History of the Russia Exchange Program

Since 1996, Beloit College and the Russian State University for the Humanities (RSUH) have cooperated in the exchange of students. The university, established in 1991, grew out of the Institute for History and Archives, founded in 1930. The cooperation between Beloit and RSUH was initiated by Beloit College President Victor E. Ferrall and RSUH Rector Yuri N. Afanasiev. RSUH boasts a student body of over 4,000 students, including an increasing number of international students.

Since the inception of the exchange program, over 80 Beloit College students have spent a semester or more in Moscow at RSUH. The first RSUH student came to Beloit in 1995, leading to 60 RSUH studying at Beloit from 1995 through 2009.


A number of delegations from Beloit College have visited the Russian State University for the Humanities, leading, for example, to collaborations in dance and museum studies. Beloit College in turn has hosted such RSUH faculty members as Irina Bakanova, Dean of Art History. In May 2006, RSUH hosted a Beloit College faculty development seminar, the work of which lead to the establishment of a course on Moscow in Transition introduced in 2008 and taught by a Beloit College faculty member as a distance learning course every fall. Fall 2009 Beloit College magazine article “Onion domes and Skyscrapers”

The Moscow exchange program allows Beloit College students to strengthen their Russian language skills and to engage with Russian culture and society through their courses and explorations of the city of Moscow. RSUH students in turn come to Beloit to improve their English, engage in liberal arts education, and become better acquainted with American culture and society.