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Macquarie Uni Greek Program students explain how the language changed their lives



Why do people pursue Greek studies and what is the practical application of the language in someone's career and personal life? In what ways can the Greek language broaden someone's perspective and why is it important for the community to work collaboratively towards preserving the teaching of the language and tradition in the Antipodes?

These were some of the topics discussed during the 'Pathway Stories in Careers through Greek Language' online event held on Sunday and organised by the Macquarie University Greek Studies Program and the University's Greek Association (MUGA) on the occasion of International Greek Language Day which is celebrated annually on February 9.

The over 30 attendees who joined in the conversation from Australia and Greece alike, had the opportunity to listen about the Greek language from a list of guest speakers including Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs Secretary General John Chrysoulakis, Consul General of Greece in Sydney Christos Karras, THI Australia's

representative George Giovas, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts at Macquarie University Professor Panos Vlachopoulos and Head of Macquarie Uni Modern Greek Studies Program Dr Patricia Koromvokis who was also moderating the discussion.

Ήμουν ομιλητής στη διαδικτυακή εκδήλωση που διοργάνωσε το Πρόγραμμα Νεοελληνικών Σπουδών του Παν/μίου Macquarie (Sydney) & η επικεφαλής του, δρ Π. Κορομβόκη. Θέμα της εκδήλωσης «Μονοπάτια καριέρας μέσα από την ελληνική γλώσσα» και αφορμή της η Παγκόσμια Ημέρα Ελληνικής Γλώσσας. pic.twitter.com/B4W1FPcf8N

— Γιάννης Χρυσουλάκης (@johnchrysoul) [February 7, 2021](#)

Greek Deputy Minister for Education Zetta Makri was not present due to unforeseen circumstances but her speech was read by Dr Koromvokis.

Among the attendees were Greek Studies Foundation President Theofilus Premetis, who has been supporting the Greek Studies Program for over 25 years, representatives from Sydney primary, secondary and tertiary education institutions and Greek Student Associations Presidents from Macquarie, Sydney and NSW Universities.

“The goal of today’s event is not to promote the indisputable value of the Greek language but to answer tangible and crucial questions,” Dr Koromvokis said before she invited the speakers to take the stand.

The highlight of the event was a number of graduate and undergraduate students who shared their thoughts on the role of Greek studies in their careers and way of thinking.



Chrysoulakis: ‘Modern world needs the Greek Language’

During his speech, Secretary General of Public Diplomacy and Hellenes Abroad, Giannis Chrysoulakis, expressed the hope that he will soon be able to visit Australia and praised the organisers of the event.

“For us in Greece, your opinion and point of view [with regards to Greek Studies] are very important.

“Modern Greek studies is a key part of a broader picture that reflects what Greece is today,” said Mr. Chrysoulakis, talking about the multiplicity of the Greek language and its inseparable relationship with the Greek word ‘Logos’.

“Greek is a language that from its very beginning raises questions and is always in a quest to find and look for answers.

“I urge you to share with others the knowledge you have acquired during your studies because our modern world needs the Greek language and the Greek way of thinking,” Mr Chrysoulakis said and encouraged the students to look further into the “Study in Greece”.

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— Study in Greece (@study_in_Greece) [October 14, 2019](#)

Consul General Karras: ‘Language is a way of thinking’

For his part, Consul General of Greece in Sydney Christos Karras spoke about how language learning can influence one’s way of thinking not only from a career perspective.

“A language is above all a way of thinking and a vision of life. This especially applies to the Greek language, which has an uninterrupted history of over 35 centuries and it has the longest documented history of any living Indo-European language,” Mr. Karras said.

“The Greek language is the mother of universal values that give meaning to our existence and has added to the world words and concepts such as Democracy, Dialogue, Philosophy, Mathematics, Architecture, Theater,” said the Consul General going on to share with the students how three of Greece’s greatest contemporary poets – Cavafy, Kalvos and Solomos- were bilingual.

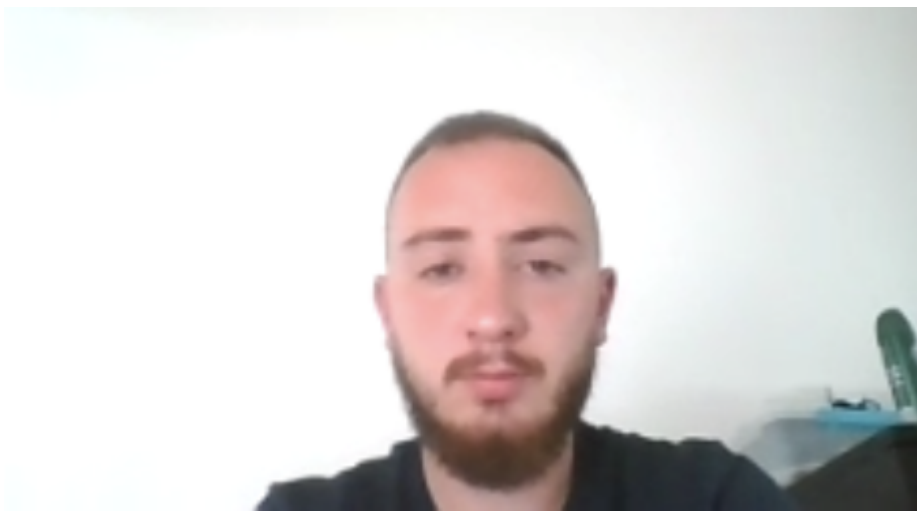
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— The Hellenic Initiative (@THI_OneGreece) [December 19, 2020](#)

Greek language unites us’

Representing The Hellenic Initiative (THI) Australia, member of the board George Giovas referred to the organisation’s educational programs that aim to promote Greek language and culture learning and he revealed his desire to expand his Greek language skills.

“Greek language is what brings us together, what unites us and what keeps us close to our roots,” said Mr. Giovas, before a total of ten Greek Studies Program undergraduate and graduate students went on and shared their thoughts on how the Greek language opened pathways into their careers.



Among them was undergraduate student, George Svolos who described his studies as an 'Odyssey' that will assist him achieve his goals.

"I am in my fourth year and I aspire to become a Greek language teacher; what I have learnt during my studies have been an Odyssey that travelled me to Greece. To our culture, to our philosophy, to our Orthodox faith and history," said Mr. Svolos, thanking his tutors who "have been supporting him as their own child ".

"We feel proud and excited when we hear young people speaking so passionately about Greek studies," said Dr Koromvokis, visibly moved.

"I am touched by the students' speeches and their passion for the homeland. What I have heard today motivates me to work harder towards finding ways for them to visit and experience Greece. I have an obligation to do so. Thanks for the amazing experience," Mr Chrysoulakis said.

The event concluded with the Secretary General reciting verses from Nikiforos Vrettakos poem 'The Field of Words' and with Dr Koromvokis announcing that more meetings like this will follow.

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