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The Ukrainian Catholic University: its development and educational mission today

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The article deals with the revitalisation of Catholic education in Ukraine after the collapse of the Soviet system and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church's emergence from the underground. It speaks of the reinstatement and the 25 year work of the Ukrainian Catholic University – the easternmost Catholic university in Europe, and the only Catholic university in the territory of the former Soviet Union. The article provides brief historical information, an analysis of the general crisis, needs and problems of education in present-day Ukraine, and shows how a small academic institution, founded upon the principles of regard for human dignity, faithfulness to the Church, and a sense of social responsibility, can be an agent for positive change in society at large.

Keywords: Higher education; reform of the higher education; Catholic education; humanities; Ukraine

Historical context

The Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) is a non-governmental institution for higher education and research founded by the St. Clement Foundation,¹ whose elected head is Patriarch Sviatoslav (Shevchuk), the leader of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

UCU is the first and only Catholic university in the territory of the former Soviet Union, and thus the most eastern of the family of European Catholic universities.

UCU was created to provide an alternative in the post-Soviet, post-colonial, post-totalitarian Ukrainian society. It is designed to be a viable alternative to rigid and self-referential higher education, to the intellectual establishment skeptical about faith and religion, and to academia closed in the ivory tower of indifference to what is going on outside of its walls. UCU is a university working for society, focused on cultivating skills and attitudes to prepare young people for the complex ways of life in the contemporary world.

The importance of the Greek Catholic Church

The establishment of UCU has been a long and dramatic process more than 90 years in the making. To understand its complexity one must bear in mind the complexity of Central and Eastern European History, especially during the last century. Ukrainian

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population, divided between the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires, was deprived of its territorial unity and cultural autonomy, and nearly all opportunities to develop economically, socially or culturally were shut down. In the situation where social institutions were nonexistent, the Greek Catholic Church became the important agency of resistance and cultural preservation for many centuries.² The First World War brought an end to the two empires but did not help Ukrainians fulfil their desire of creating an independent national state. Divided in the interwar period between Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania and the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian nation suffered the most significant damages in its history. Given the level of sufferings and the number of human sacrifice in the interwar period and during the Second World War, ethnic Ukrainian territories were at the very epicentre of XX century European bloodshed.

The Nazi and Soviet regimes turned people into numbers, some of which we can only estimate, some of which we can reconstruct with fair precision... It is for us as humanists to turn the numbers back into people. If we cannot do that, then Hitler and Stalin have shaped not only our world, but our humanity.³

The consequences of this historical division and political violence remained tangible after the war and subsequent reunification of Ukraine under the Soviet regime. The national identity had been divided into two main parts that existed under very different kinds of political regimes. Ukrainian identity of Eastern Ukraine had been weakened and marginalised as a result of a long existence under the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. But even though the Kremlin tried to homogenise Ukrainians and make them thoroughly Soviet, the results of Soviet policies differed greatly in various parts of Ukraine. The western part of the nation, historically under Austro-Hungarian and later Polish governments, preserved its identity, a network of cultural and economic institutions and, even more importantly, part of its national elite and its resistance energy. The mental division between different parts of the country is noticeable to this day.⁴

The tragic consequences of such historical circumstances caused significant assimilation or marginalisation of the national elites, and made normal development of the Ukrainian political, cultural or educational systems during nineteenth and twentieth centuries impossible. At the outset of conscious national revival the needs were too many, the energies too limited. Under those circumstances there remained one leading force that continued to think about the importance of education. It was the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. Ukrainian Catholic leaders throughout the twentieth century dreamed of opening an institution of higher learning that would become an environment of intellectual excellence and spiritual formation for the Ukrainian population. Even before the First World War Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky appealed to the Austrian Parliament requesting permission to open a Ukrainian university in Lviv. Unfortunately, this project was not implemented either before or after the war, when Lviv was incorporated into the newly formed independent Polish state. Unable to study at the Polish university, and disallowed from opening a university of their own, there was but one alternative left for Ukrainians: to use the existing Greek Catholic Seminary as a basis for creating a Higher School of Theology as a prototype of a future University.

The Greek Catholic Theological Academy

And thus the Greek Catholic Theological Academy was first established in 1928. The institution was important and unique. It was the only Ukrainian institution of higher

learning in the territories of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Romania. It started with programmes in Theology and Philosophy. During the interwar years, the Academy developed its academic staff, compiled an impressive book collection, and created a publishing house. The Academy became a centre of intellectual and spiritual life for the UGCC and the Ukrainian population.

