

Annual Report

2024



CLI student Anna Braun with a golden eagle in the Kyrgyz Republic. Photo by Andrew Dumenigo

In 2024, the Melikian Center continued its core commitment to advance the success of diverse learners and expand opportunities for student global engagement. Key foci for the year were building national and international partnerships from the Baltics to the Balkans, and informing public and policy debates on the future role of the U.S. in the shifting geopolitics in Europe and Asia.



Keith Brown
Melikian Center Director

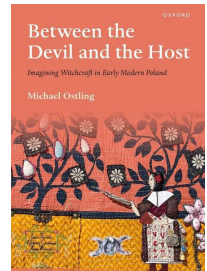
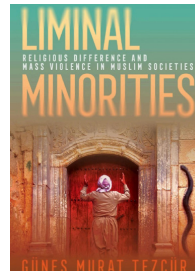
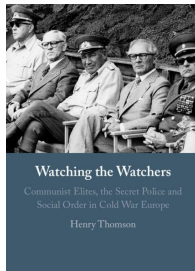


International collaboration celebrates 5 years

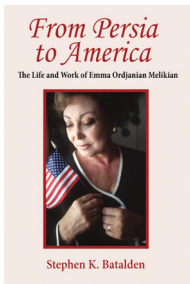
In 2024-25, the Melikian Center is hosting **Dr. Ozan Utku Cam** as its sixth Global Teaching Fellow from Central European University (CEU). ASU and CEU are partners in the Open Society University Network, and the Global Teaching Fellowship (GTF) program offers early career scholars from CEU's highly-ranked graduate programs to gain teaching experience. ASU undergraduates have the opportunity to take classes on pressing global issues, including democratic erosion, from international scholars. Ozan's full-year appointment is partly supported by the Center's Title VI award from the US Department of Education. In 2024, three previous fellows began long-term positions at the University of Prince Edward Island in Cairo, the Centre for Geopolitics at the University of Cambridge, and the Council of Europe.

Faculty Accomplishments

2024 was a productive year for the Melikian Center scholarly community, which continued its active and regular works-in-progress series. Three faculty affiliates published sole-authored scholarly books in 2024, analyzing the working of secret police regimes in East Europe (Henry Thomson), the fate of religious minorities in the Middle East (Günes Teczur), and in a revised and updated version, witch trials in early modern Poland (Michael Ostling).



Affiliates Iveta Silova, Keith Brown, Ana Hedberg Olenina and Danko Šipka all collaborated with colleagues beyond ASU to edit or co-edit publications on a range of research topics including Cold War memories, Ukrainian documentary film and Slavic linguistics. In the digital domain, Candace Rondeaux shared several years of painstaking team research on Russia's paramilitary Wagner Group at a new website, uncoveringwagner.org.



Stephen Batalden authored *From Persia to America*, a biography of Emma Melikian. The book details her journey from Teheran to New York, where she raised four children, contributed to her community, and later founded the non-profit "Thank you America" and endowed The Melikian Center at ASU.

The Melikian Center in collaboration with Yerevan State University, published selected proceedings from an international symposium held in Yerevan, Armenia in December of 2022. The volume included papers by Melikian Affiliates Danko Šipka, Stephen Batalden, and Shahin Berisha.

Research in Action

In 2024 faculty from three of ASU's professional schools launched or continued externally-funded programs in **Western Balkans, the Caucasus, and Central Asia**.

Cronkite school professors led projects to build capacity in journalism training in Albania and North Macedonia, while the Mary Lou Fulton School of Education began work with Georgian university partners to implement a major USAID project to strengthen the Republic's pre-service teacher education programs and K-12 education systems.

Faculty at ASU's Engineering School continued to train innovators and entrepreneurs in the Balkans, and are also providing technical assistance to Kazakhstan as energy sector professionals improve cybersecurity in the country's electricity grid.

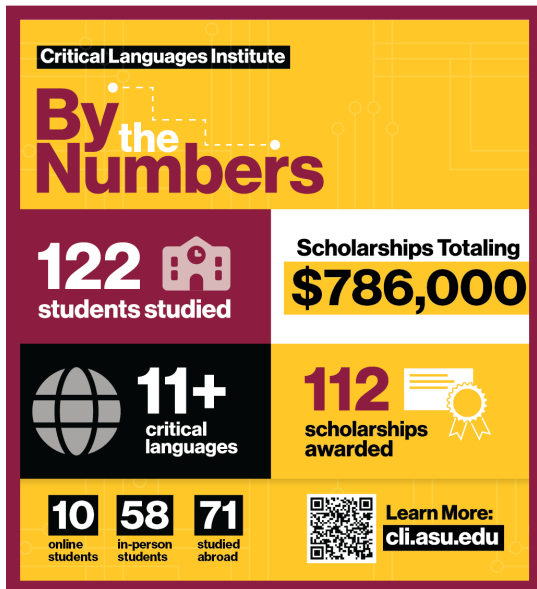
Critical Languages Institute

The Critical Languages Institute (CLI) finished its thirty-third summer of providing immersive language and cultural training programs. In Summer 2024, CLI served 122 students. 92% of CLI students received scholarships, and 96% maintained or increased their linguistic fluency by 1 to 4 levels—74% increased. To ensure that its program offerings could serve every type of learning, CLI offered domestic in-person, online, and abroad options.

