

Kraków, December 15 2014


On behalf of the International Association for Polish Studies I share deep concern about the budget cuts that threaten the University of Amsterdam, and in particular its Slavic Department. If implemented according to plan, the cuts lead to a substantial reduction of the department, as part of the 98 fte cutback that Amsterdam's Humanities Faculty needs to realize. In a future scenario proposed by the Faculty Board, the Slavic Department is asked to transform three of its four BA programs into minor-sized tracks. With this letter I ask you to support the department, as a reduction of its program and personnel would be a major loss in both academic and societal terms.

Amsterdam's Slavic department ranks among the leading institutions in Slavic studies. The team is internationally renowned for its success in combining in-depth region knowledge with pioneering scholarship in new media, visual & performing arts, sociolinguistics, language contact, dialectology, and postcolonial studies. Staff members closely cooperate with partners in eminent academic programs in linguistics, literature, theatre, and art across Europe (Bergen, Cambridge, Copenhagen, Edinburgh, Ghent, Leeds, Leiden, London, Manchester, Moscow, Passau, Potsdam, Prague, Rijeka, St. Petersburg, Tromso, Warsaw, Zagreb), Australia (New South Wales), and the US (Chicago, Detroit, Kansas, Princeton, Yale).

In addition to this sturdy academic profile, the Slavic Department is acclaimed for its active cooperation with journalists, curators, filmmakers, writers, artists, translators, and designers. It hosts an unusually vivid extra-curricular program – consisting, in November 2014 alone, of 5 operas, 32 papers & public lectures, 1 film screening, and 1 concert. These and other department-hosted events attract up to hundreds of visitors. Thanks to the staff's robust use of social media, its activities have repeatedly been forwarded as best (PR, social-impact, and teaching) practices within the faculty. The specialized knowledge of both the staff and its alumni is actively used by media, commercial partners, (academic as well non-fiction, fiction, and dictionary) publishers, police, (national and European) governments, museums, and embassies. This knowledge plays a crucial role in fostering ties between the Netherlands and the societies and economies of South and Central Eastern Europe and Russia.

The UvA's Slavic Department, in short, supplies region expertise to an international, transdisciplinary academic community, whose members mutually enrich one another's research and teaching practices; *and* it caters to a diverse pool of local and foreign societal partners. Drastic cuts in its program and staff would be a huge blow to the university and these external partners alike. We therefore urge you to maximally support this important academic, cultural, and social institution, whose in-depth expertise is indispensable to multiple academic and public stakeholders.

On behalf of the International Association for Polish Studies



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