The Second World War and both the Soviet (1939–1941) and Nazi (1941–1944) occupations abruptly interrupted this process. The Academy was shut down overnight, professors and students were repressed, many died in the camps, prisons, on the fields of war. After ‘liberation’ of Western Ukraine in 1944, the Academy was closed down for good by Soviet authorities. But the urge to have a national institution of higher education was not suppressed. That the Church did not abandon its efforts became obvious in 1963, when Josyf Slipyi, the new head of the UGCC, was released from the Soviet concentration camps due to the intervention of Pope John XXIII. One of Slipyi’s first decrees as Metropolitan concerned the establishment of the Ukrainian Catholic University in Rome. Metropolitan Josyf Slipyi never doubted that one day this University would ‘return’ to Ukraine.

One significant conclusion to be drawn from this story is that the elite of Ukrainian society, and the Greek-Catholics in particular, closely connected the issues of Catholic identity and development of the Church with the needs of developing higher education for Ukrainians.

The collapse of the soviet system

Only after the collapse of the Soviet system and the establishment of an independent Ukrainian state, did the long-desired idea become reality. Sheptytsky and Slipyi’s university was reopened in Lviv, first as the Lviv Theological Academy in 1994, and later as a university. During his pastoral visit to Ukraine on 26 June 2001, Pope John Paul II blessed the future university’s cornerstone. The ceremonial inauguration of the Ukrainian Catholic University was held in Lviv on 29 June 2002.

As a result of a decade of effort by the University, Theology was recognised as an academic discipline in Ukraine, and in 2006 UCU became the only Catholic institution of higher learning fully accredited by the Ukrainian government. The University’s graduates in Theology – including seminarians, religious and laity, men and women – receive degrees in theology recognised both by the Congregation for Catholic Education and by the Ukrainian state. In the millennium-long history of Christianity in Ukraine, it was the young women at UCU who were to become the first female graduates in Theology.

Identity and educational philosophy: mission statement

The vocation of the University is clearly described in its mission statement:

The Ukrainian Catholic University is an open academic community living the Eastern Christian tradition⁵ and forming leaders to serve with professional excellence in Ukraine and internationally – for the glory of God, the common good, and the dignity of the human person.

This mission is reflected in the name of the institution. ‘Ukrainian Catholic University – every word here has deep significance,’ said Rev. Borys Gudziak, one of the founders

of the new university, and its Rector in 2000–2013, the crucial years of transitioning from the Theological academy to the full-fledged University.

The scholarly dimension is indicated by the word ‘university,’ speaking to a responsible, creative and critical search and use of knowledge. The word ‘Catholic’ reveals UCU’s religious dimension, the openness of the human being to transcendent and interpersonal dialogue. The Christian identity of the university, while rooted in the Eastern tradition, develops in constant dialogue with other people of faith and goodwill ... Our cultural and social dimensions are found in the word ‘Ukrainian,’ the reality that surrounds us; this is who we are. So our task is to be a centre for cultural thought and the formation of the new Ukrainian society based on human dignity.⁶

The two pillars on which the philosophy of the university is based are the martyrs and the marginalised, including disabled people, dispossessed, and people with special needs.⁷

The charism of martyrdom

‘Martyrdom’ in the University’s identity is much more than just a tribute to historical memory. Seven among the blessed martyrs of the UGCC, proclaimed during the visit of the pope John Paul II to Ukraine in June 2001, were professors and students of the prewar Lviv Theological Academy (LTA). UCU maintains a strong spiritual connection with the LTA of the interwar period, its efforts and its personalities, and regards itself as its heir and successor. The images, biographies, publications, the surviving relatives of these martyrs are very much present on UCU’s campus: in the sermons and on icons in the churches, on the library shelves, in the discussion panels at conferences and seminars, giving example and inspiration to the young generation. This spirit of courage and self-sacrifice was preserved and carried on further in the Soviet time by the Church that was banned by the authorities and went underground thus becoming the largest clandestine ethical and social opposition to the totalitarian regime in the Soviet Union. The testimony of profound spiritual freedom, relentless social resistance and ecclesiastical vitality of the UGCC’s faithful has been collected and systematized in more than 2000 interviews by the UCU Institute of Church History in its project ‘Profiles of Fortitude: the Oral History of the Underground period of the UGCC. 1946–1989’. This goes a long way towards explaining why the UCU community is so readily mobilised in times of serious social crisis. The staff members and students of UCU were there at both Ukrainian revolutions of 2004 and 2013–2014, joined anticorruption campaigns, participate in numerous volunteer organisations in the conflict zone in Ukraine’s East. On 20 February 2014 the University has suffered a heavy loss – Bohdan Solchanyk, a young and talented faculty member was killed by a sniper in Kyiv during the Revolution of Dignity,⁸ while defending the freedom and future of his country.

