The Professorship:
- stimulates, promotes, and facilitates original and innovative research in all aspects of Hellenic civilization
- preserves and expands the teaching of Hellenic courses at UMSL
- creates opportunities for research and training of US scholars and students in Greece
- initiates and maintains outreach programs of public education for the wider community

Introduction

Twenty years ago a group of passionate Greek-Americans had a dream: that their culture and language be preserved for their children and their children’s children.

The Hellenic Government-Karakas Family Foundation Professorship has been successful in honoring this dream. Evidence of this success can be seen locally, nationally, and internationally:
- locally, it is attested by the high student enrollments and the active involvement of the community in our programs
- nationally and internationally by the position of the Professorship as a leader in the research, teaching, and outreach of Hellenism.

What sets this Professorship apart is the emphasis on the humanistic values of Hellenism. We live in an age of rapid technological progress, in which it falls upon our universities to provide to our youth not only the technical skills needed to succeed in a competitive global environment, but also the ability to think critically and be morally aware human beings. As an ideal, humanity originates in Greece.

And that’s why Hellenic studies are so important to our educational system and a Professorship like ours so vital. Here, in the heart of America, we are determined to preserve the Great Tradition.

The purpose of this Newsletter is to communicate our work to the public. Please stay tuned for all the exciting things we have in store for you and our students!

Michael B. Cosmopoulos

The Twentieth Anniversary of the Professorship

The 20th anniversary of the Professorship was celebrated with a moving ceremony on February 3, 2016. More than 300 students, academics, and members of the local Greek-American community attended the ceremony, which included brief greetings from officials, short speeches, and the presentation of a special gift to the Professor. The University of Missouri-St. Louis raised the Greek flag over the campus.

ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS

Please consider endowing a scholarship through the Professorship. Endowed scholarships are offered in perpetuity. They are such a wonderful way of making a difference to so many students’ lives! You, as the donor, set the name and terms.

Currently, the Professorship offers two endowed scholarships: The Koumparakis-Moss Scholarship and The Karakas Family Foundation Scholarship. Our goal is to add another three for a total of five.

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Research

One of the primary objectives of the Professorship is to sponsor, facilitate, and organize original and pioneering research into all aspects of Hellenic Civilization.

The birth of states

The Iklaina excavation is UMSL’s archaeological project in Greece. Situated at a strategic location overlooking the Ionian Sea, Iklaina appears to have been an important district capital of the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1600-1100 BC). This is the period also known as “Mycenaean” and famous for such mythical sagas as the Trojan War.

The objective of the project is to investigate the birth of the first complex states in western civilization. Some of the exciting discoveries of the project are monumental buildings belonging to a Mycenaean palace, frescoes, pottery, metal finds, as well as an inscribed Linear B tablet, which is the earliest record of state bureaucracy in Europe.

The project has received funding from UMSL’s International Studies and Programs, as well as federal sources (National Endowment for the Humanities, National Science Foundation), and private foundations and institutions, such as Harvard University, the Institute for Aegean Prehistory, the Pylos Foundation, and the National Geographic Society.

In summer 2016 we had a contingent of 25 students from UMSL and other universities, who spent four weeks excavating and learning about Greece and Greek culture.

Iklaina was featured prominently in the National Geographic Society/PBS mini-series “The Greeks”, which aired in June. In July, the President of Greece Mr. Prokopis Pavlopoulos visited the excavation, toured the monuments, and chatted with our students and staff.

Greek Mystery Cults

For more than one thousand years, people from every corner of the Greco-Roman world sought the hope for a blessed afterlife through initiation into the Mysteries of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis. In antiquity itself and in our memory of antiquity, the Eleusinian Mysteries stand out as the oldest and most venerable mystery cult of the classical world. The second major research project carried out by Cosmopoulos concerns the origins and development of the Eleusinian Mysteries and Graeco-Roman Mystery cults, and their interplay with Pauline theology and the emergence of Christianity.

The following publications by Cosmopoulos appeared recently:

Books:

Scholarly articles
- “Cult, Continuity, and Social Memory: Mycenaean Eleusis and the Transition to the Early Iron Age”, American Journal of Archaeology 118.3.
Teaching

The Professorship is committed to preserving and expanding the range of Hellenic courses taught at our university. In 2016 Professor Cosmopoulos taught four courses: *Myths and Monuments, Archaeological Fieldwork, Greek History and Culture, and Democracy and War*, in which he focused on two important aspects of Greek studies: their relevance to today’s life and their usefulness in helping students develop the critical skills necessary to succeed in our fast-paced technology-oriented world.

