

## **Trends in US-based Central Asian Language Instruction: The Case of Indiana University's Summer Language Workshop**

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### **Abstract**

This paper focuses on the administrative aspects of Central Asian language intensive summer language training, drawing chiefly on data, examples, syllabi, and other materials from the Indiana University Summer Language Workshop, which, for over twenty years, has offered intensive courses in a broad range of languages of Central Asia. The national picture of US-based summer programs for Central Asian language teaching is reflected in this case study of one of the most historically robust of these programs. Discussion includes factors affecting language offerings each year, an overview of funding mechanisms that support this programming and impact the state and availability of Central Asian language instruction, enrollment and hiring trends, student demographics, instructional support mechanisms, and language materials.

### **Introduction**

Intensive instruction in the Central Asian languages has been a feature of the Indiana University (IU) Summer Language Workshop (the Workshop) curriculum for over 20 years. This paper focuses on the administrative aspects of Central Asian language training, drawing on data, examples, and other materials from the Workshop. Specifically, this paper provides an overview of the program with a focus on languages taught and the decisions that drive course offerings, enrollment trends, students, funding, faculty, instructional support, and language materials. In this paper, "Central Asian languages" include Iranian (Dari, Pashto, Persian) and Caucasian (Azerbaijani and Georgian) languages.

### **Language Offerings**

#### *Historical overview:*

Georgian was the first Caucasian language offered in the Workshop, followed by Uzbek, which was first offered beginning in 1991. Georgian was offered continuously until 2013 and Uzbek was offered uninterruptedly until 2014. In 1993, Azerbaijani and Kazakh were added. Kazakh was taught continuously from 1993 until 2013, while Azerbaijani was offered through 2012 (and is likely to be offered again beginning in 2016). Kyrgyz was offered once to two students in 1994. This is the same year Turkmen, which was offered continuously through 2009, was added (Turkmen will be offered again in 2015). In 1997 Chechen was offered to three students. Tibetan was offered in 2001 and 2002 to a total of eight students. In 2003, Pashto, Tajik and Uyghur were added. Tajik was offered continuously through 2011, Pashto through 2012 and Uyghur through 2013. That last summer, it was only offered at the intermediate level to two students. Mongolian was added in 2007, Dari in 2010, Tatar and Turkish in 2011, Persian in 2012 and Urdu (in combination with Hindi) was offered for the first time in 2014 to six students. Dari was last offered, at two levels, in 2013. Mongolian, Persian, Tatar, Turkish, and Urdu continued to be offered.

Factors determining language offerings each year include national student demand; the research needs of IU faculty and graduate students; academic year enrollments in the IU Department of Central Asian Studies

(CEUS); prioritization by CEUS and IU's Inner Asian and Uralic National Resource Center (IAUNRC); funding from IAUNRC and other national centers with specific interest in supporting particular languages or groups of languages; and textbook development by other units at IU, most notably by the Center for the Languages of the Central Asian Region (CeLCAR).

