_bookmark11) Barrett Honors students are a key contributor to this success.

The plan is organized around the four lines of effort in the abstract and the description of evaluation and monitoring. The four lines of effort central to the Center’s operations will:

1. Increase course offerings, enrollments and in-country program opportunities in 12 regional LCTLs, including proficiency-based instruction at the 300-level and beyond.
2. Infuse regional content into existing and new degree programs, and expand access to study abroad and student research opportunities.
3. Build an infrastructure of academic and career mentoring to increase diversity in the next generation of REEE experts pursuing higher degrees and/or public service.
4. Engage partners and publics in the region and beyond in the conduct and dissemination of high-quality, innovative and transdisciplinary research on cross-cutting themes.

The timeline attached in Appendix I.1 is laid out to show the sequencing and allocation of effort along these four lines of effort, by the different personnel, activities and investments described in the budget narrative. Other detailed appendices (including D.1’s list of enhanced and new ASU curricular materials) provide additional information on the overall project plan, and especially the first two lines of effort.

Besides international partnership-building; hosting national conferences and communicating research to broader publics; new graduate training programs; and active outreach

12 ASU is reported as #21 overall in the United States, and #5 among public universities for graduate employability by the Times Higher Education. [https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/graduate-](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/graduate-employability-top-universities-united-states-ranked-employers) [employability-top-universities-united-states-ranked-employers](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/graduate-employability-top-universities-united-states-ranked-employers) accessed February 2022

to members of underrepresented communities to diversify the field; two specific new cross- cutting initiatives will advance the third and fourth lines of effort. They will be propelled by the project leadership (Brown and Levin), the FLAS-IMP Coordinator and CEU Global Teaching Fellow, working with a broad coalition of faculty and students.

First, the Center will launch a multi-year collaboration with Phoenix Committee on Foreign Relations to conduct a large-scale, inclusive oral history project. Extending pilot work under the rubric “Global Arizona,” the project will support ASU, MCCCD and high school students engaged in coursework (including proposed new classes), thesis research, internships or community service with training and equipment to conduct oral historical research.

Informants/consultants will be PCFR members, who represent a wealth of international experience, knowledge and networks; and/or members of Arizona’s heritage communities with ties in Armenia, Albania, the former Yugoslavia, Poland, Romania and a number of other East European and former Soviet countries. The project is conceived with multiple goals, including knowledge-production; contributing to citizen diplomacy; and equipping diverse students with practical skills, new perspectives and access to potential mentors or support networks for future professional success. It will also raise the profile of the Center and its programs.

Second, the Melikian Center will contribute to teacher training at MCCCD by supporting eight paired peer relationships between its faculty affiliates and Maricopa Community College faculty. During each year, two MCCCD faculty will be affiliate fellows at the Melikian Center. They will design and follow a professional development plan built around 15-20 training hours provided by the Melikian Center and addressing Russian, East European or Central Asian topics and texts. In regular dialogue with their peer partner, and with access to ASU library and teaching support services, MCCCD faculty will develop curricular content for existing or new

classes. At the conclusion of their program, MCCCD affiliate fellows will have opportunities to share their curricular innovations in a range of forums, including the InterAsian Connections program; the Melikian Center’s annual graduate students training workshop; or MCCCD global forum events. Their students will also benefit from greater awareness of opportunities with the Center, including the oral history project described above, and language study through CLI. *High Quality and Directly Tied to Goals of NRC Program*

Ongoing ASU core commitment to the Melikian Center and its operations over the next four years means that the requested funds will directly target the absolute priorities established by the Department of Education, and leverage substantial additional funding. In particular, Title VI funds will complement existing ASU investments in staffing and faculty recruitment; and in student access and acquisition of foreign language proficiency and area studies expertise, through the CLI tuition waiver, graduate student support to contribute to AY FLAS awards.

The salary support requested will provide vital capacity in instruction and direct student support (Melikian Associate Director, FLAS and Internships, Mentoring and Partnerships (IMP) Coordinator, CEU Teaching Fellow, Summer CLI Instructors, Faculty supplementary pay). More than 70% of the total salary support requested supports personnel who are directly involved in instructional and/or student advising roles. These funds directly contribute to the four lines of effort of the program. The balance of the salary support requested complements ASU’s investments in administration (Melikian Director, Program Manager, Graduate Student assistant), and advances increased outreach and communications efforts essential to the overall effort (Communications and Outreach specialist).

