

Summer 2020 · Issue 11



Lockdown Broadcasts from the Alumni Association

Most of the times, we cannot predict what will happen. But we can always be prepared to avoid the effects of any unexpected circumstances at the minimum possible cost. We can always find opportunities for something new, something that will support the people around us.

That's how the idea for Plan B Live Interviews arose. The Alumni Association Board has created plans to support our community in any situation. We cannot predict the future but we can act and react.

The Facebook Live interviews initiative was included in our plans but in a further stage of our development. However, understanding the challenging times of the Covid-19 era, we decided, without second thoughts, to move fast and support our community. We created a show on social media with one scope: to support and empower our society in this situation. The questions we were called to answer were many: The subject of interviews, the style, the interviewers, the interviewees, what day, what time, in which language etc. and the time we had to get it all together was too short. At the same time, there were so many live

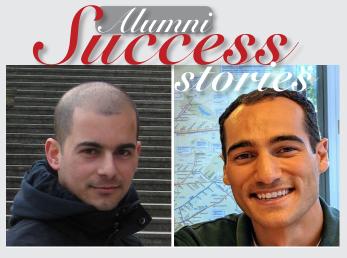
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Ensuring Learning Continuity: the University's Response to the Coronavirus.

The coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) was an unprecedented situation that humanity had, and still has, to face. The Greek Health Minister announced on March 10th, 2020 the closure of all schools and Universities for 14 days as part of efforts to contain spread of coronavirus. In light of this mandate and to ensure the health and safety of our campuses in Athens and Nashua, Hellenic American University onsite classes and other campus-based educational activities were suspended. These measures, which involved the shift of onsite classes were provided through synchronous online instruction and remote operations, ensuring as far as possible the continuity of students' learning.

Even before the Greek government's directive ordering the closure of all educational institutions in the country, the University had been working on developing plans for alternatives to faceto-face classes. Our strategy was built on the creation of virtual classrooms: class sessions were conducted real-time on the same days and hours as they ordinarily would be. Moreover, University operations and services continued to be offered as staff in units such as the Registrar's Office, Admissions, the Writing Center, Student Affairs and Alumni Affairs were working remotely to continue serving the student and alumni

The shift to synchronous online instruction and remote administrative operations were implemented smoothly based on students' feedback. The success of this effort is due in large part to the team who coordinated the transition: Executive Vice President Dr. Leonidas Tzonis, Director of Academics



Vasilis Anastopoulos (MSIT '11) & John Nikolaides (BAELL '18)

If you were to ask fellow alumni what prompted them to begin their studies at Hellenic American University, you would hear a remarkably diverse set of reasons. Some of us arrived at Hellenic American University with a clear idea of what we wanted to achieve during our studies and what career we wanted to pursue. Some of us were already working and began a degree program to better prepare for the future challenges we knew we would meet. And some of us were not entirely sure what we wanted to do professionally, but discovered through the General Education program where our true interests and talents lay.

The two success stories in this issue of Connect are indicative of alumni who were determined to follow a specific academic and career path. Vasilis Anastopoulos (MSIT '11) already had professional experience in the IT sector when he decided to pursue a master's degree to enrich his knowledge. John Nikolaides (BAELL '18) was led by his passion for teaching to earn his undergraduate degree in English Language and Literature, which in turn led to his employment as a language teacher.

Vasilis Anastopoulos (MSIT '11) is currently working for the Hellenic National Defense General Staff as officer in the Information Technology Corps. For the last five years, he has been working in cyber defense.

He had already been working in IT, when he decided to enroll in the MSIT program. The knowledge and expertise he acquired during his studies helped him to become more effective at work. He notes, "In the military a master's degree can't get you a promotion, but it's taken into account when you are transferred. In my case, it helped me in performing my duties, as well as in understanding and contributing to the operations of the IT department. From this point of view, my performance increased and I was better established in the IT department."

He says, "I certainly applied the knowledge gained from this program and benefited as well from the experience and expertise of the teaching personnel. What I strongly remember is a pleasant sense throughout the course with both faculty and my classmates."

According to Vasilis, the curriculum of the program "is well tailored to the needs of a professional, as it addresses both technical and business topics". Studies can provide a solid ground from which alumni can develop their careers. However, as Vasilis notes, "Professional success or failure is the result of many factors. Studying at the HAU has certainly contributed to my development as a professional and as a person."

