

CTG Online News

Thu, 16 June 2016 10:52:00 EST

CTG Welcomes Fellows from Ukraine & Azerbaijan for Study Tour

The Center for Technology in Government's Leadership Institute welcomed two fellows from the Young Transatlantic Innovation Leaders Initiative (YTILI) for an intensive two-week study tour where they learned about open government, open data platforms, data analytics, policy innovation, and more. The fellows, Denys Gursky of the Ukraine and Shebnem Mammadova of Azerbaijan, are up-and-coming IT professionals and thought leaders who are eager to apply what they learn through their study tour to their work in their home countries.

YTILI is an international exchange program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State in partnership locally with the International Center of the Capital Region (ICCR), focused on helping young Eastern European professionals develop entrepreneurial skills and enhance economic opportunities in their countries. Participants spend three weeks in the United States working at carefully-selected host institutions, and CTG was invited by ICCR to host the young scholars for two weeks where they engaged in workshops, meetings, and brainstorming sessions with CTG's experts and network of colleagues.

Denys is the young Founder and CEO of SocialBoost, a technology startup that promotes open data in the Ukraine. SocialBoost coordinates "Hackathons" in which thousands of Ukrainian IT professionals and government agencies gather to engage in collaborative computer programming in order to brainstorm innovative solutions to pressing problems. Shebnem is a Senior Advisor at the Department for Electronic-Governance Development in the Ministry of Communications and Technologies in the Republic of Azerbaijan, a small country located at the crossroads of Southwest Asia and Southeastern Europe. Shebnem was particularly interesting in learning about open government data platforms and strategies that can be used to engage civic activists in creating web technologies in Azerbaijan.

"My visit and experience at the Center for Technology in Government and fruitful communication with their staff and partners was very productive and worthwhile," says Shebnem. "This experience has given me new visions and a broader perspective on a wide variety of topics and issues that I feel will help me improve public service in Azerbaijan," she continues.

So that Denys and Shebnem could gain as much knowledge as possible during their visit, CTG Program Director Donna Canestraro connected the scholars with additional valuable mentorship opportunities in the area, such as with the New York State Enterprise Corporation, Wise Labs, NYBizLab, UAlbany's Blackstone Launch Pad, the SUNY Research Foundation's Mentorship Program, and more.

The Leadership Institute at CTG prepares leaders to be successful in the 21st century by providing them with the tools and knowledge they need to innovate successfully and provide public value. For more information about the Leadership Institute, including available courses and study tours, contact Program Director Donna Canestraro or visit it online.