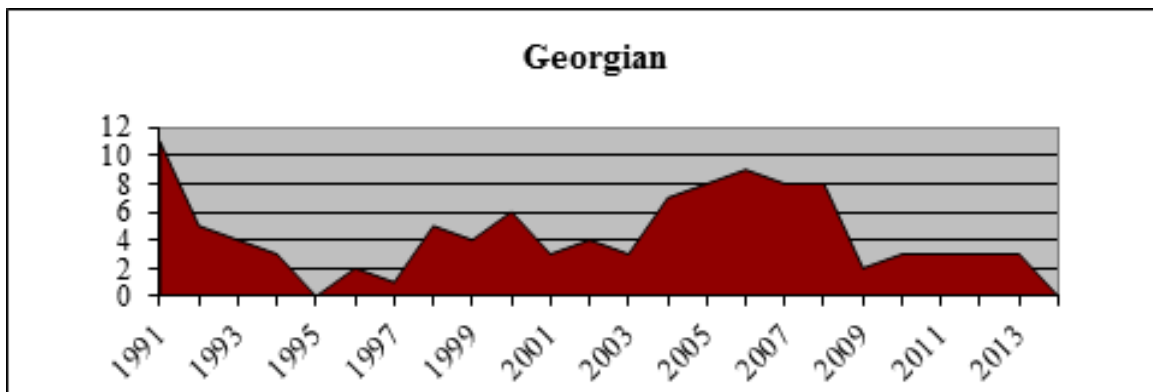
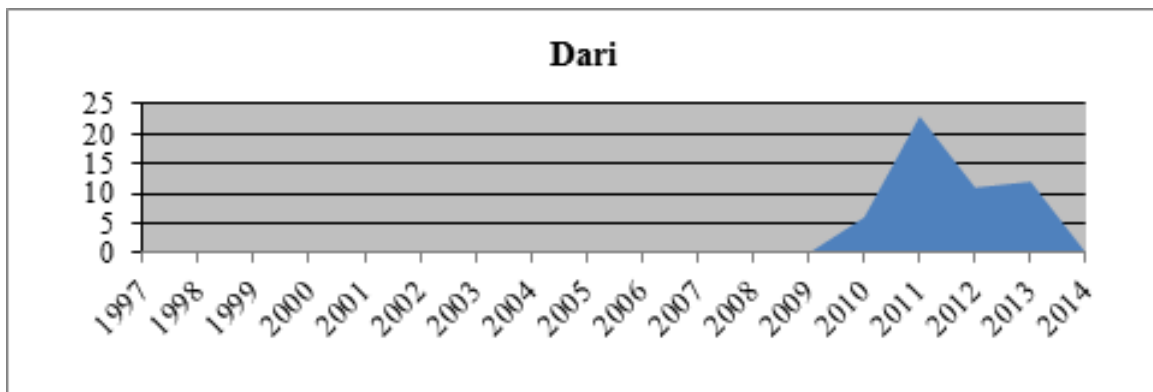
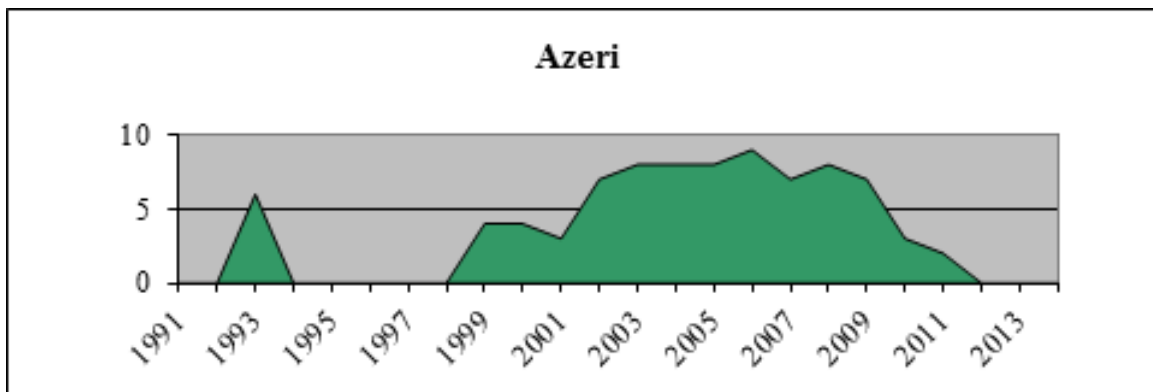
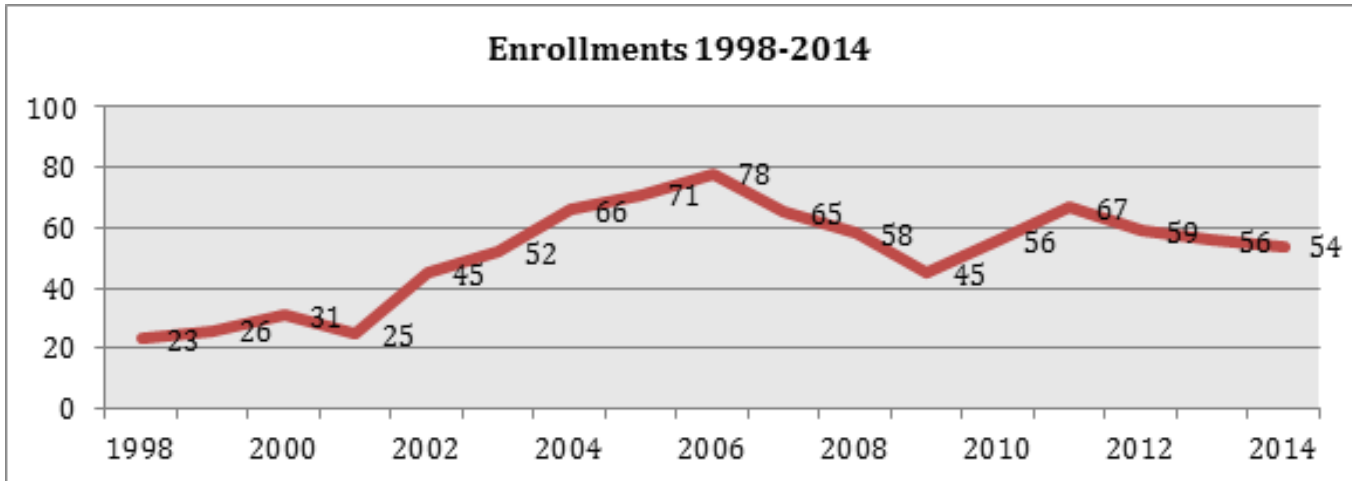
A guiding principle for the Workshop in deciding which courses to offer is promotion of and support for academic year language study, and the academic priorities for CEUS and its faculty as manifest in their research and teaching interests. Over the past 23 years, these academic-year priorities have increasingly been the primary motivator for offering various languages through the Workshop. Indeed, this academic mission impacts student demand (i.e. enrollments) as can be seen in the cases of Uyghur and Kazakh. As faculty focus has shifted away from the regions where these languages are spoken (because of political factors affecting access to the region for Uyghur and retirements for Kazakh), fewer students are able to pursue research in these areas at IU and student demand has decreased significantly.