The St. Louis Greek Community Visiting Assistant Professor in Modern Greek History and Culture

Thanks to the generosity of over 100 donors from the wider community we were able to establish a three-year position in Modern Greek Studies. This position, held by Professor Nikos Poulopoulos, was renewed for another three years by UMSL. Professor Poulopoulos is doing a wonderful job not only in teaching Modern Greek history, language, and culture, but also in researching the history of our St. Louis Greek Community. In the past year in his courses he managed to walk his students through the full, diachronic, spectrum of Greece’s historical and cultural trajectory, from the glory of the ancient Greeks to the genesis and gradual maturation, over the last two centuries, of Modern Greece. He interjected in between a summer course of the quite nebulous, but ...über-fascinating period of Byzantine Hellenism! This past semester, with the support of a College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Grant, he designed a new course examining the history of friction between the Middle East and the West – where Greece has perennially functioned as a buffer zone, when not an actual battleground! Moreover, part of his graduate seminar in Oral History, was dedicated to the study and analysis of historical narratives, housed presently at the Matsakis Center at UMSL, by members of the Greek community of St. Louis.

Building upon his increased interest on the early history of the Greek Diaspora in America, and especially of St. Louis, and drawing upon his long research and study of the historical archives of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he continued to work on a manuscript on nineteenth century Greek activity in the States. Last semester, he delivered two invited lectures on the subject: “From New York to New Orleans: Early Greek Merchant Communities in the United States” at Stony Brook University and “*Homo Auctor*: Orphans, Merchants and the Making of the First Greek-American Citizen in the Nineteenth Century” at Yale. Furthermore, in order to make parts of his research more accessible to a wider, non-specialist, audience, and to contribute to the increasingly popular fields of public and digital history, he launched a blog on the history of the Greeks of St. Louis ([https://stlgreeks.wordpress.com](https://stlgreeks.wordpress.com)).

STUDY IN GREECE PROGRAMS

We are pleased to offer to our students and the wider public exciting opportunities for study in Greece, both in the summer, through the Iklaina Archaeological Project, and in the winter through our Academic Program in Greece, held in partnership with the American College in Greece. For more information please visit [www.greekstudies.org](http://www.greekstudies.org)
presentations on Greek Studies, the cutting of the anniversary cake, and Greek dances. The event was attended by H.E. Ambassador Polyxeni Petropoulou, Consul General of Greece in Chicago; the Honorable Sam Page, St. Louis County Councilman; and representatives of local Greek organizations. In formal greetings they sent for the occasion, the Presidents of the USA Barack Obama and of Greece Prokopis Pavlopoulos recognized the contributions and importance of the Professorship. Greetings were also sent by the Ambassador of Greece to the US Mr. Christos Panagopoulos, Missouri Senators Claire McCaskill and Roy Blunt, and other officials.

**Outreach**

We are committed to organizing exciting events for our students and the public. Some of our events are:
- The Catharine Pelican Memorial Lecture
- The Sam Nakis Lecture
- The Dr. Nicholas Matsakis Memorial Lecture
- The Professor Diane Touliatos Lecture
- The George E. Mylonas Lecture (jointly with the St. Louis Art Museum, and Washington University Classics and Art History); and
- The Leon and Johanna Spanos Performing Arts Event

Beyond UMSL, Professor Cosmopoulos gave five lectures at Harvard University, New York University, the College of William and Mary, the University of the Peloponnese, and the University of Athens. He also lectured at St. Charles Community College and John Burroughs School.

**Mark your calendars—Spring 2017 events**

February 9 (Nakis lecture): The Neolithic Roots of the Greek Past
March 4 (Spanos concert): Pavlo in concert
March 9 (Touliatos lecture): Presentation by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios

**Distinctions**

In November 2016 Professor Cosmopoulos was elected a member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts, the premier research academy of Europe. In the ranks of the Academy are included 8 Nobel Prize Winners, as well as Pope Benedict XVI. The induction ceremony will take place in March 2017 at the seat of the Academy in Salzburg, Austria. Professor Cosmopoulos was also invited to lecture at the university of the Academy, the Alma Mater Europaea.

Also in November, Professor Poulopoulos was awarded a Greek Diaspora Fellowship, administered by the Institute of International Education, the Fulbright Foundation and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. As part of this fellowship, he will be hosted for 2 months during the summer of 2017 by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, where he will lecture extensively on the history of the Greek Diaspora and collaborate with an interdisciplinary group of researchers with the aim to create archival resources and identify exhibits for a Museum of Greek Diaspora and Immigration in Greece.