

ASU among first US universities to partner in global Ukrainian studies effort

At a New York event, ASU joined a coalition of over 100 universities committed to advancing knowledge and countering misinformation

By Jaik Havlick, ASU News
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Arizona State University was among five of the first universities in the United States to sign a memorandum of understanding last week at “Ukrainian Studies Now: Building Global Alliances,” a special event in New York City on Wednesday with Olena Zelenska, first lady of Ukraine, marking its induction into the Global Coalition of Ukrainian Studies.

Part of the first lady of Ukraine’s broader academic diplomacy efforts to improve Ukrainian studies across the globe, the Global Coalition of Ukrainian Studies seeks to improve public and academic knowledge on Ukrainian society, dispelling myths and preventing the spread of misinformation among the current geopolitical crisis in the region.

Launched by the first lady last year, the coalition has so far brought together over 100 universities worldwide, but none in the U.S. until earlier this week.

Among those in attendance were Dan Rice, president of the ASU-powered [American University Kyiv](#), which currently enrolls 700 students, and ASU’s executive vice president and university provost, Nancy Gonzales.

“ASU takes great pride in being among the first universities in the U.S. to join an international coalition of universities dedicated to protecting the historical and cultural accuracy of Ukraine through the teaching and research of Ukrainian studies,” Gonzales said. “It was my distinct honor to celebrate this historic MOU¹ alongside Olena Zelenska, the first lady of Ukraine. We are committed to advancing her mission of advancing academic diplomacy.”

The MOU is another chapter in ASU's longstanding relationship with the nation and people of Ukraine. With the [McCain Institute](#), ASU has helped support delegations to Ukraine, sending defense-technology business leaders, democracy experts and bipartisan Congressional senior staff to the region, making contact with Ukrainian counterparts and laying foundations for deals in business and politics.

With its [Melikian Center for Russian, Eurasian and East European Studies](#), ASU has offered classes in the Ukrainian language, provided funding for student and faculty research projects that focus on the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War, and hosted public facing events to raise awareness about the conflict over the past several years.

Also in attendance was Craig Calhoun, University Professor of Social Sciences and board president of the Melikian Center, which, through its Critical Languages Institute, has provided intensive Ukrainian language education to over 40 students in the past five years, including 10 foreign language and area studies students and 11 Title VIII Fellows.

ASU's continued commitment to furthering critical Ukraine-related education was also appreciated by members of the Ukrainian community in Arizona, including Oli Nevinska, founder of the Ukrainian Prostir UA foundation and of Bra?very Boutique, a platform promoting Ukrainian designers in the U.S. market, who was also in attendance.

"For me, this step represents a powerful commitment to supporting Ukraine not just in the present moment, but in shaping the future through education and research," said Nevinska, who is also the Arizona and New Mexico delegation leader for the American Coalition for Ukraine. "It's about ensuring that Ukrainian voices, experiences and knowledge are heard and integrated globally.

"I see it as both a responsibility and an opportunity for ASU to stand with Ukraine by fostering collaboration, building understanding and preparing future generations to engage with these critical issues."

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

¹ Memorandum of understanding

Main image



University Provost Nancy Gonzales stands with Olha Budnyk, advisor-commissioner of the president of Ukraine on the Presidential Foundation for Support of Education, Science, and Sports. Courtesy photo

Gallery



University leaders stand with signed MOUs to commemorate the partnership.



Nancy Gonzales signs ASU's MOU.



Nancy Gonzales and Olha Budnyk sign the MOU.



An event attendee reads the program for Ukrainian Studies Now, in which five U.S. universities are joining the Global Coalition for Ukrainian Studies.



Olena Zelenska, first lady of Ukraine, provides her remarks during the Ukrainian Studies Now event.