The mission for special needs

No less important to our community is the group of intellectually handicapped people that have been marginalised for a long time, invisible both to the authorities, as well as society as a whole. The University developed collaboration with international organisation ‘L’Arche’. Cooperation with ‘Faith and Light’, the local branch of this movement, resulted in the establishment of the Center for Spiritual Support of Persons with Special Needs at UCU. The University put people with intellectual disabilities in the centre of

the academic community that admittedly celebrates the achievements of reason, to make them ‘professors of human relations’ for faculty and students by confronting people who strive for intellectual excellence with the most important questions of human life – ‘Are you able to love?’ and ‘Do you love me?’ When in 2012 the University opened its new student dormitory, the Centre was given its own quarters there offering residence to several disabled people, and was situated in the midst of student life, reminding them that people with special needs also have special gifts to offer.⁹

The actual presence of both of these groups on campus serves as an important everyday reminder of faithfulness and humility, readiness and ability to attend to the needs of others, thus become a natural part of educational and formative process.

From this deeply rooted sacrifice and marginalisation the University slogan was born: ‘Witness. Service. Communication.’ This idea is reflected in the construction plan of the new campus with its three central buildings: the Church of St. Sophia with its Spiritual-Pastoral Center, the Patriarch Josyf Slipyj Collegium (student dormitory), and the recently opened Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Center (the University’s main Library).

At the Collegium, teachers and administrators, priests and Redemptorist nuns, people with special needs and their assistants live alongside the students. Scholars, diplomats, politicians, artists from Ukraine and abroad, stay in the guest quarters. This creates a very special environment of living-learning community, unique in Ukraine, and signals a common vision of what an educational institution should be. In the opinion of the Head of the UGCC His Beatitude Sviatoslav (Shevchuk), UCU today stands at the vanguard of educating laity in the Church and society in general.

The formation of holistic persons

UCU is constantly re-thinking the phenomenon of the university in the twenty-first century, in which the demand for new skills and knowledge are changing too rapidly. What is really in urgent demand today or tomorrow is the formation of a holistic person, and the restoration of dignity to humanity itself. As John Howard Van Amringe said more than a century ago, the university today really has to become a place where not just a mere specialist, but a ‘Person’ is developed (Belknap and Kuhns 1977). UCU is striving to build a community of faith based on common values, such as the dignity of every person, and a culture of excellence, creativity and intellectual independence.

But all these things make sense only if they serve the final goal – the edification of a person ready to give all of their gained experience and knowledge back to society. This readiness to serve cannot be practiced ‘some time in the future’, it has to start here and now. The totality of the university’s work is organised with this goal in mind. The community is closely engaged in discussions concerning the future development of university, the institution of new study programmes, plans for construction of new buildings; it organises fundraising and recruiting campaigns. We strive to return the forgotten glory and meaning to the ancient Greek word ‘λειτουργία’, making it the essence of the university’s everyday existence in all spheres and senses.

Difficulties and challenges

The inauguration of UCU, with its new approach to learning, high professional level university faculty of theology, philosophy, history, social sciences, business, journalism

and media communication, IT and the largest modern humanities library in Ukraine, was a major step in the effort to change higher education in Ukraine. However, for the newly formed Ukrainian state, the creation of an independent private university with a strong and transparent Christian identity, was a challenge. In accordance with the previous Soviet tradition, the Ministry of Education practiced total control over the educational system, and was eager to retain it. It took 10 years of efforts by the university's staff, administration, supporters and Theology students in Ukraine to have Theology included in the list of academic disciplines recognised by the Ministry of Education.

Several deliberate attempts have been made in the past to disrupt the normal functioning of the university. The most dramatic episode took place in May 2010, when Mr. Tabachnyk, then Head of the Ukrainian Ministry of Education, and infamous for his reactionary policies, started an open campaign against UCU in order to have it shut down. This attack coincided with the General Assembly of the FUCE (European Federation of the Catholic Universities) in Lviv. The open support of the guests of the Assembly, as well as the strong voices of UCU's international partners, prevented the Ministry from destroying the new independent institution.

Beside opposition from the government, UCU faced several other challenges, the most crucial being the lack of qualified staff and the absence of funding.