John Nikolaides (BAELL '18) worked from an early age for his mother, renovating rental properties in the US. He naturally considered home renovation the only career of his life. That changed when the company he worked for closed and John left the US and came to Greece to work for his uncle, who was a successful constructor. It was around that time, however, when the economic crisis hit Greece and the construction industry. John knew he had to switch career paths if he wanted to stay in Greece.

After working for various companies, he began to take seriously the idea of being an English teacher and eventually decided to enroll in a certificate program in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) that was provided by the Hellenic American Education Center in 2014. His first teaching experience was at his local church. After receiving his TESOL level 5 certificate he enrolled in the Hellenic American University's B.A. in English Language and Literature program. From his very first lesson as a teacher, John felt he would be content teaching English the rest of his life because of the satisfaction and joy he received by helping his students learn the language.

After teaching privately for three years, John began working for a nongovernmental organization: Faros lighting their way, an organization that provides housing for unaccompanied minors from various ethnic backgrounds. His initial assignment did not include teaching English, but his desire to help these boys meant he often took on work in addition to his assigned duties. He used his knowledge and experience to inspire the boys to learn and look beyond their current circumstances. Faros has now promoted John to English teacher and head of the academic department. As John says "I am currently facing various challenges, which is why I am always pleasantly surprised to see how much of a positive impact I have on my students. I did not choose to have this passion, but I'm glad I found it".

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interviews on social media. There was another question related to our added value: why will people choose us? And the answer to this tricky question became our driver. "Because we offer something different", was our answer.

We understood the needs of our audience. Immediately, we set the next steps and analyzed the data from the social media pages. We found the best day and time for our broadcasts. Secondly, we had to come up with the topics. We decided to discuss with our audience what really matters. Practical and simple instructions that would provide immediate support to people watching us. We avoided interviews that would focus on theoretical matters or the personalities of the interviewees per se. We tried to find professionals from the market.

The broadcasts went live and the results were great! This proves that Plan B is an initiative that the people can embrace. But we won't stop here. I would like to share my special thanks to the students and professors of our university departments responsible for translation and subtitling as they volunteered their knowledge and all the interviews are available on HAEC's <u>Youtube channel</u> with English subtitles for our foreign students and alumni.

On behalf of the Alumni Board, I would like to invite our less active alumni to become more active members of the alumni regeneration project. I would also like to say to the active alumni and to the students that support us: Let's keep going! You have already achieved extremely good results! And finally, to all the students: my friends be close to the Alumni Association, this is your society of tomorrow. Come to us, we are here to support you in any case!

We are something bigger than an association!

Vassilis Elaiotrivaris President of the Hellenic American University Alumni Association **Interviewees** who offered their insight on topics related to IT, wellbeing, psychology and empowerment are the following:



Vassilis Barbas, PMBA '09



Stella Saich, MBA '19



Xanthi Zafiris, MSPsy '16



Elpida Kokkota, CEO at MeXoXo



FrapPedes – Spiros Liveris & Antonis Skarpetas (Party edition)

The **host** in all Plan B interviews was Gavriil – Nikolaos Adamopoulos (MBA '19)



BAELL and MAT Students and Alumni/ae who contributed in translating/subtitling PLAN B videos from Greek into English are the following:

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Acknowledgements: Vasilis Manousakis, Adjunct faculty member, Hellenic American University

GCUITY Spotligh

Teachers Greg Barton and Eduardo Lucena González



This issue's Faculty Spotlight turns to the undergraduate General Education program and to **Greg Barton** and **Eduardo Lucena González**,

passionate teachers who, at the same time, embody the values the General Education curriculum seeks to instill among students. The two faculty members—who also co-coach the Hellenic American College soccer team—have that curiosity about the world, openness to change and dedication to fostering community that the General Education program promotes.

Greg Barton

Greg joined Hellenic American
University in September 2019 as
Assistant Director of Student Affairs
and International Programs. In his short
tenure so far, he's led the successful
initiative to establish the Academic
Center for the Enrichment of Students
(ACES) and worked with students to
create an array of new student clubs
and athletic teams. He also oversees
the delivery of the University's on-site
international programming. And all this,
alongside teaching undergraduate courses
in art and leadership.