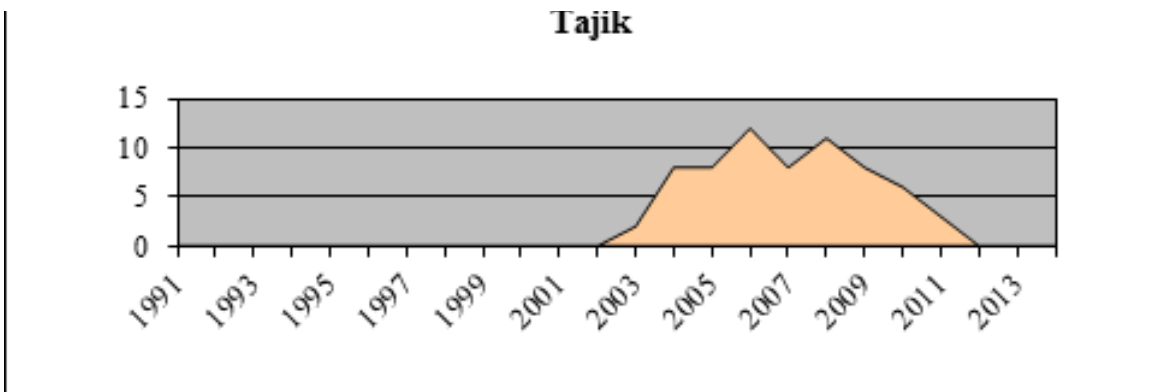
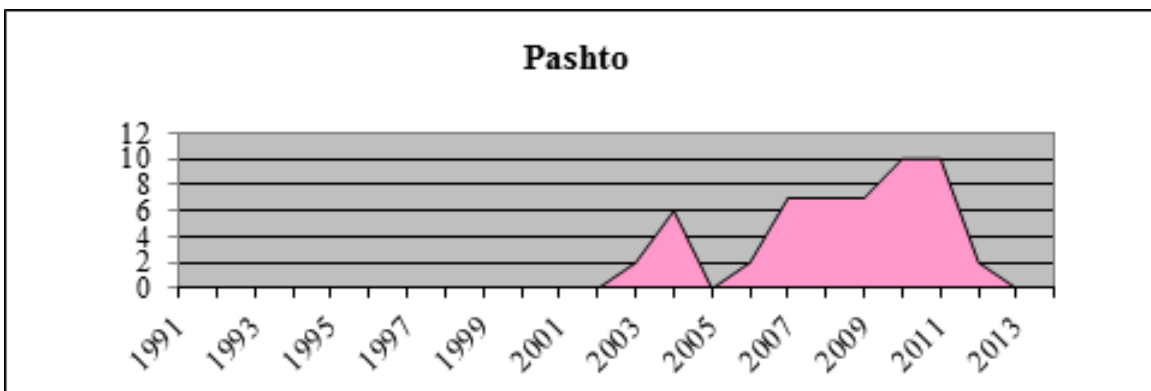
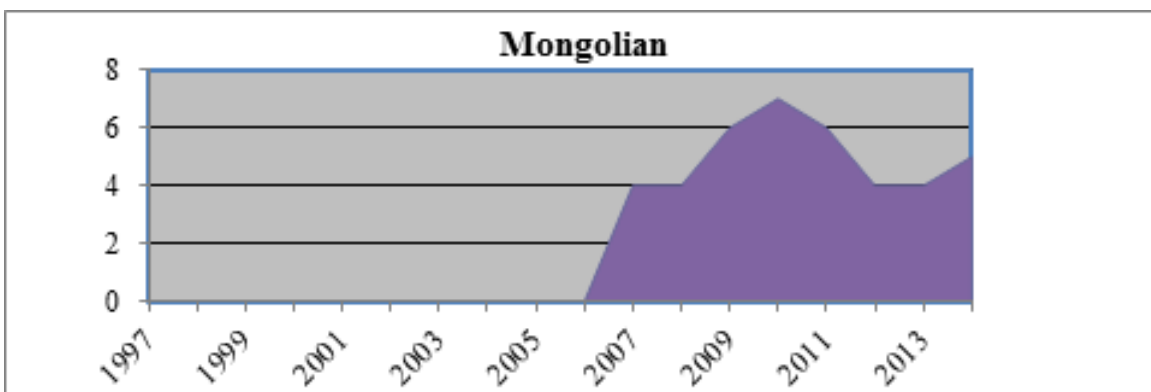
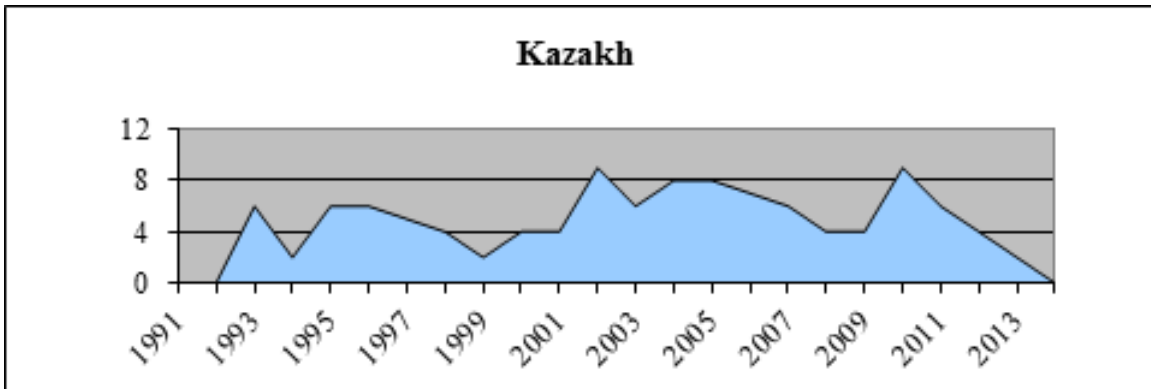
Another major academic mission at IU supported by the Workshop is textbook development in CeLCAR. The Workshop offers an ideal setting for textbook developers who seek to assess how well drafts of the materials work in the classroom. Students in the Workshop represent a national audience of learners at the graduate and undergraduate level from institutions across the US as well as professors and other professionals. Most students of Central Asian languages are experienced language learners, so are discerning about the methodologies and approaches employed in class and in their textbooks. They use the CeLCAR materials intensively for two months and complete anonymous surveys that provide CeLCAR developers with feedback at the midterm and final points of the program. Some of the developers also teach from their textbooks in the summer and can thus gauge the efficacy of their texts daily in practice. Thus every year, the Workshop leadership consults with CeLCAR about course offerings that would best help them in their work. Finally, Turkish has been added and expanded to two levels to support the work of the Turkish language Flagship, which works together with the Workshop director on curriculum and hiring for the Turkish courses.