The beginnings of UCU were extremely modest. A small kindergarten, and later an abandoned school demanding capital repair was a difficult start for an institution that operated in a country with completely ruined economy. To succeed in its mission, UCU learned the art of frugality – doing a lot and serving many with limited resources. Faced with non-infrequent attempts of corrupt government officials to create conditions to make the University's development impossible, UCU preserved its independence, remains faithful to the truth, advocated for academic freedom and honesty, created a broad circle of supporters and like-minded people.

International support

International support was an important source of strength and inspiration for UCU from the very moment of its reopening in 1994. Professors and lecturers from the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Italy, Poland, Germany, Austria and other countries constituted a significant part of UCU's teaching staff. This concerned theologians in particular because in Soviet times, Theology simply did not exist as a discipline. Participation of international faculty helped tremendously in resolving the early staffing difficulties. It also helped to build quite a new system of teaching, unprecedented in post-Soviet Ukraine, based on a culture of academic excellence and honesty, study of sources and previously unavailable western bibliography, close cooperation with the students. In accordance with the principle of 'ad fontes,' the curriculum stressed the study of classical and contemporary foreign languages, and the best of the even the earliest graduates were able to continue their education in various MA and PhD programmes abroad. These tactics and measures helped resolve the teaching staff problem in a relatively short period of time.

The UCU Library began thanks to generous donations from abroad, and soon became one of the best university libraries in Ukraine in theology and humanities, with open-shelf access to as much of its collections as possible, a unique policy among Ukrainian academic libraries. Thanks to many benefactors and partners, the UCU collection, in addition to its Slavic language books, has numerous foreign language books and periodicals, many of them only copies in Ukraine today. The

main result of all these efforts was the opening of the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Center in August 2017. The Sheptytsky Center combined a world class Humanities Library with the facilities of an educational centre open to the general public. It soon became the most frequently attended intellectual hub in the city.

International partnership and academic cooperation remain an important part of the university's *modus operandi*. The University conducts its own academic exchange programmes, is a participant in Fulbright, Erasmus + and other programmes led by the international academic foundations, has more than 50 bilateral cooperation agreements, including double diploma programmes, and provides study for international students.

The University's standing in the Ukrainian academic milieu has undergone significant change. As a private religious institution with a microscopic number of students and without state recognition, in the 1990s UCU was practically invisible or not taken seriously by the academic and educational institutions. By the century's end, the situation began to change. The best educational institutions in Ukraine started to treat UCU as a reliable and promising academic partner with high academic standards and strong dedication to the cause of reform. The benefits were mutual. Some universities helped UCU with the academic staff, and received help from the university in return, broadening their international partnerships, starting new interinstitutional academic projects and study programmes. Today, UCU counts some of the best academic institutions in the country among its partners and supporters.¹⁰

The same dynamics can be observed in UCU's relation with the city and state officials. Where initially there were no understanding and little, if any, help, today the city administration and the mayor of Lviv regard UCU as one of the most successful examples of post-Soviet transformation, modernisation and self-organisation. UCU's example is important for the city also because of the university's determination not only to look for support, but to give back to the city by creating a new academic and intellectual environment for the residents and guests. In turn, the national government, has found in UCU a strong ally in the cause of higher education reform, an example of successful implementation of internationalisation, new methodologies and technology, dedication to moral principles, opposition to all types of corruption.

Local businesses have demonstrated deep interest in the development of the new academic institution. The support of business partners enabled UCU to create the Lviv Business School and the Faculty of Applied Sciences. The Ukrainian business community is showing its support for UCU by organising fundraising campaigns and creating numerous programmes to financially support the students.

Turning once hostile opponents into friends and supporters was probably one of the University's main achievements in this quarter-century story of its development.

Funding model

The salient difficulty of the University's growth is to collect finances needed for the dynamic development of a first-rate educational institution. Due to the poor economic situation and the practically nonexistent system of banking credits in Ukraine after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the University could not acquire sufficient funds by charging adequate fees. Even today not much has changed, and student fees cover only 25–60% of the real cost of the study programmes. The University never had, and still does not enjoy, the financial support of the Ukrainian government. All of the above has led

to the creation of a mixed model of financing, the main part of which is fundraising campaigns and individual donations from the University's supporters.¹¹

Today UCU organises several annual fundraising events worldwide. With the help of Ukrainian business partners it became possible to also mount a successful domestic fundraising campaigns. The funds collected during fundraising events in Ukraine today constitute a minor part of the University's budget, but this part is growing from one campaign to the next, and the new culture of patronage, philanthropy and generosity is slowly gaining a foothold in Ukrainian reality.

The University's annual budget is thus comprised of donated funds, student fees, endowment income and money earned from services provided to the public. The latter have gained increased significance recently. Rent of the University's facilities, fees from public lectures and evening courses still constitute a minor part of the university's budget, but they are steadily growing.