Alongside federal funding options for ROTC cadets through Project Global Officer and for graduate students via Title VIII, CLI was able to increase the number of Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships for undergraduate and graduate students by 41%, adding ten additional fellowships and offering a total of \$216,700 in FLAS funding for the summer.



CLI Students preparing to perform at Russian Cultural Night



The rise of transnational conversations around generative AI is reshaping higher education, particularly in foreign language training, offering both opportunities and risks. The Critical Languages Institute prioritizes deep learning, fostering transformative experiences that develop future leaders. CLI students gain fluency, cultural competency, and personal growth, leading to national fellowships and career opportunities in both private and government sectors.



Jamie Edmonds
CLI Director

Growing Student Engagement

More than 110 students participated in immersive language study-abroad or faculty-led area-studies programs in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, the Kyrgyz Republic, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, and Uzbekistan.

Since December 2023 in Russian, Eurasian, and East European Studies, 9 students earned PhDs, 9 earned Bachelor's degrees with a major or minor, and 8 completed a Barrett Honors thesis.

ASU students and faculty won 23 national awards, including 8 Fulbright teaching and research fellowships, 1 Boren Fellowship, and 14 Title VI FLAS Fellowships.



Center staff and affiliates contributed to over **30 public-facing events**, including April 2024's Genocide Awareness Week, which brought more than 2,200 guests to ASU's campus.

Regional engagement and partnership-building

Cintana Education



Sponsors and supporters "launch" ATU at the university's opening ceremony

Melikian Director Keith Brown represented ASU at the launch of American Technological University (ATU) in Tashkent, Uzbekistan in October. ATU joins a global network of Universities powered by ASU that includes partners in Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Montenegro, Turkey and Ukraine.

Fulbright Programs



Melikian Center Graduate Affiliate Rebecca Stuch received a Fulbright award to do research in the Republic of Moldova

Since 2019, the Melikian Center has offered predeparture orientation to 44 scholars, 27 student researchers and 176 English teaching assistants (ETAs) to the five former Soviet Republics of Central Asia. The Center also directly supports

ASU's Fulbright success, providing funding and training to five of ASU's fourteen student awardees headed to Bulgaria, Czechia, Georgia, Hungary and Moldova.

Community College Connections



Olena Tanchyk, member of the Center's faculty advisory committee, speaks with a colleague at the 2024 MCCC Global Forum

In 2024-25, three faculty members from the Maricopa County Community College District joined the Center as fellows to collaborate with ASU peer mentors on curricular and research projects. This

initiative continues and deepens the Center's contributions to International and Intercultural Education at MCCC.

Russia and its Near Abroad



A frieze from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, depicting Soviet police arresting intellectuals

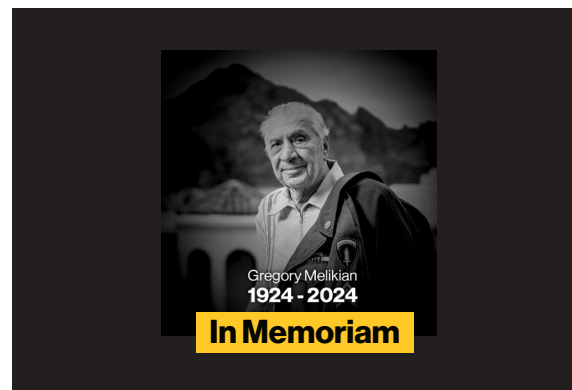
As well as offering Ukrainian, Kazakh, Uzbek, Armenian and Russian language instruction through the Critical Languages Institute, The Center continued to provide Arizonans with reliable information on the impacts of President Putin's foreign and domestic policy for his fellow-citizens as well the wider world, especially in terms of energy security and human rights.

Writing Across Boundaries



Journal collection at the Slavonic Library, University of Helsinki

The Melikian Center is partnering with five other National Resource Centers to advance the career success of young scholars based in Central, East and South East Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The program gives participants tools to publish their research in high impact peer-reviewed professional journals, and thus contribute new voices, perspectives and topics in the study of Russia, Eurasia and East Europe.



Fund-raising totals

In 2024, the Melikian Center received:

\$1,683,745

in federal grants

\$264,666

in philanthropic gifts from **54 donors**

The contents of this Annual Report were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

Want more information?



Melikian Center
melikian.asu.edu



Critical Languages Institute
cli.asu.edu