

**Institute of Social Work and Counseling  
Moscow, Russia**

15 June 2013  
v.1.2

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Department of Social Work at the Russian Orthodox University  
of St. John the Divine.

As part of ROU (the Russian Orthodox University of St. John the Divine), we held our first academic conference: "International Dialog on Theory and Practice of Social Work - A Competency Approach", a theme which reflects the movement in the USA and Western Europe beyond an emphasis on desired outcomes to a broader emphasis on domains of competency which integrate theoretical learning with practical outcomes. The purpose of the conference was to initiate a public, academic discussion that will move toward establishing a national professional standard, but perhaps more important



**Father Rodion, Bishop Panteleimon, and Dr. Firsov**

was the ensuing dialogue between our faculty and the Orthodox hierarchs who will ultimately decide questions of theory and practice in our university. In our cooperative and subordinate relationship to the church, we took a key step forward.

The conference was chaired by our Social Work department chair, Dr. Mikhail Firsov; Bishop Panteleimon of Orekhovo-Zuyevo, chairman of the Russian Orthodox Church's synod of charitable works and social ministry, and Igumen (Abbot) Peter, the rector of our university. Professors from Russian universities in Orel, Tver, and three schools in Moscow were joined by Dr. Lanny Endicott from Oral Roberts University, Dr. David Cecil from Asbury University. Students and staff from the university and from the Orthodox Church also attended.

During the conference Bishop Panteleimon requested a follow-up strategy meeting with our chair, Dr. Firsov. Then after the conference, our faculty leadership met with Igumen Peter, our rector, who expressed his gratitude for our part in gaining the bishop's interest, whose involvement Fr. Peter had been trying to inspire for more than a year.

We then discussed developing our department's lead role in social work education and practice among six Orthodox universities nationwide, a consortium that Patriarch Kirill plans to initiate during the next year. The conference was the first substantive personal contact between our faculty and its governing hierarchs. Cooperative contact with and support from church leadership is vital to our purpose because recent history and current trends suggest that when the federal government finally establishes and funds a national social policy, it will look to the Russian Orthodox Church to play a key role in its implementation. Because the profession of social work was born in during perestroika, Russian academia is still forming its educational standards and the government is working to form operational standards for the field. During the Soviet years, "social workers" were merely the caretakers who fed the residents, mopped the floors, and changed the linens in government facilities. The "profession" did not exist as a proponent of social policy, reform, and progress. Our mission at ROU is to establish the



**Igumen (Abbot) Peter, Rector (Chancellor) of the University**

social work profession, and to educate and train a cadre of Christian workers, advocates, and leaders. Therefore, we consider the conference, including our subsequent meetings with Bishop Panteleimon and Igumen Peter, a key step forward.

In meeting with our rector, Igumen Peter, we agreed to move immediately to create Documents of Understanding between our university, ROU of St. John, and the universities of Drs. Endicott and Cecil. Igumen Peter would like to see a broad

agreement encouraging faculty and student exchange across a broad range of faculties, including economics, law, psychology, as well as social work.



**Social Work Students, Faculty and Guests: Lanny Endicott, Shawn Monier, David Cecil**

15 June 2013, Ministry Update from the Institute of Social Work and Counseling

In concurrent meetings with our major church partner in Moscow, Word of Life, we outlined for Pastor Mats-Ola Ishoel the ways we can provide continued education and training for his church workers while offering continuing education credits at ROU or completion certificates with ORU. In June we will complete our first Continuing Education module taught at the church with 16 of 22 students meeting requirements for academic credit. These students will continue their training as in-church counselors next fall. Our Spring Semester ended with our the Institute's second graduation ceremony as 10 students

received professional development diplomas in Social Rehabilitation, our two-year program in substance abuse and codependency rehabilitation, similar to a what many in the USA know as Celebrate Recovery, a Christian 12-Step program.



**Graduation, Social Rehabilitation Diploma Program**

This summer our main challenges will be recruitment and selection of a new first year class at the university, preparation to launch our first distance education webinar in the fall, and a consolidation of the institute's course offerings to correspond with local church needs and the desire of continuing education students to receive academic credit from one of our collaborative education partners - ROU St. John's, Moscow and certificate of completion from ORU, Tulsa, Oklahoma. We also begin to prepare for an extensive audit of our accreditation by the federal Ministry of Education next November.

We thank you for your interest and support in what we are doing. We remain entirely supported by our students' tuition payments and your generous contributions. We thank God for the successful transition He has given us and for our progress towards an operational budget balanced upon student funds only.

We train Christian counselors and church leaders in the best techniques of social work and psychological counseling. Our approach to soul care is biblical and Christ-centered and we are working in partnership with both the Orthodox and Protestant churches in

Russia through the Russian Orthodox University and the Institute for Social Work and Counseling.



**Dr. Ruslan Nadyuk (l) with Mikhail Pimenov of the Russian non-profit "Family"**

Work in Progress

We are developing this newsletter as well as our Russian language web site:

[www.исрк.рф](http://www.исрк.рф)

Please contact us at the email addresses listed above or at:

[instswc@gmail.com](mailto:instswc@gmail.com)

Prayer Requests, Institute of Social Work and Counseling, Moscow, 3 April 2013

(1) THANKSGIVING for a successful conference at the University, for concluding our first cooperative module with Oral Roberts University at the Institute, for budget solvency as the Spring Semester ends, and for the graduation of students from our two-year Social Rehabilitation program.

(2) CONTINUING NEED. For the successful recruitment of students for our Fall programs at the University and the Institute.

(3) CONTINUING NEED. For visas for the Curries through the University. Our Orthodox directors have approved this, but the paperwork must be pushed through and this is a "first time" process for University staff.

(4) CONTINUING NEED. For an effective and affordable distance education launch with Graduate interns next Fall.

(5) For implementation of a separate cooperative agreements between ROU and the two American universities who were represented at our Moscow conference, Oral Roberts and Asbury.

(6) For work and ministry opportunities for our graduates.

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