

## **National Ukrainian Teachers' Conference**

On May 2-4 Ukrainian educators from across Canada met in Edmonton for the 2014 Ukrainian National Teachers' Conference. This was the second conference of its kind held in North America dedicated to excellence in Ukrainian language teaching, leading and learning. The conference theme, "Ukrainian Language Education in the 21st century" attracted 85 conference participants from across Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec.

The conference kicked off on Friday, May 2 with a banquet, entertainment and a panel discussion focusing on the question, "Ukrainian language education in the 21st century. Where are we now and where will we be in 2030?" The panelists included a university faculty member, community educational representatives, teachers and a graduate of the Ukrainian bilingual program.

The conference offered participants a variety of sessions on topics such as assessment, the application of technology in language teaching and learning, research-based best practices and the role of Ukrainian language education in the present and future.

The keynote speakers at the conference were Dr. Roman Shyyan, Director of the Institute for Teacher Development and Training in Lviv, Ukraine, and Dr. Olenka Bilash, from the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. Dr. Bilash's keynote address was entitled "Global Best Practices: Effective 21<sup>st</sup> Century Language and Culture Learning Strategies" and Dr. Shyyan's keynote explored the topic, "What is the direction of Ukrainian language education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century," in light of the current political situation in Ukraine. Keeping with the theme of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, Dr. Shyyan and Dr. Olena Husar from the University of Ternopil joined the conference 'virtually', delivering sessions and participating in discussions with conference participants via technology. Special activities planned to enhance the conference participants' experience included a trip to the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village and of course, a trip to West Edmonton Mall.

There were a number of educational and community organizations that helped support the conference which include the Alberta Foundation for Ukrainian Language Education (AFUES), Canadian-Ukrainian Congress, Institute for Innovation in Second Language Education (iisle) at Edmonton Public Schools, Ukrainian National Federation, Edmonton Branch, Ukrainian Language Education Centre (ULEC) at the University of Alberta and the Teachers of Ukrainian, Second Language and Intercultural Council (SLIC) of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

This conference brought together Ukrainian educators, community members, and parents to meet and discuss strategies for enhancing the teaching and learning of Ukrainian. Conference participants underscored the importance of connecting with Ukrainian language educators both locally and nationally to share ideas, best practices, resources, and to build a support network. Plans are underway for the next National Ukrainian Teachers' Conference which will be held in Toronto in May, 2016.

Please visit [shkola.ca](http://shkola.ca) to learn more about the conference.

(Submitted by Olena Hartsula and Melody Kostyuk (Conference co-chairs) and Yanina Vihovska, President, Teachers of Ukrainian SIG)