

## **BELARUS – Advice from Fulbright Alumni**

**The following are extracts from Fulbright Grantee Reports and are not meant to reflect the views of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), its cooperating agencies, or the U.S. Embassy.**

**Please provide any information on the aspects of local culture that could help future Fulbright grantees working in your host country or institution(s).**

Very polite and hospitable culture, not as progressive as the U.S. in terms of male/female relations, gender equality. The University is not quite organized in terms of class scheduling. Schedules change every week, as well as class locations. Examination procedures are quite lax. Students are given 4 chances to pass a short oral exam consisting of two questions. There is a strong pressure to pass students.

Teachers dressed in a much more relaxed way than I anticipated. Many wore jeans to teach in.

**Please provide any recommendations related to logistics (e.g., travel, money, housing) that could help future Fulbright grantees working in your host country or institution(s).**

It is not easy to travel in Belarus if you do not have a car. Buses and trains, particularly, are quite slow. But they do have a developed transportation system, even though routes may not be direct. The Belarussian Ruble devalued by half when I was there. In the middle of my grant, Euros and dollars stopped being available in the country. It is very difficult for the Belarussian people, who did not really complain a lot about it. They were still incredibly generous and gracious. Housing was not difficult to find, though expect to pay a lot more than the average Belarussian (though it is still low by CA standards). Heat is automatic and goes on in November and is turned off by the end of April. Though it is quite cold outside, it is comfortable inside. Most landlords want to be paid in dollars. These are to be had only on the black market and the rate is much higher than the exchange rate in the bank. Renters should make sure they sign some kind of agreement with the landlord and that there is a clause that says they can pay the equivalent in rubles.