



't the 2018 celebration of Ukraine's Independence Day in Boston. Photo by the author.

November 29, 2021

I find myself awfully disheartened by the smear campaign that has been launched against Halyna Hryn, [George G. Grabowicz](#), and other colleagues at Harvard (including, in the latest round, against me). This is not the first such campaign, sadly, and it's getting tiring to have to fight the same battle over and over again. For my own part, I could care less what kind of dishonest innuendos someone makes about me—I feel that my work and its outcomes speak for me. But the honor and good name of people who have dedicated their lives to Ukrainian studies, to values of inclusion and openness, and to the highest standard of intellectual pursuit in their scholarship are worth fighting for.

Competition is a good thing, but not when it's done using insinuations and baseless accusations of some ulterior motifs, fearmongering, demonization, and division. What the

campaign of mudslinging against Halyna Hryn and George G. Grabowicz has revealed is the radical difference in the visions for the future of the [Shevchenko Scientific Society, USA](#) between the two slates running to lead our old organization into the future.

I'm glad to find myself among friends and colleagues who, like Halyna Hryn and George G. Grabowicz, have embraced the idea of reforming the Society fundamentally, opening it up to all "outsiders" who might be interested in joining in, giving them plenty of opportunities to shape the Society and implement their scholarly projects within the Society. The "alternative" team, however, is looking to maintain the status quo, to keep out those who are different and who don't fit into their patriarchal idea of the Society based on their gender, identity, ethnicity, or language spoken. For the sake of the future of the Society, I very much hope that this "alternative" will not materialize, no matter who wins the chance to lead the organization in the next few years.

I also think that all who share the values of openness and equality, of inclusivity and modernization, and who have known Halyna Hryn and George G. Grabowicz as people of great integrity and selflessness—as have I in the 14 years of working with them on various projects—simply **need to speak out** and defend their honor and reputation.

You must have seen the incredible quality of the works that they have produced, the ability to turn things around, to create vibrant and open communities where stagnation and decay reigned before. Just look at the publications produced under their leadership, at the state-of-the-art websites launched, events organized, and people—most importantly the people—that they have invited, embraced, and welcomed! The alternative to this would be to return to the old ways, to allow an organization with great history to slowly die as it turns into a retirement home for white old men, and the resources to be wasted on passing fancies of the day. That's why I believe that no one should be silent about this attack.

Otherwise, the groundless accusations will be validated by our silence and the work of these decent and worthy people will be rewarded with undeserved denunciations, vilification, and slander. I for one cannot stand idly by as it's happening, and I invite you to speak out, too!

Sincerely,

Oleh Kotsyuba

–Corresponding member, Shevchenko Scientific Society in the US

–Manager of Publications, Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute

–Director of the Web-Project, Krytyka