The funding requested for K-12, Community College, professional and public outreach, curricular enhancement, and for conference and workshop programming, directly contribute to

the two absolute priorities established by the Secretary. By supporting initiatives anchored in MSIs and HBCUs, they also advance the competitive priority set for NRC. FLAS fellowships for REEE LCTLS–including languages identified as critical for US security by government agencies (Russian, Turkish, Persian), alongside languages vital for qualitative research and reciprocal understanding–further advance AP1, and will be awarded in compliance with both FLAS competitive preference priorities.

*Cost-Effectiveness and Direct Impact of Requested Funding*

In all the proposed uses of federal support, the Melikian Center will leverage other funding—from internal ASU sources, cost-sharing, or philanthropy—to extend the impact of Title VI funding. Within the substantial investments made by ASU in Center staffing and affiliated faculty, support for the entire contribution by the Center Director to administering and leading the NRC, and for further commitment of effort by the key staff identified above, represents an ASU contribution of over $700,000 over the course of the project. A conservative estimate of resources directly complementing funds requested for NRC programming, is

$86,500. The requested FLAS Fellowship support will be supplemented by the Graduate School’s tuition discount on out-of-state tuition, as well as ASU’s tuition remission for all FLAS awardees. The indicative figure for ASU contribution is again calculated conservatively at

$826,000 for the 70 summer FLAS fellows, and 20 high school and Community College scholarship recipients gaining 8-13 college credits through the Critical Languages Institute. Title VI funding, then, directly leverages $1,621,078 in ASU contributions to the program.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Table I.1 Additional funds directly leveraged by Title VI support | | |
| Type of Funds | NRC/FLAS  Total Requested | Projected ASU  Direct Match/ Contribution |
| Faculty and Administrative Support | $763,693 | $708,578 |
| Discretionary Spending | $226,308 | $86,500 |
| Student Support (FLAS awards) | $1,116,000 | $826,000 |
| TOTAL | $2,106,000 | $1,621,078 |

*Long-term Impact*

Title VI Funding will build on multi-year commitments in REECA studies at ASU to have a significant and enduring impact on undergraduate and graduate training programs. By supporting the sequenced launch of high-quality intermediate and advanced level LCTL courses, and providing fellowship support for students from a range of institutions, programs of study, and socio-economic backgrounds, NRC and FLAS support from the Department of Education will combine to maintain and extend ASU’s Critical Languages Institute as a national resource for a diverse cohort of talented and motivated language learners. The high-quality language training, career mentoring and international experience provided will enhance students’ qualifications for advanced study in the field, and their preparation for careers in public service.

The programs will also firmly integrate language and non-language learning at ASU, enhancing both undergraduate and graduate programs. Anchored in curriculum development to expand course offerings with regional content, the investments will open pathways for students to build regional expertise not only in the social sciences, humanities and arts, but also in business, journalism, education and the applied sciences. Area studies at ASU will cut across conventional disciplinary borders, and provide students with diverse perspectives and key transferable research, writing and collaborative skills. As well as increasing the number of students completing the coherent and focused certificate program, Department of Education

funding will support faculty professional development that raises awareness of the value of regional context for disciplinary or technical knowledge-production. In the short-term, products will include new curricula and faculty-generated modules used in learning environments from high school classrooms through to postdoctoral professionalization workshops.

After soliciting feedback from audiences and also communication professionals, The Melikian Center website was redesigned in 2020-21, upgrading content to address areas of national need and include faculty-generated blogs and videos, curricular materials and resources, and timely commentary on pressing issues in the region. Part of the role of the incoming outreach and advising coordinator will be to monitor the impact of ongoing programs, and solicit further input from partners on areas of particular interest to their constituencies.

**J. Competitive Preference Priority (NRC)**

The Melikian Center’s project will be implemented at a multi-campus University with two campuses designated as Hispanic-serving Institutions (ASU-Downtown campus, and ASU- West). In addition, it will involve close partnership with three Community Colleges in the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD), all three of which are also designated as HSIs (Glendale CC, Mesa CC, and Paradise Valley CC). A key component of the proposal, as laid out in the letter of support from Nellie Torres in Appendix 1, is professional development for instructors, which will be implemented in collaboration with MCCCD’s Office of International and Intercultural Education, and include formal affiliation with ASU for eight MCCCD faculty, as well as broader shared programming and network building to extend MCCCD students’ exposure to content from and perspectives on Russia, Eurasia and East Europe. ASU will also collaborate with Howard University, an HBCU, to strengthen peer and mentoring networks among REECA students from under-represented groups. Howard

University’s letter of support, anticipating BIPOC students progressing from the Thinktank Initiative to intensive language study at CLI, is also included in Appendix 1.[13](#_bookmark12)

13 All six campuses/institutions identified here are included in the list of MSIs at <https://orise.orau.gov/msipp/documents/approved-msi-school-list.pdf>