His record of accomplishments reflect his educational and professional background, one that includes a B.A. in Art and Art History from Washington & Lee University (where he also played collegiate football), an M.A. in Historic Preservation from the Savannah College of Art and Design, and several years of teaching art at the Norfolk Academy in Virginia.

It reflects, too, his passion for making art and forging community. An artist in his own right, Greg created his Drawing & Design course with a focus on what he calls "practical creativity". "I want to show students the ways in which art

and creative thinking are being used in their own field," he says. Students paint and sculpt and delve into photography and design, with drawing serving as the connecting thread through all units. Greg claims that "you don't have to be an artist to make art," echoing Joseph Beuys' dictum that "everyone is an artist"—in the sense that we all have a profound need but also ability to create.

For Greg, such opportunities for discovery and creative self-exploration are at the heart of the General Education program. "It's a time in your life when you can take chances," he says. "I hope the course encourages them to see their future trajectory in a new and broader perspective."

It was through the Core Curriculum of his own undergraduate studies that Greg realized his true calling. "It absolutely changed my life," he says. "I started college thinking I wanted to be an architect. It was Gen Ed that helped me discover I wanted to go into teaching." It's a path he's followed ever since, one that's now led to his admission to the online Ed.D. program at Johns Hopkins University, where he will focus on entrepreneurial leadership in education.

The idea of practical creativity which shaped the course has played a big part in Greg's life, starting with Hampton's Surf Company, an artist collective and lifestyle brand he co-founded with his brother. Its product line includes hand-printed apparel and custom-designed, hand-shaped surfboards. Part of the firm's sales goes to support partner charities. "We wanted to make art that makes a difference," he says, "and we found a business model where we could do so."

The Covid-19 pandemic has left Greg confined to his apartment in New York City for the time being but he's eager to

return to Athens. Among his priorities for the year ahead is to get students to take on greater responsibility for the projects he helped set up; this will help ensure that these clubs, teams and programs are self-sustainable in the long run. Another is seeing the newly launched basketball team repeat the success of the Hellenic American College soccer team, which has been a place for students to build strong friendships in an inclusive, leaguecompetitive playing environment. In Greg's eyes, the team's success is evident in the way in which the players "have come together as a true community"—a measure of achievement that neatly marks his approach to teaching and administration as well.

Eduardo Lucena González

Eduardo has been teaching Spanish in the University's General Education program since 2014. He joined the University after more than a decade of teaching experience and studies that included a Master's degree in Literature and Spanish Philology from the University of Córdoba in Spain and a sojourn at the François Rabelais University in Tours, France, where he studied linguistics and cinema.

"I love teaching," he says, "I love the sense of sharing something that I love, which is the Spanish language. When I teach, I feel I'm learning at the same time from my students. Each year they make me a better teacher with their questions and feedback."

Eduardo calls himself a "classroom animal"— a creature whose natural habitat is the classroom. If so, he's a highly kinetic one at that. He says half-jokingly, "The thing I miss the most now that we've temporarily transitioned to online learning is being able to walk around the class. I usually cover a couple of kilometers a day when teaching."

Maximizing learning opportunities for students has an important place in his teaching. For Eduardo, this means not only fostering student interaction in the classroom but also multiplying points of contact with the language, which is one reason he tries to embed literature and the arts teaching where possible—even at the lower levels of language competency.

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Most of the students in his classes are taking Spanish as a second foreign language in order to fulfill a General Education requirement. To some students unfamiliar with this component of American higher education, the requirement seems at first to be more an obligation than an opportunity.

But as Eduardo points out, studying a foreign language—even when you already know one or more—enables you to appreciate your connectedness to others and, at the same time, the contributions other cultures have made to your society. The University in its catalog calls this "cultivating an intercultural mindset". "You realize that the things you know are part of a broader whole," he says, "and that there are other ways of thinking and interpreting the world and more to life than just your profession."

This diversity of interests is true for Eduardo himself. His engagement in the broader community spans a spectrum of activities, from teaching Spanish for immigrants at the ADES-Cervantes Institute to translating short stories and children's tales. He has continued to pursue his interests in literature as well, most notably as a frequent contributor to the annual "Literatura en Atenas" festival celebrating Ibero-American literature. This past year he's also been co-coaching the College soccer team with Greg Barton. A soccer player since his childhood in Spain, Eduardo notes that the team isn't just about the practices and workouts and final scores. "Yes," he says, "a team has to do things a certain way, it has its rules, but what counts is that we've become a family who all share the same passion."