This difficult situation and funding model unexpectedly became one of the most successful tactics of self-awareness and self-education for the University's community. It started with the gradual engagement of many students and most of the staff members in fundraising campaigns. Another important step has been made in starting a special procedure of forming the University's annual budget that is unprecedented in Ukraine. Every unit goes through a process of responsibly calculating its own needs and expenses, to affirm its priorities and bring them in accordance with the University's general development strategy.

UCU contributes to many societal projects that goes beyond its core activity of training professionals and preparing young people for leading meaningful and responsible lives. We see a growing demand for UCU's contribution in different sectors of social life. The University is well-positioned to perform these tasks if it has enough resources to build and maintain its capacity. In the face of these demands, the University has to be thrifty and frugal and use its limited resources well.

UCU today

At UCU's beginnings (1994) it comprised a single university-level faculty of Theology and Philosophy, and several research institutes, such as the Institute of Church History, the Liturgical Institute with a small number of students and university staff. The university's research and pastoral institutes have won recognition for their scholarly publications, digitalised archives and databases, international conferences, ecumenical seminars, and social programmes.

The University is constantly growing and responding to the needs of society. At present, the Ukrainian Catholic University has 6 degree-granting faculties. Within the Faculty of Philosophy and Theology, students earn a Bachelor, Licentiate and Doctor of Theology degrees recognised by the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education, as well as programme degrees of Bachelor and Master of Theology accredited by the Ukrainian government.

The Humanities Faculty offers 'Artes Liberales' programme leading to government-accredited degrees of Bachelor and Master of History, Bachelor of Cultural Studies and Philology.

The Faculty of Social Sciences offers programmes in Sociology, Ethics, Political Science and Economics, as well as Master programmes in Journalism, Mass Media, Human Rights, Management of not for profit organisations, and Public Administration.

The Faculty of Health Sciences provides degree courses in Social Work, Psychology and Mental Health, Physical and Occupational Therapy. The newly created Faculty of Applied Sciences is developing courses in IT, Business Analytics and Data Science.

The UCU Lviv Business School specialises in graduate courses that are developed at the intersection of Business Education, Ethics and Management.

The university offers a number of non-degree certificate courses in Christian Ethics and Catechism, Religious Studies, Ukrainian Language and Culture, Iconography, Ecumenical Studies, Leadership, Business Management, and others.

UCU also offers a semester programme in Eastern European and Ukrainian studies taught in English for international students.

Through its Chairs and specialised institutes, UCU conducts academic research in several fields, including religion and society, European and Church history, Kyivan Christianity,¹² Jewish Studies, Women Studies, Patristics and Classics, ecumenism, and liturgy, mass media and mass communication, management, and psychology.

UCU supports an interdisciplinary approach in its courses. For the purpose of enabling students to get the most out of their study, and to broaden their choices, three courses of the Faculty of Humanities have been united in a special design of the *Artes Liberales Curriculum*. Today, when the number of the courses and students at the University is growing, special efforts are dedicated to preserving the unity and integrity of the University. UCU is trying to extend Christian reflection to new areas of learning and research, such as sociology, the arts, public policy, and business administration. Aspects of Christian history, spirituality and morality are integrated in most of the teaching courses. For the purposes of integrity, we implement the Core Curriculum, which combines general courses in Christianity, Humanities, Languages and Methodology of Education, Critical and Creative Thinking, Academic Writing, etc., in order to give the newcomers a feeling of integrity and belonging to a united academic and spiritual community. It is intended to become the main academic and formative basis that underpins all study courses, and at the same time serves as a specific 'trademark' by which UCU graduates will be distinguished.

The Ukrainian Catholic University Libraries system is noted for the quality of its constantly growing collections and its service-oriented approach. The libraries offer open-shelf access to as much of the collections as possible, a unique policy among Ukrainian academic libraries. Thousands of readers from inside and outside the university use the libraries' basic collection of more than 150,000 volumes.

The UCU Press, founded in 2003, has earned respect in Ukrainian academic circles for its publication of original scholarly works, as well as Ukrainian translations. The Press's books frequently receive prizes from Ukraine's most prestigious annual Publishers' Forum.

The University is known inside the country for its independent public position and commitment to social responsibility, its preoccupation with promoting a culture of academic excellence and honesty, and the scope of its international outreach. The Ukrainian Catholic University is a member of several international academic associations, including the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU), the Federation of Catholic Universities of Europe (FUCE), the World Conference of Catholic University Institution of Philosophy (COMIUCAP), the Commission Internationale d'Histoire et d'Études du Christianisme (CIHES), the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU), and Catholic Universities of Central-Eastern Europe (CEEUCU).

