

Maria Sticco, Publicist  
e-mail: mes5@pitt.edu  
tel: (412) 383-2493 fax: (412) 383-2466

3400 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15260  
tel: (412) 383-2456 fax: (412) 383-2466  
www.upress.pitt.edu

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**University of Pittsburgh Press Awarded Mellon Grant  
for Collaborative Publishing Initiative in  
Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies**

PITTSBURGH—The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded a five-year grant to the University of Pittsburgh Press for a publishing initiative in Russian, East European, and Central Asian studies to be pursued in a unique partnership with the University of Wisconsin Press and Northwestern University Press. The grant is in the amount of \$390,000.

The grant will support publication of first books in the humanities by providing resources to improve and promote them to the widest possible audience. Pitt Press and its partners will cooperate in the selection, development, and publication of these monographs. Grant funds can be used, for example, for the editorial development of manuscripts, to include more illustrations, and to produce reasonably priced editions, including paperbacks where appropriate. Funds are also available for additional marketing and advertising and lecture tours by the authors.

The three presses developed this joint initiative in response to a call for proposals from the Mellon Foundation to the entire membership of American Association of University Presses last year. Mellon was seeking projects that would encourage cooperation among university presses and promote the publication of new scholarship in under-served fields. Of the 30 such joint proposals received from many university presses all over the United States, only four were ultimately selected for grant awards, including the joint Pittsburgh-Wisconsin-Northwestern project. (The other three proposals were for American literature, South Asian studies, and ethnomusicology.)

James V. Maher, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh, commented, "Pitt's long-standing commitment to international scholarship is reflected in the strength of our area studies programs—and in the efforts of our Press to increase its profile in these subject areas. By working creatively in collaboration with other university presses to further these goals, the Press has earned the Mellon Foundation's recognition of these efforts in the form of a grant that is a measure of the achievement of the University of Pittsburgh Press and its partners."

In seeking the grant, Pittsburgh and its partners made the case that the study of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia is redefining itself in response to the dramatic transformations of the post-Soviet period, yet many university presses have reduced their publication of books on this important part of the world.

"We consider this area of scholarship vitally significant and rich in possibilities," said Peter Kracht, the Editorial Director of the University of Pittsburgh Press. According to Jonathan Harris, Professor of Political Science at Pitt and the editor of the Russian and East European Series (REES) published by the Press,

“This cooperative agreement opens up extraordinary opportunities. It will enable us to publish the works of a new generation of scholars, foster research that cuts across the traditional disciplinary boundaries, and help scholars in Russia and Eastern Europe to make their own work more accessible to the English speaking world.”

Kracht added, “First books, built on original research in previously inaccessible archives, are often at the cutting edge of our understanding of this part of the world—but they are also precisely the type of scholarship that poses challenges to publication in both editorial development and marketing. For example, few university presses, if any, can afford to fully provide the kind of developmental editing needed to ensure that specialized manuscripts, promising in their findings and insights, can fulfill their potential for broader relevance.” The Mellon funds will allow the Press to offer these and other services on selected book projects.

The grant will also provide resources for the joint marketing of the books, enhanced advertising, and the promotion of books in European and other international markets.

Another unique feature of the Pittsburgh-Wisconsin-Northwestern project is the provision of funding to allow authors to share their scholarship by personally presenting it to their peers. “The lecture format, in which the author’s presentation is followed by questions and discussion, also provides a prime occasion for the exchange of knowledge, views, and ideas that is at the heart of the scholarly endeavor,” Kracht said. “But scholars and even potential hosting departments often lack the resources to pay for the travel and accommodations needed to bring the speaker to the audience. With the Mellon funds,” he said, “we’ll be able to offer support for these efforts.”

Cynthia Miller, Director of the University of Pittsburgh Press, emphasized the long-term strategic and scholarly value of this effort. “By publishing ground-breaking books of the highest quality in this field, and giving them every possible advantage in terms of production values and marketing effort, we hope that this cooperative effort will help Pittsburgh to make substantial strides not only in our own mission as a Press, but to make a significant contribution to the study of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia. We are grateful to the Mellon Foundation for allowing us that opportunity.”

**For additional information, contact:**

**Peter Kracht, Editorial Director & Director of Electronic Publishing  
University of Pittsburgh Press**

**[pek6@pitt.edu](mailto:pek6@pitt.edu)**

**(412) 383-2499**

**Or visit the project website at: [www.mellonslavicstudies.org](http://www.mellonslavicstudies.org)**