And then there's the theater. Less than a year after his arrival in Greece (and before becoming proficient in the language) he joined the Theatre Company of Ilioupoli, where he made his acting debut in a Greek-speaking role in a play by Iakovos Kambanellis. "I decided to do theater," he says, "as a part of my project of learning the language. I wanted to challenge myself as much as I could." Twelve years later, he still acts with the company, but now, as he says, with considerably more confidence.

At the side of the NGO Faros





During the Spring 2020 Semester, the Hellenic American Union and the Hellenic American University officially started a partnership with Faros, an NGO focused on helping and supporting unaccompanied refugee minors. Faros aims at not only giving food and shelter to the children, but also giving them opportunities to be educated which will allow them

to be able to support themselves once they are old enough to leave the shelter.

This collaboration was initiated in the Fall 2019 Semester when four of the boys came to a Writing I class and took part in the lesson as members of the committee responsible for judging a debate among the students. All the participants were more than happy to work together and this gave the boys motivation to want to study at the Hellenic American University/ Hellenic American College.

Now, this collaboration has grown and will allow the beneficiaries to have free access to educational material, such as tests and books to learn English, and gradually get certificates of their knowledge of the English language through Hellenic American Union, but also have classes working towards a General Education Degree (GED) through the Hellenic American University. The GED comprises courses in English, math, science, and social sciences, and will enable the boys to get accepted to Hellenic American University, and study with a full scholarship. In the beginning, the boys took classes at Hellenic American College, with the support of HAUniv students, but now, due to the current situation, the courses are offered online with the help of an adjunct faculty member from Hellenic American University.

"It is a great honor and pleasure for me to be part of this special project the Hellenic American University has undertaken. The boys are excited to dive into their homework because they can see the importance of education, and are excited with the idea of becoming college students. It is inspiring to feel that maybe I can make a small contribution, and make a person's life more pleasant, bring a smile to their face, and some hope into their future. I am really glad I was given this opportunity!" (Valentini Andreoula, MAAL '17, adjunct faculty member at Hellenic American University and teacher at Hellenic American Union)

"The boys' lives have not been easy thus far but luckily the possibility for them to become university students at the Hellenic American University/ Hellenic American College is making a positive impact on their young lives. They are currently putting in effort studying because they have become all the more hopeful, and rightfully so, that they have the power to achieve their goals. It is my honor and privilege to pass down many gifts which I received from the Hellenic American University; namely, knowledge and care". (John Nikolaides, BAELL '18)

Valentini Andreoula (MAAL '17) Adjunct faculty member at Hellenic American University

Community Building

in the Time of COVID-19



The past few months have been challenging in terms of building community bonds and enhancing student engagement. However, physical distancing reminded us that there are plenty of ways to thrive as a community; even a remote one. The Office of Student Affairs & International Programs embarked on new projects and has proven that HAU's commitment to student engagement has no boundaries.

Once the Ministry of Education announced the closure of schools and universities, our priority was to successfully deliver all courses in an online modality. Luckily, our preparation and commitment to e-learning over the past few years made for a smooth transition. While we were ready for the change, countless questions still came to mind. What will happen to the student activities, our clubs, and events? How are we going to sustain effective communication with our student body and lift their spirits? Could we really come together as a community to change adversity into opportunity?

The first thought was to organize weekly activities and there was no better way to start than to offer "Workout Sessions." Every Tuesday

and Thursday, the HAU community exercised via Teams under the instructions of Ms. Sherah Powers, an HAU student and professional ballet dancer, and Mr. Greg Barton, our own coach and Assistant Director of Student Affairs and International Programs. Participation and excitement led us to consider alternative ways to offer non-academic seminars. As a result, we inaugurated the "Master Class Series." In order of appearance, Dr. Alessandra Sax-Lane, Dr. Ermioni Karachaliou, Mr. Greg Barton, and Ms. Stavroula Floratos shared their knowledge in topics under the umbrella of life-skills. Taking the faculty's lead, we are proud to share that our student clubs successfully continued their meetings online. In addition, as a University that respects the trends of our time, we

could not be absent from the "Social Media Challenges". Every Monday, a topic was announced leading to a weekly winner. Last but not least, the voice of our student community, our candidates for the new Student Council for the AY 2020-21, launched an e-campaign on our social media for the elections that were held on May 4th to May 8th.

