RIDRU's White Paper Contest

RIDRU's November conference will include White paper presentations and discussions. All submissions will be **peer reviewed and posted** on RIDRU's website. The top three teams will receive **prizes of $400, $300, $200 CND** respectively.

Criteria

The White Paper should:
1. be constructed by an interdisciplinary team of graduate and undergraduate students from **one university**.
2. focus on a contemporary issue related to reform in Ukraine.
3. be 15-25 pages long (double spaced and not crowded).
4. include the following:
    a. Title page with topic, names of authors, subject specialization of each author, and name of their home university
    b. Introduction and summary (or abstract)
    c. Background and problem(s)
    d. Proposed solution/Recommendations
    e. Conclusion
    f. References
    g. Visual/graphic aids and/or appendices with examples and support evidence
5. be written in accessible English for the general public

Please submit your White Paper on or before **November 6, 2017** to: obilash@ualberta.ca.

Papers will be posted on the RIDRU website no later than November 15, 2017.

Prizes will be announced on November 17, 2017.

Frequently asked Questions about preparing a White Paper

1. What is a White Paper?

A White Paper is a document that argues a specific perspective or position on an issue and/or proposes a solution to a problem. A White Paper is focused, purposeful, authoritative, informative, and persuasive. It is clearly organized into parts and written in accessible language. It avoids extensive detail and, when possible, avoids technical or specialized terms—and explains them when they do appear. White Papers are strengthened with images such as tables, graphs, or photographs that enhance, complement, or concretize the text. Many White Papers contain citations and a References page as well.

2. What is its purpose?

Agencies, corporations, and individuals write White Papers in order to persuade others to make a policy change, adopt a specific attitude or perform a specific action. Writers use White Papers to help make positive change in the world, either in the short or long term.

3. Who should be on the team?

Strike a team of 3-4 undergraduate and graduate students. Together your team must have specialization in at least three subject or discipline areas.

A team approach will enable you to:
- Conduct more research
- Present multiple perspectives
- Discuss and better select the arguments and visuals
- Share the final editing and revising

4. How should we choose the topic?
Select a topic of direct relevance to the reforms in Ukraine. For example,
- Gender Aspects of Higher Education
- Internalization of Higher Education
- Strategies for overcoming resistance to change

The following resources might also help you select a topic:
> Указ президента про стратегію сталого розвитку "Україна 2020"
> http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/5/2015

> Презентація головних ідей стратегії сталого розвитку "Україна 2020"
> http://www.nbuviap.gov.ua/images/4/str.pdf

5. How should the White Paper be organized?

The exact form or organization of a White Paper is flexible. The writing team will make choices based on a range of factors including criteria, intended audience(s), personal position on the issue, and individual/group writing style. However, most White Papers contain some version of the following sections:

- Title page with topic, names of authors, subject specialization of each author, and name of their home university
- Introduction and summary (or abstract)
- Background and problem(s)
- Proposed solution/Recommendations
- Conclusion

- References
- Graphic or visual aids and/or appendices with examples

6. Who is the audience for the White Paper?

Your primary audience is the general public, but will also include RIDRU readers and politicians.

Think about what they care about, worry about, already know, and need or want to know about your topic. Let the answers to these questions inform all decisions about composing and revising your document.

7. How do we prepare to write our White Paper?

To write an effective White Paper, the 3-4 graduate and undergraduate student writing team must:

a) *Be sure the team members meet the criteria of the White Paper Contest*
b) *Choose a topic or issue that relates to reforms in Ukraine*
c) *Research what has been written about this topic or your proposed solutions as they relate to Ukraine, other post-Soviet states, or elsewhere.*
d) *Save and record all references.*
e) *Know and meet the expectations and needs of the audience – Your primary audience is the general public, but will also include RIDRU readers and politicians.*

The team must also:

f) *Clearly state the issue or problem.*
Draw from your research and your personal experience to clearly state the problem or issue. Stay focused and avoid digressions— though brief, relevant examples or anecdotes can help your argument

g) *Provide background on the issue or problem.*
Research your topic and give your audience enough general background or context so they can follow your argument and make an informed decision about how to think or act. The background can include historical developments, evidence, diverse schools of thought, current controversies, media stories, impactful personal stories, statistics in the form of charts or graphs or other helpful information. By providing background—especially with citations—you will show your audience that your team is knowledgeable on this topic and thus trust your ideas and solutions.

