REEEC Alumni Profile:
Andrew Scoulas

“What kind of job can you get with that degree?” This is perhaps the most frequently asked question of students majoring in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies. It is an understandable concern of parents and other relatives, as well as of prospective students themselves. And, it’s a question that is quite challenging to answer since career paths in the liberal arts and social sciences are often non-linear. In the interest of providing a concrete answer to this question, we caught up with 1995 Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies alumnus Andrew Scoulas to find out how he put his bachelor’s degree to work in the real world. As a new graduate in 1995, Andrew continued to deepen the professional experiences he had already initiated while being a full-time student.

In his sophomore year of college, he spent his summer breaks as an office assistant at the Institute for Real Estate Management. By May of 1995, he had been promoted from this temporary position into a permanent office clerk where his responsibilities increased. In October of 1996, he was hired at the National Association of REALTORS®, his current employer. Within two years, Andrew had been promoted to Information Specialist within the National Association of REALTORS®, and was responsible for serving its 800,000 members. Seven months later he became the International Programs Coordinator. In this position, he prepared briefs for National Association of REALTORS® staff, attended conferences of the Russian Guild of REALTORS® and the Russian Society of Appraisers in Moscow, and dealt with many of the administrative and pedagogical aspects of the courses offered leading to the Certified International Property Specialist designation.

Since June 2000 Andrew has been serving as a Policy Consultant with the National Association of REALTORS®, which now has more than one million members. He manages the Organizational Standards Program database, analyzes state and local association governing documents to ensure compliance with NAR policies, as well as maintaining communication with members and the general public via phone, email, and the organization’s website.

Throughout his career Andrew has found multiple uses for his advanced Russian language skills, which he acquired through domestic study at the University of Illinois and abroad at St. Petersburg State University. In his current position as a Policy Consultant, he often receives internal requests for consultation when dealing with Russian translations and participates in meetings with Russian delegations when they visit the office. In nearly all the jobs he has held since graduation, he has put to use his research and writing skills honed through the interdisciplinary degree in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies.

Besides earning an undergraduate degree, Andrew credits a specific relationship with one professor as having directly influenced his career. During his time as a student, he says “…I was able to take 4 Russian history classes with Professor Andrew Verner. In addition to having a commanding presence in the classroom, he had an excellent eye for detail in terms of content, and he was also attentive to students’ writing styles. To this day, his constructive comments and observations have a positive influence on my professional writing.”

Additionally, the part-time job Andrew held during his time as a student has had a great impact on his career path. He says “the benefits [of working at the Institute of Real Estate Management] were numerous because I made many professional friendships which I have maintained to this day. At my first job,
I befriended a manager…and I later worked for him. That job later became a stepping stone to other jobs, including my current position. Additionally, earning a part-time salary during summers helped me pay my tuition.”

In his spare time, Andrew enjoys photography and listening to music, keeping up with current events and traveling. And, although he graduated from the University of Illinois in 1995, he continues to expand his language skills. In addition to Russian, he has studied Ukrainian, French and Korean. Since 2011 Andrew has studied German at the Goethe Institut in Chicago. In April of this year he began B1 (Intermediate level) courses and in July earned his A2 (Advanced Beginner level) ranking. Andrew also recently started coursework for earning the Certified International Property Specialist designation.