Our International Programs have managed to adjust to the new circumstances, as well. This summer and for the first time, HAU will offer online courses to our study abroad students. With both synchronous and asynchronous sessions, students will have the opportunity to study at an international U.S. institution, build global competences, and create a steppingstone to a future adventure abroad.

If anything, COVID-19 has taught us how to be creative and to explore new ways of embracing our family, friends, and colleagues.

Dr. Ermioni Karachaliou

Director of Student Affairs & International Programs

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Dr. Themis Kaniklidou, the new Dean of the Nashua instructional site, Marieke Martin, and our e-Learning Director, Dr. Dimitris Tolias.

Although designed as an emergency measure, the implementation of synchronous online classes on an institution-wide scale—almost 90 onsite classes were transitioned—creates an important precedent in our future discussions with our accrediting body. The success of this initiative demonstrated our capacity,

preparedness and know-how to offer additional programs online as well.

All members of the Hellenic American University community, program directors, administrative units and educational support services, remained operational during this period to provide uninterrupted support to undergraduate, graduate students and alumni.

Leonidas Phoebus Koskos, Esq. President

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Dr. Christine – Irvine Niakaris was recently appointed Interim Provost at our University. She continues her role as Director of the Arts and Sciences and, Coordinator of the Master's in Applied

Linguistics-TESOL program, in which she also teaches. She is pleased to report that the students who are enrolled in the program are teachers committed to professional development. Since the MAAL program continues to be taught through e-learning, their studies were not interrupted by the lockdown. The live video sessions provided a great opportunity for students to support each other through difficult times as well as a meaningful platform for sharing their ideas on teaching and learning.



Dr. Themis Kaniklidou, Director of Academics, was also appointed Interim Director of General Education.



The Hellenic American University community welcomed **Ms. Marieke Martin**, who was appointed Dean and Executive Director of the Nashua campus in March, 2020.



Mr. Petros Romaios, along with his position as Director of the MA in Conference Interpreting, was also appointed as the Director of the MA in Translation program.



Mr. Greg Barton, Assistant Director of Student Affairs & International Programs and adjunct instructor in the General Education program was accepted to the Doctor of Education program at

Johns Hopkins University. He will begin in the fall via e-learning.



Dr. Ioannis Chalikias, Director of the University's Business Programs, gave a talk to the Association of Paiania Producers of Agricultures on "Exports of Agricultural Products: Trends, Shares in International

Markets and Competition". Dr. Chalikias was also appointed this year by the Minister of Finance to the Gaming Commission.



Dr. Panayotis Kalozoumis, Director of Hellenic American University's Research Center and Coordinator of Engineering programs, coauthored with G.M. Nikolopoulos, and D.

Petrosyan a <u>paper</u> on "Coherent population oscillations and an effective spin-exchange interaction in a PT-symmetric polariton mixture" in *Europhysics Letters*. This work was done in close collaboration with the <u>Institute of Electronic Structure and Laser</u> in FORTH and in particular with <u>Theoretical Quantum Optics and Technology</u> group.



Dr. Ermioni Karachaliou, Director of Student Affairs and International Programs is the <u>Campus Compact Good Steward award</u> recipient. As President Koskos noted in his nomination,

"Dr. Karachaliou has made a lasting impression through her contributions to campus life and study abroad programs. Because of her leadership and selflessness, Hellenic American University has continued to develop into a welcoming community with a positive student culture." She has also earned praise for her work in forging partnerships with other colleges and universities for study abroad programs.



Dr. Ioanna Kinti has joined Hellenic American University as an Assistant Professor in the Business programs. Among the courses she will be teaching are Leadership and Organizational

Behavior, Strategic Human Resource Management, Functional Skills Integration and Ideation. Dr. Kinti earned her PhD at the University of Oxford in the UK, where she also did post-doctoral studies at the ESRC Centre for Skills, Knowledge and Organizational Performance (SKOPE). Before that, she completed an MSc in International Political Economy at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Before joining the University, she taught at the Athens University of Economics and Business, the University of Cyprus and the University of Oxford Department of Education. Her research interests have recently focused on the leadership and management of innovation teams and innovation collaborations.