UCU and its impact

The re-establishment and development of UCU has had a serious impact on the process of reforming higher education in Ukraine. To understand this impact, it is important to bear in mind two peculiarities of the Ukrainian situation. Firstly, unlike in other European countries, the Church in Ukraine enjoys a growing credit of trust among the public. It seems that in the turbulences of post-Soviet transformation, the Churches in Ukraine, and the Greek-Catholic Church in particular, became the only institutions society can put its trust into. Not only did they manage to preserve faithfulness and integrity, but paradoxically they also proved to be the most democratic institutions in present-day Ukrainian society, with the highest level of self-organisation, initiative, and eagerness in supporting anti-corruption campaigns and socio-economic reforms.¹³

Secondly, it is the Greek-Catholic Church personified in UCU, that in 2005, jointly with several leading secular universities in Ukraine initiated the Consortium of Universities for Reform in Higher Education, thus starting a slow but steady movement towards autonomy, academic freedom, intellectual excellence, and elimination of corruption in education.¹⁴

As a result of this and other initiatives the state's monopoly on education, morality and ethics is perhaps not fully overcome yet, but it is significantly diminished. UCU today attracts the best high school graduates from all over Ukraine, including Crimea. Although the number of enrolled students is relatively small, by the quality of its applicants UCU competes with the best universities in Ukraine, such as the National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy, National Technical University of Ukraine «Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute», and the Ivan Franko National University in Lviv. For example, 48% of last year's entrants are in the top 5% of school graduates from all over Ukraine.¹⁵ UCU today not only has students from every region of Ukraine, but also from Poland, Belarus, Russia, Armenia, Georgia, Canada, the United States, Brazil and Argentina, representing the various Eastern Catholic Churches as well as the Roman Catholic Church, and Orthodox Churches. UCU graduates work in various segments of society, from the penitentiary system to the Presidential Administration, offering, simultaneously, proof of personal success and efficacy as agents of change.¹⁶ But they are especially needed in the Church.

UCU happens to become 'the right institution at the right time'.¹⁷ After a half century of Communist persecution, the Greek Catholic Church came out of the catacombs and vigorously took to building the physical and administrative structures needed to attend to the vast spiritual and pastoral needs of the faithful. The courses that the University offers to both the ecclesiastical circles and the general public, as well as the graduates of the University, are a great aid in this undertaking. Suffice it to mention that the current head of the Church, His Beatitude Sviatoslav (Shevchuk) is a former student of one of UCU Summer Schools, and later a member of the UCU Faculty of Theology and Philosophy. He was also appointed Rector of the Lviv Seminary, which is closely associated with UCU. Thanks to his close association with the University, he understands its potential and its importance to the future of the Church.

In recent years, UCU has also become a leader in general processes and social initiatives in the country, such as higher education reform, the articulation of just social, political, and economic principles, the modelling of honest and transparent academic practices, the fostering of general cultural, intellectual, and ecumenical openness. UCU has also initiated special outreach courses, summer schools and life-long learning opportunities for specialists and the general public, such as its

‘Theological Encounters’, ‘School of Christian Leaders’, ‘Good Governance’, ‘Charitable Foundations Management’, public lectures in Humanities.

The University feels a strong obligation to help Ukraine heal its past and present wounds, to unite the nation on the basis of values of dignity, freedom, respect and love. To this end, several social initiatives have been initiated, such as hosting guests from Eastern Ukraine in Lviv and UCU (‘Christmas Together’), students trips to Eastern Ukraine, volunteer programmes in helping the postwar zones, and other.

As the sole Catholic University in the territories of the former Soviet Union, UCU sees its mission as helping other formerly Soviet nations. We have students from Russia, Belarus, Georgia. UCU faculty has served Roman Catholic seminaries in Georgia and Kazakhstan. Our professors and staff participate in many inter-institutional and international projects, such as the movement for university autonomy, mission and standards of higher education, human rights and equality, spiritual freedom and ecumenism. The university is home of the Religious Information Service of Ukraine (RISU), one of the best of its kind.

The University started in a country where for many intellectuals Faith and Reason were incompatible, ‘Theology’ meant nothing, women had no access to theological studies, corruption was a dominant reality at the universities, and the word ‘private’ was associated primarily with racketeering. The Ukrainian Catholic University succeeded in breaking down these cliches, in establishing an example of a community of mutual trust, personal development, and academic excellence united in faith and prepared to serve.