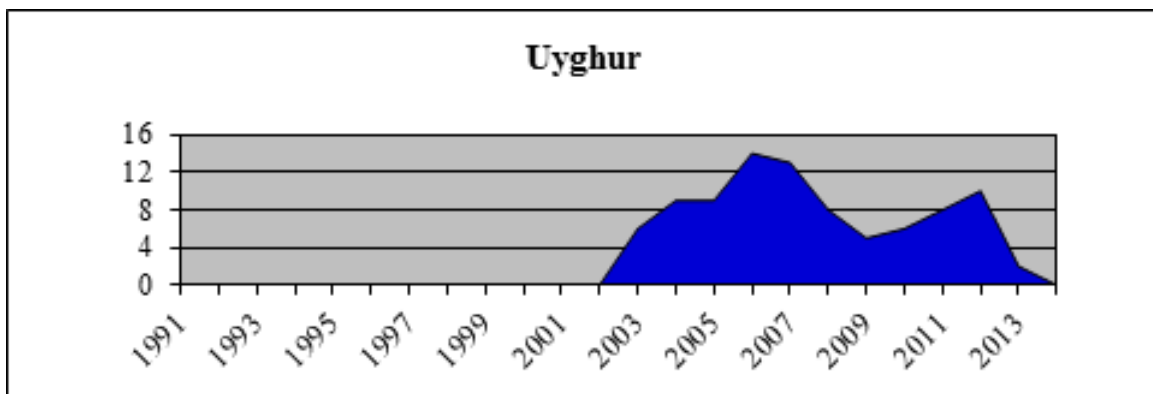
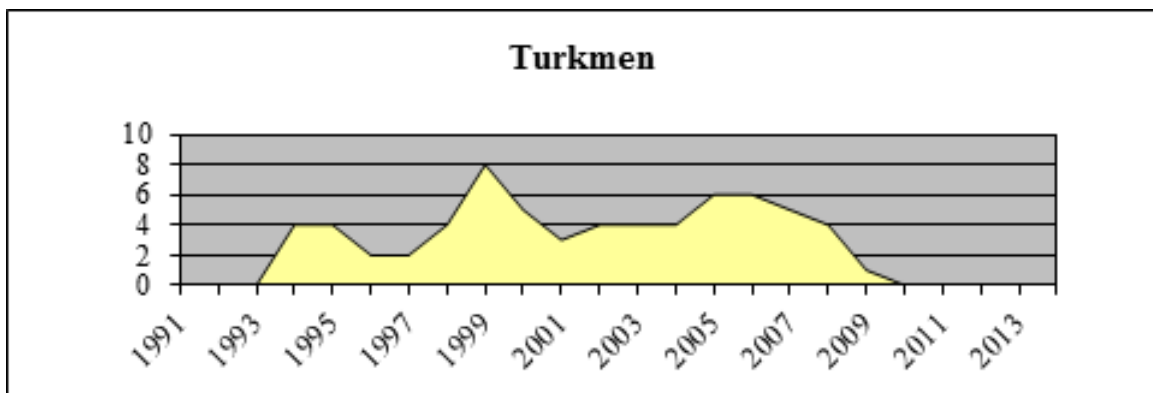
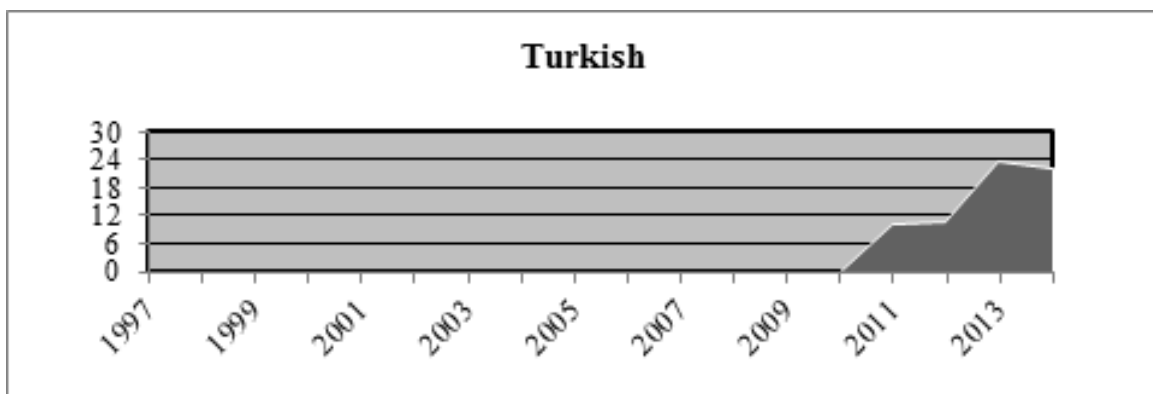
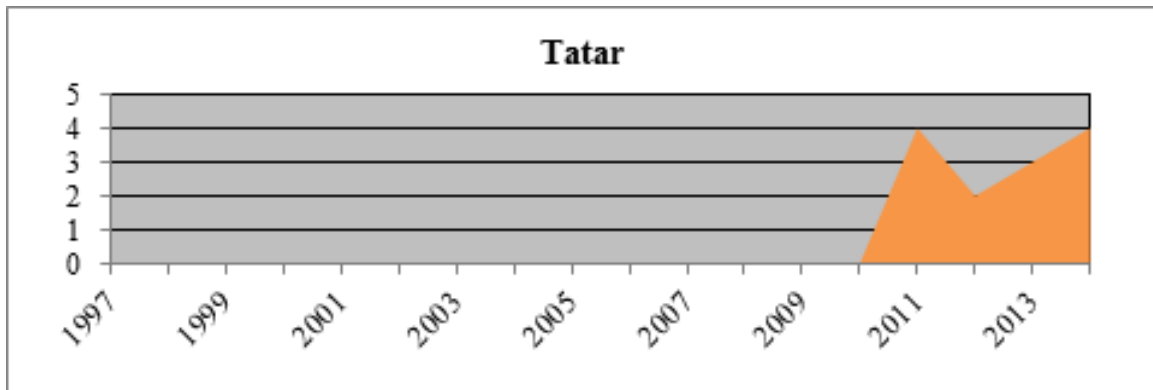
The principle of promoting academic year language study means aligning the curricula and syllabi in the Workshop with those in the academic year so that students can seamlessly enroll in the next level of the language after a summer of intensive study in the Workshop. In many cases, this dictates summer instructional hiring decisions, because it is ideal for CEUS faculty members teach the courses both in the summer and academic year. This principle also influences decisions about summer course offerings. The Workshop will not offer courses if they threaten enrollments in the academic year, which has increasingly led to decisions not to offer more than one or two levels of instruction in each language in the summer or not to offer courses at all.

