

International Students Learning about Russia

The adaptation of foreign citizens who come to study at Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University is an important part of the work of the Institute of International Educational Programs (IIEP).



The adaptation program includes communicative events aimed at introducing the traditions of other countries, themed nights and meetings, classes on Russian language and literature, and tours that help students discover what's so special about our country and communicate effectively with representatives of different ethnic groups.

"Short tours around St. Petersburg as well as longer trips encourage students to study and help them adapt successfully to the new environment," the IIEP professors believe.

In late April – May 2016, professors voluntarily organized several cultural trips for the international students of the IIEP.



They first traveled to Veliky Novgorod to see beautiful landmarks, masterpieces of wooden architecture, and the Cathedral of St. Sophia, take a walk along the banks of the Volkhov River and down the city streets. During the classes on history, geography, and Russian language, the students learned a lot about the history of the ancient Novgorod. The hospitable city was excited to welcome the foreign guests. On the day of their arrival, the weather was magnificent, and the sun shone bright. The students were impressed by the stories told by the tour guide, who was showing them iconic places all day long. Having returned home, the students wrote short essays about the trip. A lot of them admitted they would love to visit the city again. For example, IIEP student Igor Malakhov, who is enrolling at the Institute of Civil Engineering this year, pointed out the architecture of Novgorod and a particular building style that preserves the integrity of the city space and adds a historical meaning to it.



Following lectures on mineral resources, the students visited the Sablinsky caves. They learned that these caves are a unique natural site that is basically an underground labyrinth with lakes and huge caverns that spans over dozens of kilometers. Quartz sand used in the glass industry has been extracted from these caves for 150 years. The famous Imperial crystal was made from this sand. In winter, hundreds of bats live in the Sablinsky caves. These harmless creatures often scare the visitors. However, the guides say they are not to be feared. They create a special atmosphere and carry numerous tourists away to the mysterious world of the past.



"The international students enjoyed the tour. They were surprised to see such an amazing place in the Leningrad Region and advised their fellow students to visit the Sablinsky caves," said P. S. Nedelko, Assistant Professor at the Department of International Students Training of the IIEP.

Students from other countries are also interested in everything related to the life and work of Russian poet Alexander Pushkin, as indicated by a two-day trip to Pushkinskiye Gory. The work of Alexander Pushkin is an obligatory part of the educational program on Russian language and literature. Students enjoy reading his poems and visiting places that the poet frequented. Mikhaylovskoye and Petrovskoye estates are some of such inspirational, secluded, sunny sanctuaries. The international students could feel that everything there is imbued with the talent of Alexander Pushkin. According to them, in Pushkinskiye Gory one can feel the true love to Russia, and acceptance of the world where everyone is the author of his own success.



A trip to Verkhnie Mandrogi was another fascinating journey. The keepers of ancient Russian customs told legends about the life, rituals, and beliefs of our ancestors, and introduced their guests to the arts of woodcarving, weaving, lacemaking, and textile painting. The ancient Russians weaved the tapestry of history, and we are now able to get our hands on it due to the respect of the historical memory. Don't forget the delicious bakery! Every student had the opportunity to appreciate the culinary skills of the hosts.

"Harmonious personal development determines the desire for new knowledge, cultural awareness, and dedication to the job at hand. We help foreigners learn more about St. Petersburg and discover iconic places in the Leningrad Region and other major cities of our homeland. They start to feel at home being in Russia, show progress in their studies and promote Russian language and literature back in their home countries. This is extremely important for the improvement of the public image of our university abroad," concluded IIEP Director A. M. Alexankov.

Many students today are thinking about where they will go next. Summer is a great time for leisurely promenades and unforgettable adventures. The students have discovered St. Petersburg and had the time to explore the city. But the most exciting part is yet to come!

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