Mr. Menelaos Makrigiannis (PMBA '10), adjunct faculty member in the BSI and MSI programs and CEO of Bewise, an information technology and services firm, has been named to Fortune Greece's

40 UNDER 40 list of innovative entrepreneurs for 2020.



Dr. Alexander Nikolaou, adjunct faculty member, recently published a paper examining the multilingual character of the linguistic landscape of Swat, a district in Khyber Pakhtunkwa,

Pakistan, in the *Kashmir Journal of Language Research*. The paper was co-authored with Dr. Sabina Shah, an assistant professor in the department of English at Hazara University.



Dr. Alessandra Sax-Lane, Director of Psychology Programs, was the inaugural speaker of the first webinar hosted by the <u>EB-ACA</u> on March 27th, 2020. Her presentation was entitled "International

Refugee Crisis: An endless sky of empathy could never be enough".



Dr. Dimitrios Zoakos, adjunct faculty member in the Division of IT and Engineering of Hellenic American University, co-authored with George Georgiou a <u>paper</u> in the field of string

theory on "Giant gravitons on the Schrödinger pp-wave geometry". The paper has been published in the *Journal of High Energy Physics*.

Alumni News



Petrina Achyriati (MAT '18) is working as a translator with the Hellenic National Bioethics

Commission, translating recommendations, reports and opinions from Greek to English. She also works with PsychologyNow.gr and the Relationship Coach Mina Taliaki, editing and translating content for their websites and social media pages either from/to English and Greek. Petrina adds, "I look forward to establishing many more collaborations."



George Baniokos (MSPsy '15), mental health counselor and psychoanalyst, gave a public lecture on

"The Relationship between Sexuality and Pornography" at Hellenic American College on February 25th, 2020.



Nayia Daskalopoulou (MAT '16, MACI '17) translated (from English into Greek) her first

book. "Unsheltered" is a New York Times Bestseller published by Diaplasis Publications.



Maria Efstathiou, Anny Katsigianni, Christina - Maria Maniati and Eleni Rizou are all members

of the MAT '17 class. They met at

Hellenic American College, worked together in their classes and discovered they had common ideas and ambitions. So, they decided to create something of their own and founded Linguamare. As they say "Our aim was to form an agency that would provide integrated solutions to businesses and freelancers at competitive prices. Our services include translation and interpretation (in several different language combinations), website design and maintenance, and graphic design. At Linguamare, we believe that in a world full of borders, language should not be an obstacle."



Vassilis Elaiotrivaris (BSBA '19) participated as a speaker in the conference

"Restructuring the stereotypes of gender inequality; the role of the woman in Greece in the 20th century" organized by the Student Association for International Affairs in Athens on March 4th, 2020.



Katerina Kanakari (MACI '14) is the owner of Domus Mare apartments, a complex of long-

term and short-term rental apartments in Likoporia, a village near Korinthos. As she states "Having professional experience in the hotel industry, I decided to return to my village of origin and do my best to contribute to its exposure and development."



Kalliopi Magoula (BAELL '19), one year before her graduation, participated in the

Career Day held by Hellenic American College. During the event she learnt about a vacant position at the "Kinnick" foreign language school in Athens, where she has now been working for two years. As she says "I am very much indebted to the Director of the College's Career Development Office, Dr. Sophia Protopapa, who insisted on making an appointment with the language school, although I was still an undergraduate at that time. Had it not been for her insistence, I would not be working in this language school now. I owe her a very big "thank you," as I do, of course, to all my instructors, whose student I had the honor of being. In retrospect my decision to proceed with my studies seems to have been a wise one. Teaching is a very rewarding and challenging job and I love it. For me it's like a dream come true."



Thanasis
Spyropoulos (BSIT
'12, PMBA '15)
is working in the
ITS department of

Mondelez international and recently assumed the role of 'Western Europe On-Site Services Area Lead', managing the IT onsite teams and services for the clusters of France & French Overseas, Benelux, Iberia, Italy & Greece.

Share Your Good News!

Have you found a new job or been given a promotion? Gotten an article published or run a marathon? Moved to a new town or city? We invite you to share your news and accomplishments with the rest of the alumni community. Just email us at alumninews@hauniv.edu a short note about what you've been up to recently. We'd be happy to share your news in a coming issue of the Alumni Newsletter.

The Alumni Association Board

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