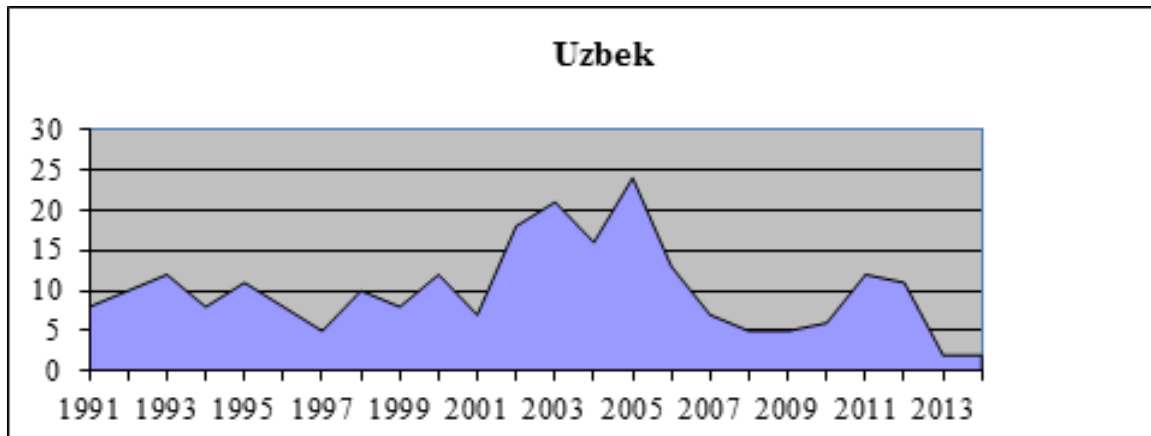
### **Enrollments: trends and factors affecting enrollments**

