



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Offshore and Cross-Border Programs

Preliminary Application Form

for review by the Office of the Vice President for International Affairs

Please provide the following information:

Indiana University Contact

Name and Rank/Title: Jeffrey Veidlinger, Professor of History and Director of Borns Jewish Studies Program

Department/Division and School: Jewish Studies Program, College of Arts and Sciences

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Foreign Partner Institution

Contact Name: Professor Sarunas Liekis

Unit: Director, Vilnius Yiddish Institute

City: Vilnius

Country: Lithuania

Please answer the following questions:

1. Provide a one page program description summarizing the academic fields and activities involved in the proposed program, whether for credit or not-for-credit instruction, arrangements for delivery of instruction or services, the intended recipients of the program, services to be provided by the partner(s), if any, the numbers of IU faculty and students involved and the likely duration of the program.

We propose a partnership between the Vilnius Yiddish Institute of Vilnius University (VYI) and the Borns Jewish Studies Program of Indiana University. The partnership will result in the creation of an Indiana University/Vilnius University Yiddish Institute. This partnership will involve faculty, student and research cooperation.

Indiana University has an internationally recognized reputation as a leader in the study of Eastern European Jewish life and of Yiddish (the traditional language of Eastern European Jews) in particular. The Robert A. and Sandra S. Borns Jewish Studies Program holds the Alice Field Cohn Chair in Yiddish Studies, currently held by Professor Dov-Ber Kerler, and also includes among its faculty Professor Jeffrey Veidlinger, the Alvin H. Rosenfeld Chair in Jewish Studies and a scholar of East European Jewry. IU's Russian and East European Institute is also one of the leading national resource centers for the study of Eastern Europe.

Vilnius Yiddish Institute at Vilnius University was established in 2001 by the American Friends of Vilnius Yiddish Institute in affiliation with Vilnius University. It is the first Yiddish center of higher learning to be established in post-Holocaust Eastern Europe. Inspired by its unique location in Vilnius, the once fabled "Jerusalem of Lithuania" and the heartland of Yiddish language scholarship and literary activity, the Institute cherishes the hope of nurturing new cultural contributions in Yiddish. The VYI hosts an intensive four week summer language program in Yiddish, offers courses in Yiddish and East European Jewish culture throughout the academic year with accreditation through Vilnius University, and supports several research activities and publication ventures.

After many years of informal cooperation between individual members of the IU faculty and individual members of the VYI, we seek to formalize these relations with the establishment of a joint-program on an institutional level. This program would draw upon the strengths of both units to further the study of Eastern European and Jewish culture.

Faculty: IU professors will regularly teach at the VYI's summer language program and have the opportunity to take part in other exchanges, including semester and academic year visits, with VYI. VYI faculty will also have the opportunity to teach relevant courses at IU. Professor Dov-Ber Kerler of IU already teaches at the VYI summer program. The proposed partnership would formalize this relationship and provide opportunities for one or two other IU faculty to teach courses at VYI. We would also like to invite VYI faculty to IU for semester or year-long exchanges.

Students: Graduate and undergraduate students from IU will be able to receive IU credit for summer language courses taken at VYI. Graduate student exchanges will also be established between IU and VYI, allowing IU students to receive credit for semester and year-long courses taken at VYI and vice versa. Already seven students (six graduates and one undergraduate) from IU have taken part in the VYI Summer Program over the last three years. In addition to the Summer Program, IU students could take courses in the Minority Studies program offered by the VYI through Vilnius University. A formal partnership would facilitate these students receiving IU credit for the courses they take and would encourage additional IU students to take advantage of this opportunity. We would also like to invite VYI students to embark upon exchanges with IU, or

to matriculate into IU graduate programs. One IU graduate student has already come to IU after completing an MA in Vilnius University and having taken courses at the VYI summer program.

Research: The NEH-funded IU project “The Archives of Historical and Ethnographic Yiddish Memories,” co-directed by Dov-Ber Kerler and Jeffrey Veidlinger, was initially established in cooperation with Dovid Katz of the VYI. It was envisioned that this archive, which consists of about 800 hours of videotaped interviews with Yiddish-speakers in Eastern Europe, would be combined with the approximately 1500 hours of videotape on similar themes held by the VYI in order to create duplicate research collections at the two institutions. We hope that closer partnership on an institutional level would better facilitate the sharing of information and joint publications on the material.

The periodical collection of Yiddish scholarship, *Yerusholaymer almanakh*, edited by IU’s Dov-Ber Kerler, is currently published under the imprint of the Vilnius Yiddish Institute with financial support from the Borns Jewish Studies Program. The proposed partnership would formalize this relationship and promote the joint-publication of additional Yiddish-language scholarship.

We expect to hold joint conferences between the two institutions.

Funding: The VYI is currently supported by an annual campaign conducted by the Friends of the Vilnius Yiddish Institute, an independent, US-tax exempt organization based out of Santa Monica, CA. The proposed partnership would allow for the establishment of a permanent endowment at the Indiana University Foundation to support the Indiana University/Vilnius University Yiddish Institute.

2. Provide a brief account of what initiated planning for the program and what discussions have occurred (and among whom) in developing the proposal.