h) *Analyze the issue or problem.*

It is important to analyze, not merely present, your information. Show your audience how you arrived at your findings or suggestions by analyzing your quantitative and qualitative data, information, and experiences. Draw careful conclusions. Your data should be replicable or re-searchable. Remember that a critical view of arguments presented in existing research shows that you have thought about your topic deeply, and sought out the best ideas

i) *Clearly organize the paper using subheadings.*
A White Paper should be easily read, scanned, and understood by interested but busy people. Break up your content into easy-to-digest sections, and use clear subheads that indicate what each section is about. White space is important in White Papers for reader comfort and understanding, so do not fill your paper with long and wide blocks of text. For ideas on creating subheadings, read other White Papers and consider your own material and the needs of your audiences. Examples of possible White Paper subheadings are: Table of Contents, Summary (Executive summary or Abstract), Introduction, The Problem, Background, The Solution, Benefits, Conclusion and References. These examples might help you:

White paper on social enterprises in Ontario:
https://www.marsdd.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/MaRSReport-Social-venture-finance.pdf
White paper on the future of the PhD in the Humanities:
http://iplai.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/white_paper_on_the_future_of_the_phd_in_the_humanities_dec_2013_1.pdf
White paper on putting girls first:
http://www.soroptimist.org/whitepapers/whitepaperdocs/wpputtinggirlsfirst.pdf
White paper on the income gap between aboriginal peoples and the rest of Canada:
http://ywcacanada.ca/data/research_docs/00000121.pdf

j) *Present a straightforward, convincing, and engaging argument on how to think about or solve the issue or problem.*
The argument is at the heart of the White Paper. Use information (statistics, evidence of success and/or failures in other places, respected learned sources) and experiences to convince your audience to think about or solve the issue or problem in a certain way. Many elements can work together to interest and persuade the audience. The key is to get to all your points as quickly as possible: Name the problem, make the audience care about it, describe and analyze it, give some essential background, lay out a solution, and provide key evidence and reasons to support that solution. And do it all with direct language that carries a sense of urgency and earnestness.

k) Lay out a solution and recommendations.

Craft your solutions so that they are logical extensions of your argument. Direct your recommendations to specific authorities - not just individuals, but the bodies they represent – including policy making organizations, institutions, and government bodies, and the public at large.

l) Craft an effective title

A strong title is essential for your White Paper. A title should be carefully crafted—not an afterthought. It's often best to craft your title when the paper is completed. Only then will you know the content well enough to capture it in a concise, engaging title.

In developing your title, follow these guidelines:
- Give your argument away—name your solution in your title (Example: Use 'ing' words such as "preventing," "eliminating," "defending")
- Shorter is better
- Break longer titles into sections using a colon (:)
- Avoid vague or general titles: Be specific and direct
- Avoid jargon or technical terms
- Avoid clichés or tired, worn out phrases
- Emphasize actions and solutions, not impact (avoid: "Impact of" or "State of")
- Consider posing a question
- "Test run" your title on friends: Ask them if it makes them want to read on.
- Be sure to deliver what your title promises
- Examples of effective titles:
    o "Slaying the Complacency Monster with Social Media"
    o "Saving Time and Money by Inclusion: The hidden value of doing right in schools"
    o "Smile at Strangers and Build a Nation"
    o "The High Tech Office: A Special Report for Organizations Drowning in Paper"
    o "Saving Energy for a Better Future"
    o "Bribery: The Quiet Killer of Equal Rights"

8. Who can help us compose, revise, and edit our White Paper?

To be successful, be prepared to write multiple drafts. Start at least one month before the deadline and set interim deadlines. Use all resources at hand—
- feedback on content (first) and form (later) from classmates instructors and others,
- help from tutors in a writing center with organizing and drafting,

- tips on form from writing style guides,
- samples of White Papers on diverse topics, and
- help with final polish from grammar-checking software and proofreading by colleagues and professors.