The following charts track the enrollments trends for all languages except Chechen, Urdu, and Tibetan (which have only been offered once or twice respectively and whose enrollments are detailed above). Factors that most impact enrollments include the research priorities of students and faculty as described above, funding, access to study abroad in regions where the languages are spoken, and world events. For example, when they were high priority for the US military, Afghan languages attracted many students, but there is much less demand for Dari and Pashto than there was even five years ago.









## Students

In the Workshop, over 75% of those pursuing Central Asian languages are graduate students. The majority of undergraduate students are in the Reserve Officer Training Corps. As noted above, students also include professionals working for the government and professors (since 2009 government agencies represented include the National Security Agency, and Departments of Defense, Energy, and State; faculty have come from IU, Northwestern, the University of Chicago, and other schools). Most students have funding for study abroad following their Workshop study and many spend time in country at some point. They study history, politics, religion, biology, anthropology, resource management, architecture, ethnomusicology, linguistics, etc. In 2011, a group of female students started the national Women's Central Eurasian Network in the Workshop, because it was a place where many of them met and could interact for the first time on a large scale. That same year, the Workshop initiated two years of graduate student roundtables for students to talk about their research, doing research in Central Asia, having opportunity to present on their research. Since that time, students present on their research or time overseas in other extracurricular programming.

## Funding

There are two main types of funding for summer intensive language programs: funding for instructional support and funding for student fellowships. Student funding includes Department of Education Title VI Foreign Language and Areas Studies Fellowships (FLAS); Title VIII funding that comes through flow-through agencies like the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) and directly from grants from the State Department to the Workshop; scholarships for ROTC undergraduate students through the national Project GO program sponsored by the Department of Defense's Defense Language and National Security Education Program (DLNSEO); and for military linguists and language specialists through the DLNSEO-sponsored Language Training Center grant the Workshop received for 2013. Funding for faculty hires has come from the Title VIII flow-through agencies and Title VI National Resource Centers (NRC) at IU and other institutions. IAUNRC annually works with a consortium of other NRCs that regularly contribute funds to support instruction for select groups of languages depending on the focus of each NRC. In the past decade, especially most recently, there have been serious fluctuations in these funding sources because of changes in agency priorities and also because of partners' priorities. For example, SSRC stopped receiving funding from Title VIII to support summer language programs in 2008 and in the 2013 fiscal year, the State Department did not appropriate any funding for the Title VIII program. Similarly, serious cuts to the Title VI National Resource Centers in 2011 and again in the 2014 Title VI competition curtailed funding for instructional salaries, which limits the Workshop's ability to offer courses with very low enrollments. In 2014 these affects were felt most seriously as fewer fellowships

were available to support graduate students and professionals and less funding was available to support languages with very low enrollments.

## **Faculty**

The first instructors in Central Asian Languages in the Workshop came from overseas and other institutions in the US. All were native speakers. The majority of these summer hires returned annually to teach and instruction is fairly consistent each year. There have been some minor fluctuations in Azerbaijani and Kazakh instructors. The majority of changes have been seen when a second instructor is needed for the rare summer when a second or third level of Dari, Mongolian, Pashto, or Uyghur is taught. The Georgian instructor was a faculty member from the IU Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. Beginning in 1999, the senior lecturer in Persian from CEUS taught Azerbaijani for ten years with just one break in the summer of 2008. In 2006, a materials developer from CeLCAR, a graduate student in the IU Department of Linguistics who also worked as a CeLCAR materials developer, and two new CEUS faculty members began teaching regularly in the summers in Pashto, Uzbek (both levels), and Uyghur respectively. A new CEUS faculty hire in Mongolian language joined the Workshop faculty in 2007. Two more CeLCAR materials developers began teaching Dari and second-year Uyghur in 2010. In 2012, a doctoral student from the IU Department of Anthropology began teaching Persian and a Masters student from CEUS began teaching Turkish. These were only the second and third students hired to teach Central Asian languages. The CEUS student is the first and only non-native speaker hired to teach a Central Asian language in the Workshop. With the addition of intermediate Turkish in 2013, an academic year hire from CEUS and the Turkish Language Flagship joined the faculty.

