Once again, the US Department of Education has designated the Russian and East European Institute as a Title VI National Resource Center (NRC) and provider of Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships for Russian and East European Studies, the result of a successful grant proposal submitted in June, 2018. These awards extend an unbroken streak of successful Title VI proposals on the part of REEI that date to the establishment of Title VI in 1958.

At REEI’s fall reception, REEI Director Sarah Phillips happily announced that “the next four years of NRC funding will allow REEI to continue important outreach programs to a variety of constituencies, including primary and secondary school teachers and students, and forge a plethora of new programs and partnerships to boost knowledge on the REE region across Indiana, the country, and the world.” With this four-year funding package, REEI will launch several new initiatives, both on and off the IU Bloomington campus.

A new lecture series entitled “The Americanists” will explore Soviet/Russian American Studies and feature presentations at IU by Russia-based practitioners in a partnership with IU Departments of American Studies, and African-American and African Diaspora Studies that will also highlight Russian/Soviet histories of people of color and negotiations of diversity in the Russian/Soviet region.” In collaboration with IU’s Inner Asian and Uralic National Resource Center and the East Asiana Studies Center, REEI will participate in the launching of “Networks, Flows, and Displacements across Eurasia in the 21st Century,” an annual workshop that will bring in outside experts to guide IU faculty and graduate students in exploration of the complex flows and displacements that shape politics, trade, daily life, and popular culture from China to Eastern Central Europe.

REEI will also create a specialized Indiana Russian East European Network (IREEN) to facilitate teaching and research collaborations in Russian and East European studies at Indiana’s 14 public Institutes of Higher Education, 4 of which are minority serving institutions. Beyond the state of Indiana, REEI and IAURNC will collaborate on two significant outreach projects to bolster and enhance the study of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia at minority serving and other US institutions of higher learning. The Bluegrass State Intelligence Community Center of Academic Excellence (BGS IC CAE) in Kentucky will promote studies of technology and security with the aid of Professor Scott Shackelford from the Kelly School of Business, an expert on Russian-Estonian cyber warfare, who will lead BGS IC CAE students on an intelligence and security-focused 10-day study tours of Estonia. In a partnership with Montana State University (MSU) in Bozeman, Montana, REEI and IAUNRC will aim to foster interest in the REE
region and lay the groundwork for programs that will enable MSU students to travel to Siberia and Siberian students to visit Montana.

In addition to supporting new initiatives, students and faculty, the NRC grant will enable REEI to grow the Russian and East European collection at Wells Library, already one of the leading Russian and East Europe collections in the country, provide funds to expand curricular offerings in Russian and East European area studies, and support the teaching of less-commonly-taught East European languages at the Summer Language Workshop.

The ample Foreign Language and Area Studies grant will provide funds to support several graduate and undergraduate students in the study of Russian and East European languages during the academic year and the summer with fellowships and scholarship that cover tuition and living costs over the next four years.

The Title VI awards testify to the accomplishment and dedication of REEI’s faculty, students, staff, and alumni. We are grateful for the hard work of faculty and staff that have contributed to the success of REEI’s proposal, which will enable REEI to further pursue its essential role in helping to teach the languages of our area, supporting the research and pedagogical work of faculty, funding outstanding students of Russia and Eastern Europe, and making important contributions to the knowledge of our area in the broader community, both near to Bloomington and nationwide.