

HELLENIC HERITAGE FOUNDATION CHAIR IN MODERN GREEK HISTORY

Executive summary of Chairholder's Report – by Prof Sakis Gekas

Teaching highlights:

From April 2017 to May 2018, the Chairholder's teaching included the courses "History of Modern Greece" and "History of Modern Europe". The Chairholder's expertise in Greek history leads to significant Greek content being included in courses on Europe, which has been successful in generating interest in other courses about Greece at York University. Additionally, the Chairholder led the third-year, intensive summer-abroad course in Modern Greek History – taught partly in Canada and partly in Greece. This included a four-day summer school course in Ermoupoli on the History of Greece in the Mediterranean, co-taught exclusively for our students by two of Greece's most distinguished economic historians, Professors Agriantoni and Chatziioannou from the National Research Foundation in Athens, in addition to historical walks and other activities.

Research and Community Engagement highlights:

- Prof Gekas was selected as one of forty scholars worldwide to participate as a *Stavros Niarchos Foundation Greek Diaspora Fellow* in the "Collaborative Project on Empire, Colonialism and Global History in the Mediterranean World" at the University of Crete.
- While in Crete, Prof Gekas co-organized the conference "Transitions from the Ottoman period to the Greek state", and taught six graduate seminars using a curriculum co-developed with Prof Socrates Petmezas, now available to be taught at York.
- In Athens, Prof Gekas presented material from York's Greek Canadian History Project, on the anti-dictatorship movement in Toronto. There he also recruited a new student who has now accepted the offer to pursue his MA at York, becoming our third active HHF Graduate Fellow.
- The Greek Canadian Studies conference in May 2018 was a step toward making York a centre of Greek diaspora studies. This was part of the Immigrec Project funded by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation – a collaboration among McGill, Simon Fraser, YorkU, and the University of Patras. The project is to create the largest ever database of interviews, photographs and papers of Greeks in Canada, supporting a virtual museum of Greek immigration to Canada.
- The Greek Canadian History Project continues as a very active archival project to collect historical materials from Greek families in Canada and preserve them at York. This serves our aim of becoming the main repository of Greek Canadian history in Toronto and beyond. We have acquired many large collections, including the collection of Mr. Avramis, with over 1200 videotapes that document Greek community events in the city. The collection of Dr. Michalis Vitopoulos, who sadly passed away this year, was processed over many months by Anna Matthaïou, a former Hellenic Studies Program student. Over 100 interviews have been conducted, some of which were gathered during a trip to Winnipeg this year. The contributions of Dr. Chris Grafos have continued to be enormous in terms of making these activities happen despite severe constraints on time and finances.
- The Chair's activities include more and more supervision of graduate students, as the University has recruited students for the HHF Graduate Fellowships.
- The Chair published 11 additional publications and conference presentations during the period.

- The Chair has actively participated in the HHF History Committee events, as well as Danforth walking tours sponsored by the Myseum organization.
- Other ongoing international activities and partnerships include:
 - York hosts four Greek exchange students per year through the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Undergraduate Exchange Scholarship;
 - Partnerships with the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the National Kapodistrian University of Athens – and now, new this year, the University of Crete;
 - Courses taught at University of Athens Faculty of Law and Political Science, which York students can take;
 - Placements with the Canadian Institute in Athens, York being a member of the board;
 - New discussions with the Ionian University about a possible collaboration.
- Finally, the Chairholder’s activities include organizing two annual public lectures. Funding from the HHF this year supported the public lecture by Professor Gallant that opened the Greek Canadian Studies conference.

The Chairholder and York University are grateful to the HHF and all its donors for their strong and enthusiastic support of our activities this year.