All of those with academic year appointments at IU have taught each summer their languages were offered. There are two exceptions to this: in 2013 one of the CeLCAR developers finished her degree and could not teach because of restrictions on her visa. And in 2014, IU's senior lecturer in Uyghur taught Uzbek (she was raised and educated in Uzbekistan).

For many years IAUNRC, CeLCAR, and CEUS controlled the Central Asian hiring decisions, faculty oversight, and instructional budgets for the Workshop. When the Workshop underwent fundamental restructuring by the College of Arts and Sciences in 2011, instructional oversight, hiring, and budgeting processes for the Central Asian languages reverted to the Workshop director. Though this work is now centralized, the director continues to work closely with the directors of the IAUNRC, CeLCAR, and CEUS on all of these matters.

## **Instructional Support**

Central Asian language faculty have always participated in instructor orientations at the start of each summer, pedagogy workshop conducted by outside specialists, and have benefitted from anonymous midterm and final student course evaluations. Until the centralization of all faculty oversight in 2011, the CEUS Language Coordinator was responsible for otherwise supporting the curricula and faculty in the Central Asian languages. A graduate student in Linguistics and Second Language Studies was hired in this role in 2004. With excellent attention to detail and a fine grasp of best practices in second language acquisition, she began a series of regular faculty orientations that focused on aligning the various methodologies employed in the Central Asian language classrooms with a focus on communicative competencies, use of authentic materials and multimedia, and discussions about expectations in American classrooms. This last point was critical for many of the faculty who were trained and otherwise taught in Central Asia using primarily Soviet methods. To reinforce work done in the orientations, she also regularly observed classes in the summers, using a rubric for providing feedback and underscoring the most critical ideas and approaches introduced earlier in the summer. Simultaneous with the 2011 change in Central Asian language administration (including instructional oversight) in the Workshop, a new CEUS language coordinator was hired. However, the effects of the earlier language coordinator's efforts

are still very much in evidence in the high quality, student-centered, engaging CEUS language courses taught since 2011.

Indeed, the current Central Asian language instructors are some of the most seasoned teachers in the Workshop each summer. Their work is based in language acquisition research and national standards and this is reflected in excellent student evaluations, the director's observation reports, and feedback from outside specialists who visit Workshop classes for various purposes. Since 2012, CEUS faculty members have been leaders at meetings and presentations for all Workshop instructors and have generously shared their expertise with other Workshop colleagues.

### Language Materials

Of the 15 Central Asian languages that have been offered in the Workshop, only five have had published materials easily accessed by students in the US from the first summer when those languages have been taught: Georgian, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, and Uzbek. The first published textbooks used in the Workshop were Howard Aronson's *Georgian: A Reading Grammar* published by Slavica Publishers and Khayrulla Ismatulla's *Modern Literary Uzbek* from the IU Uralic and Altaic Series published by Routledge. These were the only materials published in the US used in the Workshop's Central Asian language classes until 2009. In other languages, course materials included books published in Central Asia that instructors brought for students; instructors' own materials produced for the courses; CeLCAR materials under development for Dari, Kazakh, Pashto, Tajik, Uzbek, and Uyghur; and a textbook published in Mongolia students purchase from the Mongolian society. In 2009, the Georgian instructor published her own textbook with Hippocrene, which replaced the Aronson volume that year. Georgetown University Press published CeLCAR's Tajik textbook in 2009 and its Uzbek book in 2010; these published versions have been used in the beginning Tajik and Uzbek courses since then.

### In lieu of references

The following tables detail Central Eurasian language offerings and enrollments in the Workshop from 1998-2014.

1998

Language	Levels offered	Combined Enrollments
Georgian	1	5
Kazakh	1	4
Turkmen	1	4
Uzbek	1 and 2	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>23</b>



1999

<b>Language</b>	<b>Levels offered</b>	<b>Combined Enrollments</b>
Azerbaijani	1	4
Georgian	1	4
Kazakh	1	2
Turkmen	1	8
Uzbek	1 and 2	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>26</b>

2000

<b>Language</b>	<b>Levels offered</b>	<b>Combined Enrollments</b>
Azerbaijani	1	4
Georgian	1	6
Kazakh	1	4
Tibetan	1	3
Turkmen	1	5
Uzbek	1 and 2	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>31</b>

2001

<b>Language</b>	<b>Levels offered</b>	<b>Combined Enrollments</b>
Azerbaijani	1	3
Georgian	1	3
Kazakh	1	4
Tibetan	1	5
Turkmen	1	3
Uzbek	1 and 2	7
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>

