



COUNCIL FOR THE SUPPORT OF POLISH STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY
OF TORONTO

*KOMITET WSPIERANIA POLSKICH STUDIÓW NA UNIWERSYTECIE
TORONTOSKIM*

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November, 2022

My Dear Friends,

This year's events in Ukraine have been all too familiar to Canadians of Polish heritage. The struggle for freedom, against czarist, Bolshevik, or authoritarian regimes such as Putin's, is as existential for Poles as it is for today's Ukrainians. Never has it been more important to understand Polish history, language, and culture and apply that understanding to today's events, of which Poland has warned the international community for several years.

As the world enters this new and more dangerous period, it has much to learn from us. In 1920, after 123 years of partition and geographic erasure, a reborn Poland saved an exhausted Europe from being overrun by the Red Army. In World War Two, the heroic contributions of Poland's servicemen and women and of its scientists, intelligence operatives, and resistance fighters were never globally acknowledged, and we continue our efforts as a culture to make this known. Why is this important now?

Since Poland's entry to the EU and NATO, Poland has worked hard to secure its place among free nations. Poland's stalwart support of Ukraine has advanced her status as a leader in Europe and gained the admiration of allies. But time and time again, a lack of historical context and understanding of The Polish experience has exacted a terrible, though avoidable, price on the global community, a price that Germany recently acknowledged.

Polish Studies at the University of Toronto is the best place to not only teach language and culture but to provide an understanding of Poland's increasing prominence in the changing global environment.

Your donations have never been more critical. This year our donors responded to the call with an increase in the overall level of their donations. We would gratefully like to acknowledge a donation of \$15,000 from the late Zofia and Professor Florian Śmieja. Let us build on this momentum. Our community has an opportunity to help Poland achieve its aims on the international stage and to prepare our youth with the cultural and linguistic tools to live, work and contribute to Poland should they choose. That is why I am asking for your continued generous support.

Kindest Regards,

Tadeusz Opitz
Chair

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A Report from Dr. Agnieszka Jeżyk

Here at the University of Toronto, 2022 proved to be a year of uncertainty marked by changing modes of course delivery. However, as our institutions gradually re-opened, and pandemic restrictions lifted, it also became a time of hope for a return to normality. In the Polish Languages and Literature Program, we continued to offer a full range of courses at all levels and maintained enrolment. We awarded fellowships to both domestic and Polish students, maintained a close relationship with Polish organizations, hosted three Polish scholars and two visiting graduate students, and engaged with Polish language and culture through online and in-person extracurricular events.

Promoting a lively exchange with the international academic environment in Polish studies was one of our important objectives this year. The Program hosted three scholars from Poland: Dr. Katarzyna Jędraszczyk and Dr. Sylwia Szykowa from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, and Dr. Mateusz Świątlicki from the University of Wrocław. In addition, two Joanna DeMone Visiting Graduate Students from Poland—Agata Chwirot (University of Poznań) and Sylwia Borowska-Kazimiruk (University of Warsaw)—were invited by the Program to conduct research. This academic year 2022/2023, we are hosting another two laureates, Mateusz Kucab (Jagiellonian University, Kraków) and Małgorzata Nowak (University of Poznań).

Outside the classroom, we kept our students engaged with our language and culture through extracurricular activities. These events were held in person, virtually, and in hybrid mode to accommodate different audiences. These activities included film screenings, dance workshops, two celebrations (Dziady and a Christmas Party), and a cultural workshop focused on picture books. The Program also addressed the atrocities of the Russian aggression in Ukraine by screening Agnieszka Holland's "Mr. Jones" and followed by a discussion. The academic year 2021/2022 allowed closer collaboration with three American universities. I worked with Harvard University on a workshop for the junior faculty in Polish studies, moderated a Q&A with director J. P. Matuszyński for the UofT and Carnegie Mellon University students, and delivered a series of online lectures for the University of Pittsburgh.

None of this would have been possible without your help. Grateful and hopeful, we count on your continuous financial support of our mission to cultivate the Polish language and Polish culture in Canada and provide the students at the University of Toronto with the best quality education in Polish studies.



Dr. Agnieszka Jeżyk,

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