

# Carolina's Engagement with Moldova a Focus of Recent Parliamentarian Visit

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In late May 2012, a group of parliamentarians from Moldova visited North Carolina to learn about the North Carolina-Moldova State Partnership Program and to discuss ongoing and future projects. Sponsored by the National Guard State Partnership program, the NC-Moldova Partnership has been formalized since 1999.

During the visit to North Carolina, the delegation participated in a roundtable discussion with representatives from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which maintains program collaborations via the Center for Slavic, Eurasian and East European Studies, the Gillings School of Global Public Health and its chapter of Engineers Without Borders, and the School of Dentistry.

From offering disaster preparedness support to sending Fulbright scholars to Moldova to working on dental health in some of the country's most underserved areas, Carolina faculty and students have been deeply engaged with Moldova over the past two decades.

"It's very exciting for me to advise and work with students who are applying to, and serving as, Fulbright scholars in Moldova," said Jacqueline M. Olich, associate director of the Center for

Slavic, Eurasian and East European Studies (CSEEEES). Both CSEEEES and the Curriculum in Russian and East European Studies provide area studies expertise to the NC-Moldova Partnership. There are currently three Fulbright students from UNC studying in Moldova.

Rick Mumford, clinical associate professor at the UNC School of Dentistry and director of the Dentistry in Service to Communities Program lauded the reciprocal relationship between the school and Moldovan government and international non-profits. Each year the school sends four UNC dental students to Moldova in exchange for two Moldovan dental students. The exchanges take place alongside additional community outreach programs by the School conducted in Moldova.

“We are committed to making this relationship continue—it’s one built on leadership and mutual trust,” said Mumford about the partnership.

Engagement with Moldova in the Gillings School of Global Public Health has focused on health education and training and disaster preparedness programs. Faculty have traveled to Moldova to deliver lectures on quality of healthcare, patient safety, risk management, comparative health systems and health reforms and ethical issues. Working in conjunction with the N.C. National Guard, Bill Gentry, director of the Community Preparedness and Health Policy Program, facilitated and evaluated an exercise program designed to increase disaster awareness in the Black Sea region.

Since 2008, UNC students in the Gillings School of Global Public Health have been involved in the NC-Moldova Partnership through the UNC chapter of Engineers Without Borders. Students have traveled twice to Moldova to assess the water-sanitation-health education situation and prepare a proposal to improve water and sanitation facilities in some of Moldova’s schools and to develop and implement a health education curriculum.

The group of Moldovan parliamentarians that visited UNC in May is the third such delegation hosted annually by the University since 2010, through the International Affairs Council in Raleigh. In recent years, UNC has also hosted the Ambassador of Moldova to the U.S., Igor Munteanu, and the former U.S. Ambassador to Moldova, Asif Chaudhry, to meet with faculty involved in the NC-Moldova Partnership and discuss opportunities for collaboration.