Professor Dov-Ber Kerler, Cohn Chair in Yiddish Studies at Indiana University, was closely involved with the establishment of Yiddish studies in Vilnius since 1998 and has remained involved with the VYI since its inception. He currently serves on the VYI’s Honorary Board of Directors and has taught at the Vilnius Yiddish Institute Educators’ Training Program since 2005. The IU NEH-funded project, the Archives of Historical and Ethnographic Yiddish Memories, co-directed by Kerler and Professor Jeffrey Veidlinger, also began in cooperation with Dovid Katz of the Vilnius Yiddish Institute. As Yiddish has expanded at Indiana University, seven IU students (six graduates and one undergraduate) have studied at the VYI’s Summer Language Program in the last three years. Indiana University has also recruited graduate students who received earlier degrees from the Institute. Thus, relations between the two institutes on an informal level are longstanding.

The VYI is now looking to establish a partnership with an American university. Professor Kerler was first approached by Sarunas Liekis, the VYI’s Director, to see if IU was interested in pursuing a partnership. Professor Kerler suggested that Professor Liekis be in contact with Professor Jeffrey Veidlinger, the Director of the Borns Jewish Studies Program. On November 11, 2009 Professor Liekis sent an email proposing a joint Indiana and VYI Yiddish Summer Program, study visits to Bloomington and Vilnius by students, exchange of faculty (including Fulbright opportunities), joint organization of conferences and seminars, joint publication of *Yerusholaymer Almanakh*, joint catalog of AHEYM and On-Site Survivor materials, and financial cooperation. This email was followed by a phone call between Professor Liekis and Veidlinger. On November 25, 2009 Professor Veidlinger also spoke by phone with Richard Maullin, President of the Friends of Vilnius Yiddish Institute and Chair of the Board of Vilnius Yiddish Institute. Dr. Maullin indicated his support for the proposal and suggested the establishment of an endowment at the IU Foundation that would support the partnership.

3. Is the proposed partner a peer institution that complements IU's strengths and ranking? If the institution is not highly ranked, please explain why this partner was selected over other organizations.

Founded in 1579, Vilnius University is the premiere institute of higher education in Lithuania. All instruction in Jewish Studies at Vilnius University is offered through the Vilnius Yiddish Institute. Vilnius University provides accreditation for courses offered at the VYI and rents space to the VYI. The Director of the VYI is a tenured member of the faculty of Vilnius University.

4. How does the partnership meet IU's strategic interests? Are there other program rationales?

Collaboration with Vilnius University will increase IU's visibility and prestige in one of the most dynamic regions of Europe. Surprisingly, according to IU's Register of International Exchange Agreements, this would represent the first linkage between Indiana University and an institute in Lithuania. The strong curricular match between the VYI and IU, particularly in relation to the Borns Jewish Studies Program and the Russian and East European Institute, will facilitate a range of academic activities. The proposed partnership will expand IU study abroad opportunities and enhance collaboration between IU and East European scholars. The VYI consistently attracts bright Eastern European students with an interest in exploring the lost Jewish heritage of the region. We expect the collaboration to help recruit highly qualified international students to IU.

The collaboration will meet IU's strategic interests as outlined in the 2008 International Strategic Plan by 1) increasing participation in study abroad programs, particularly in an underrepresented geographic region; 2) providing improved incentive to both faculty and students for participation in study abroad; 3) helping attract top quality international students and facilitate; 4) providing new resources and approaches for research collaboration; 5) enhancing and improving language instruction and 6) encourage interdisciplinary collaboration through a focus on a select thematic area of global interest.

5. What are the benefits to the partner organization or institution of the proposed program?

The VYI will benefit from the proposed program by providing opportunities for its faculty and students to study at IU. The establishment of an endowment at the Indiana University Foundation will also better facilitate fundraising operations in the United States to ensure the continuation of the institute.

6. How will the program contribute to enhanced IU faculty and graduate student research, teaching and engagement?

7. If this agreement involves sending Indiana University undergraduate and graduate students abroad, have you contacted the Overseas Study Advisory Council (OSAC) <http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/policies/administration.shtml> ?

8. If this affiliation involves hosting international students, staff or scholars at IU, have you contacted the Office of International Services for IUB and other campuses or Office of International Affairs for IUPUI to discuss U.S. immigration policies and procedures that will impact your international guests? (Please note that information regarding international services is located here:

OVPIA: <http://www.indiana.edu/~intlerv/>

OIA-IUPUI: <http://international.iupui.edu/SS/>

9. What source(s) of funding will be required to carry out the proposed program? In what ways would IU be protected from financial loss if the program proves financially unsustainable?

The program will be funded by an endowment to be established by the Friends of Vilnius Yiddish Institute at the Indiana University Foundation.

10. How will IU academic standards be applied to student admissions, course content, grading and similar matters?

A member of the IU faculty will remain on the board of directors of the VYI. We also expect for IU faculty to continue to participate in the summer program. In addition to the annual report of activities, we will conduct an extensive review of the relationship every five years.

11. What is the expected duration of this agreement?

We will begin with a five-year agreement, with the expectation that the program continue indefinitely if it receives proper funding.

Start Date:

End Date:

Signature of Submitting Faculty Member

Date

AUTHORIZATIONS:

Chair

Date

Dean/Division Head

Date

(Please complete Dean's statement below)

For IUPUI applications, the Application Form and Draft Agreement should be sent to the Office of International Affairs for routing to OVPIA

Dean's Statement:

The Dean or Division Head of the IU school that is submitting the application for a new or renewed international affiliation agreement should provide a statement below indicating the following:

- The importance of the proposed affiliation for the school;
- The academic and financial resources that the school will provide to support the exchange;
- The importance of this affiliation to the school in comparison to its other international exchange relationships, either currently existing or planned.

Dean/Division Head

Date