2002

<b>Language</b>	<b>Levels offered</b>	<b>Combined Enrollments</b>
Azerbaijani	1 and 2	7
Georgian	1	4
Kazakh	1	9
Tibetan	1	3
Turkmen	1 and 2	4
Uzbek	1 and 2	18
<b>Total</b>		<b>45</b>

2003

Language	Levels offered	Combined Enrollments
Azerbaijani	1 and 2	8
Georgian	1	3
Kazakh	1 and 2	6
Pashto	1	2
Tajik	1	2
Turkmen	1 and 2	4
Uyghur	1 and 2	6
Uzbek	1 and 2	21
<b>Total</b>		<b>52</b>

2004

Language	Levels offered	Combined Enrollments
Azerbaijani	1 and 2	8
Georgian	1	7
Kazakh	1 and 2	8
Pashto	1	6
Tajik	1	8
Turkmen	1 and 2	4
Uyghur	1	9
Uzbek	1 and 2	16
<b>Total</b>		<b>66</b>

2005

Language	Levels offered	Combined Enrollments
Azerbaijani	1 and 2	8
Georgian	1	8
Kazakh	1 and 2	8
Tajik	1	8
Turmen	1 and 2	6
Uyghur	1 and 2	9
Uzbek	1 and 2	24
<b>Total</b>		<b>71</b>

2006

<b>Language</b>	<b>Levels offered</b>	<b>Combined Enrollments</b>
Azerbaijani	1 and 2	9
Georgian	1	9
Kazakh	1 and 2	7
Pashto	1 and 2	2
Tajik	1 and 2	12
Turkmen	1 and 2	6
Uyghur	1 and 2	9
Uzbek	1 and 2	24
<b>Total</b>		<b>78</b>

2007

<b>Language</b>	<b>Levels offered</b>	<b>Combined Enrollments</b>
Azerbaijani	1 and 2	7
Georgian	1	8
Kazakh	1 and 2	6
Mongolian	1	4
Pashto	1	7
Tajik	1 and 2	8
Turkmen	1 and 2	5
Uyghur	1 and 2	13
Uzbek	1 and 2	7
<b>Total</b>		<b>65</b>

2008

<b>Language</b>	<b>Levels offered</b>	<b>Combined Enrollments</b>
Azerbaijani	1 and 2	8
Georgian	1	8
Kazakh	1 and 2	4
Mongolian	1	4
Pashto	1	6
Tajik	1 and 2	11
Turkmen	1 and 2	4
Uyghur	1 and 2	8
Uzbek	1 and 2	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>58</b>

2009

Language	Levels offered	Combined Enrollments
Azerbaijani	1 and 2	7
Georgian	1	2
Kazakh	1	4
Mongolian	1	6
Pashto	1	7
Tajik	1 and 2	8
Turkmen	1	1
Uyghur	1 and 2	5
Uzbek	1 and 2	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>45</b>

2010

Language	Levels offered	Combined Enrollments
Azerbaijani	1	3
Dari	1, 2, and 3	6
Georgian	1	3
Kazakh	1 and 2	9
Mongolian	1	7
Pashto	1 and 2	10
Tajik	1, 2, and 3	6
Uyghur	1, 2, and 3	6
Uzbek	1 and 2	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>56</b>

2011

Language	Levels offered	Combined Enrollments
Azerbaijani	1	2
Dari	1 and 2	3
Georgian	1	3
Kazakh	1	6
Mongolian	1 and 2	6
Pashto	1 and 2	10
Tajik	1	3
Tatar	1	4
Turkish	1	10
Uyghur	1	8
Uzbek	1 and 2	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>67</b>

2012

<b>Language</b>	<b>Levels offered</b>	<b>Combined Enrollments</b>
Dari	1 and 2	<b>11</b>
Georgian	1	<b>3</b>
Kazakh	1	<b>4</b>
Mongolian	1	<b>4</b>
Pashto	1	<b>2</b>
Persian	1	11
Tatar	1	2
Turkish	1	11
Uyghur	1 and 2	10
Uzbek	1 and 2	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>59</b>

2013

<b>Language</b>	<b>Levels offered</b>	<b>Combined Enrollments</b>
Dari	1 and 2	<b>12</b>
Georgian	1	<b>3</b>
Kazakh	1	<b>2</b>
Mongolian	1	<b>4</b>
Persian	1	<b>4</b>
Tatar	1	3
Turkish	1 and 2	24
Uyghur	2	2
Uzbek	1	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>56</b>

2014

<b>Language</b>	<b>Levels offered</b>	<b>Combined Enrollments</b>
Mongolian	1	<b>4</b>
Persian	1	<b>14</b>
Tatar	1	<b>4</b>
Turkish	1 and 2	<b>26</b>
Urdu	1	<b>6</b>
Uzbek	1	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>56</b>