Notes

1. After a lengthy underground period, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) was in dire need of structural reorganisation and training new cadres. This need could only be adequately satisfied by creating an institution of higher learning that would not only be a model university, but also adopt the Christian identity as its own. To implement these goals, the Synod of the UGCC founded the Lviv Theological Academy in 1994. Unfortunately, the Ukrainian legislation current at that time would not have allowed the Church or any religious organisation to found HEI that could offer state recognised academic degrees beyond theology. To implement new plans for the development, in 2001 the Synod of the UGCC recommended the establishment of the Catholic University in Lviv and for this purpose entrusted the leaders of Lviv Theological Academy to found the St. Clement Foundation meant to become a legal founder of the university. Cardinal Lubomyr Husar was appointed to lead it. An important milestone was crossed when the founding documents of the Ukrainian Catholic University (2002) were signed at the Metropolitan’s Palace in Lviv on 22 February 2002. This set the process of UCU’s legal registration and state accreditation in motion. ‘Today we are standing on the threshold of the real fulfilment of the UCU. We sincerely hope that this project, which our forefathers dreamed about, will become a reality. At this university both Ukrainian priests and Ukrainian laity will have a chance to prepare themselves for academic life, and to work for the improvement of civil life,’ said Cardinal Husar. See “Ukrainian Catholic University’s founding documents being signed in Lviv” (Inauguration of the University 2002).
2. The role the Greek Catholic Church played in the development and preservation of the Ukrainian nation during the long centuries of stateless existence was possible due to the fact that according to the canon law of the Church, the priests could marry and have children. Thus, the intellectual elite of the nation was formed, for whom the long lasting national religious tradition, European education and the idea of modernity were not alien. More on the Greek Catholic Church and its priesthood (see Gudziak 1998).
3. More on 20th century Ukrainian History (see Snyder 2010).

4. It is especially visible during the times of turmoil such as presidential elections, economic decline, or armed conflict. Comparing data of presidential elections in independent Ukraine, Yaroslav Hrytsak (1998) and the other scholars found out that the map of historical division largely coincides with the map of pro-European and pro-Russian preferences on the part of Ukrainian voters. See Hrytsak (1998).
5. The Eastern Christian Tradition is a result of historical division that slowly took place during Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Today it comprises four families of Churches: the Assyrian Church of the East, Oriental Orthodoxy, the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and the Eastern Catholic Churches. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church belongs to the family of the Eastern Catholic Churches that are in full communion with Rome but still maintain Eastern-rite liturgies. The UGCC was founded in 1596 with the signing of the Union of Brest between the Ruthenian Orthodox Church and the Holy See. The decision to come under the primacy of the See of Rome was taken by Orthodox bishops in Ukrainian territories that had been divided between Poland and Muscovy after the establishment of the Moscow Patriarchate in 1589 and increased pressure on the faithful to change allegiance and russify. The Eastern churches' differences from Western Christianity are primarily to do with the cultural and linguistic tradition, relations to politics and society, a strong Eastern monastic spirituality, as well as certain aspects of rite and dogma (such as making the sign of the cross and administering communion to the faithful, iconography, the *filioque*, priestly celibacy, etc.). See Gudziak (1998).
6. Inauguration of the University <https://ucu.edu.ua/en/about/istoriya-ta-fakty/inavguratsiya/>
7. George Weigel emphasised both these remarkable characteristics in his article dedicated to the life of Cardinal Lubomyr Huzar: 'How does it happen that a child growing up in eastern Galicia among Ukrainians, Poles, Moldovans, Germans, Austrians, Jews, Roma, and Armenians dodges Nazi death squads and the Red Army, learns first-hand what it means to be a 'displaced person' in occupied Austria, emigrates to the United States, completes university and seminary studies before being ordained a priest, writes a pioneering doctoral dissertation on ecumenism, joins a monastic order, is clandestinely ordained a bishop, has his episcopal ordination recognized by St. John Paul II, is created a cardinal by the same pope – and at an age when many men begin to contemplate retirement, returns to his newly self-liberated homeland for the first time in a half-century and over the next two decades becomes the most widely respected and deeply beloved figure in the country?' Weigel (2017).
8. The Ukrainian revolution of 2014, known also as 'Euromaidan' or 'The revolution of Dignity', started in November 2013 as a wave of protests against the government and president Yanukovich's abrupt decision not to sign an association agreement with the European Union. President Yanukovich had initially announced his intention to enter that agreement and initiate liberalising reform in Ukraine, but ultimately broke his promise to the people. This sparked a wave of protests all over the country. The call for honesty, dignity and European values received support of the majority of the population, and sympathy from the international community. But clashes in Ukraine's capital Kyiv between the protestors and the riot police, including unidentified military forces and snipers, became violent, and resulted in the deaths of nearly 130 people. Amid escalating tensions, on 22 February president Yanukovich fled from Kyiv to Russia. On the same day, the Parliament declared that Yanukovich was relieved of his duties in a historic 380-to-0 vote. Russia considered this overthrow of Yanukovich a *coup d'état*, and refused to recognise the government that replaced him. Immediately after the Ukrainian revolution Russia annexed Crimea and began a military intervention in Ukraine. The war in Ukraine's eastern regions is still ongoing.
9. 'Our friends from Emmaus, Faith and Light, and L'Arche are like that. They are our 'professors of human relations.' So in the collegium we will form the Emmaus community. These people do not need 'handouts' from us. They are our 'professors of human relations,'" says Bishop Borys Gudziak during the opening of the newly built Collegium. *Opening of the Patriarch Josyf Slipyj Collegium* <https://ucu.edu.ua/en/about/istoriya-ta-fakty/vidkryttya-kolegiumu-uku/>
10. For example, the National University of 'Kyiv-Mohyla Academy', the Ihor Sikorsky Polytechnic Institute, Kyiv, the *Polish Institute in Kyiv*, the Karazin National University in Kharkiv, the Yurii Fedkovych National University in Chernivtsi, the Mechnikov National University in Odessa, the Ivan Franko National University in Lviv, the Krypiakievych Institute for Ukrainian Studies at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, The Renaissance Foundation in Ukraine, and some others.

11. In a letter to His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI on 11 October 2008 Rector Bishop Boris Gudziak stressed: 'It is impossible to imagine UCU today without the credit of trust from the Church and the solidarity of numerous, sometimes anonymous, donors all over the world. Generous blessings, volunteer services, and financial contributions have created a phenomenon unique for Ukraine: a non-commercial humanities university. The absence of any financial support from the government (prohibited by Ukrainian post-Soviet legislation) gives special freedom but presents a special challenge for the sustainability of the university. It requires tremendous resourcefulness, managerial effort, and personal sacrifice from all members of our academic community.' (*Letter of the Rector Bishop Boris Gudziak to His Holiness Pope BENEDICT XVI*, 11 October 2008).
12. Kyivan Christianity, or the Kyivan Tradition, refers to the continuity of the religious and spiritual tradition of the Kyivan Church, founded in 988 after the baptism of Grand Prince Volodymyr the Great of Kyiv in Chersonesus. The conversion and agreement with Emperor Basil II allowed him to marry Basil's sister, Anna. Upon his return to Kyiv he proceeded to baptise the people there, and abolish the previous pagan cults, thus placing Rus within the orbit of the Christendom. The Christianisation of Kyivan Rus led to the rapid development of the state and a flowering of culture. Even after the disintegration of Rus, and the division of ethnic Ukrainian territories between more successful neighbours, the religious tradition remained paramount. It preserved its integrity, its character, and served as a unifying force and a crucial element of Ukrainian identity through the centuries.
13. According to recent data gathered by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, the most trustworthy institutions for Ukrainians are the Church, volunteers and the Armed Forces. The Christian Church still holds the leading position: the rate of trust toward the church has remained almost unchanged since the Ukraine's latest upheaval, known as the Revolution of Dignity. In early 2017 it equalled 56.7% while also showing the lowest level of mistrust – 17%. For more information (see Kyiv International Institute of Sociology 2017).
14. In November 2005, representatives of 8 Universities from the 6 leading University centres of Ukraine met in Kharkiv in order to establish the first of several expert groups that would form the future Consortium, whose final goal would be to break down state control over higher education, to strengthen the autonomy of universities in Ukraine. See: Український католицький університет. 2005. Новосельський О. *Університетська автономія – складова громадянського суспільства*. <https://ucu.edu.ua/news/universytetska-avtonomiya-skladova-hromadyanskoho-suspilstva/>
15. Recent information about UCU entrants may be seen here: *Ukrainian Catholic University: News* (2018).
16. 'Initially, simply being a normal academic institution with objective and transparent admissions and examination procedures made a great difference to many young people searching for truth and new foundations for their lives in a post-communist society. Freedom from corruption, a clear mission statement, an academic culture of excellence, honesty and partnership between students and faculty, a commitment to university autonomy from the state, and an underlying cooperation of faith and reason have been at the heart of our mission and identity.' See: Letter of the Rector Bishop Boris Gudziak to His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, 11 October 2008.
17. see Gaetan (2010).

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