PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Stanley J. Seeger ’52 Center for Hellenic Studies

Summary

For more than thirty years, the vision and generosity of Stanley J. Seeger, Jr. ’52 has inspired and enabled Princeton University to pursue what has proven to be a remarkable venture into the field of Hellenic Studies. With the support of the Stanley J. Seeger Hellenic Fund, Princeton’s Program in Hellenic Studies has advanced the work of hundreds of scholars and teachers at critical points in their careers; enriched the minds and broadened the horizons of countless students; and presented and preserved Hellenic arts and collections that attract leading researchers and artists to Princeton from around the world. Given its robust connections to the arts and its emphasis on international travel and collaboration, the Program has also become a leading model for the University’s recent initiatives in these areas. In this respect, Mr. Seeger’s original vision for Hellenic Studies has never been more relevant and integral to the future of Princeton University.

In May 2011, President Tilghman and her colleagues on the University’s Academic Planning Group approved the creation of a Center for Hellenic Studies to be named in honor of Mr. Seeger’s immense contribution to the field. Supported by the Stanley J. Seeger Hellenic Fund (and other Hellenic Studies endowments), the mission of the Center will be to oversee, fund, initiate and manage research on all aspects of Hellenic Studies, at Princeton and abroad, in Greece and the Hellenic Mediterranean. Center-sponsored activities will include fellowship programs, international initiatives, collections development, publications, interdepartmental projects, institutional collaborations, campus events, fundraising, and alumni relations. The Program in Hellenic Studies will continue to function, with an exclusive focus on the teaching mission at the undergraduate and graduate levels, while the Center will also fund faculty salaries to support teaching offered by the Program. Center and Program will be closely linked and their respective activities coordinated.
Princeton and the Hellenic World

Since its founding in 1746, Princeton University has enjoyed strong, enduring links with the Hellenic world and has been an international leader in the study of Greek culture. This intimate and continuous connection with Greece is distinctive among American universities. As scholars, educators, philanthropists, public servants, art collectors, and writers, Princetonians have contributed immensely to U.S.-Greek cultural and international relations.

Nicholas Biddle, Class of 1801, the President of the Second Bank of the United States and only the second American citizen of the independent United States to travel to Greece, was a precursor of the American philhellenic movement that aided Greece in her struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire. Princeton's long tradition of supporting international students began with the first two foreign students to receive scholarships from the College of New Jersey, Constantine J. Menaeos and Luke K. Oeconomos, Greek nationals who were members of the Class of 1840.

The Classics Department at Princeton also has a long and distinguished history dating back to the founding of the College of New Jersey. Until 1917, when the curriculum was reformed to allow electives, all Princeton students were required to learn ancient Greek. Princeton was one of the first American universities to establish the teaching of Classical Archaeology in the late nineteenth century, and one of the founding institutions of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens in 1881.

Princeton Classics Professor William Sloane was the leader of the American Olympic movement that successfully revived the Olympic Games in Athens in 1896. Led by Sloane, the small American team included four Princetonians. Among them was Robert Garrett, Class of 1897, who earned four medals in track events. In 1940 Garrett donated to Princeton his famous collection of more than 10,000 manuscripts, among them sixteen Byzantine Greek manuscripts of the highest quality.

For much of the twentieth century, Princeton University has played a leading role among American institutions in the development of Greek studies — ancient, medieval and modern. Edward Capps, Professor of Classics at Princeton from 1907 to 1936, left his mark on Greek education by chairing the boards of two American-sponsored institutions in Greece, Athens College and the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. Capps also led American efforts to help Greece during the two World Wars. Scores of Princetonians have led major excavations and expeditions in Greece, most notably in the Agora of Athens and Mt. Athos, as well as in the broader Hellenic world, at Mt. Sinai, Cyprus, Asia Minor, Antioch and beyond.
The renowned scholarship of Kurt Weitzmann in Byzantine art and Gregory Vlastos in Classical philosophy made Princeton the first American institution to establish academic programs in their respective fields. Robert Fagles’ courses and translations of the Greek Classics made Princeton a magnet for generations of scholars and students. The Modern Greek Studies Association was founded at Princeton (1968) with Edmund Keeley, the preeminent American translator of modern Greek poetry into English, as its first President. Keeley’s translations, published by Princeton University Press, brought world attention to Greek poetry, including two Nobel prizes. The Program in Hellenic Studies continues to build on the strong intellectual tradition established by these and a variety of other eminent scholars such as Howard Crosby Butler, Charles Rufus Morey, Oliver Strunk, Georges Florovsky, Kenneth Levy, W. Robert Connor, and Robert Fagles.

Princeton has also acknowledged its deep connections with the Greek world by bestowing honorary doctorates upon two Greek nationals, Johannes Gennadius and Nobel laureate George Seferis. Many Princetonians today occupy leadership positions in Greece as scholars, educators and public servants.

The Program in Hellenic Studies and the Stanley J. Seeger Hellenic Fund

Mission of the Seeger Hellenic Fund

The transformational gift of Mr. Seeger established the Stanley J. Seeger Hellenic Fund in 1979. The purpose of the Fund, as set forth in its Certificate of Incorporation, is to “advance the understanding of the culture of ancient Greece and its influence . . . and to stimulate creative expression and thought in and about modern Greece” at Princeton University (Article II). The Trustees of the Seeger board meet annually to review and approve the use of the Seeger funds in support of Hellenic Studies at Princeton.

Tradition, Goals and Strategy of the Program

With the generous support of the Fund (as well as other endowments and gifts), the Program in Hellenic Studies has collaborated with Princeton’s academic departments to create new academic positions, attract distinguished faculty to the University, and build an interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate curriculum spanning the entire range of Hellenism: the ancient world and its legacy, the Classical tradition; Late Antiquity; Byzantium; Modern Greece and the Hellenic diaspora. With its dual emphasis on teaching and research, as well as its commitment to the creative arts and international studies, the Program in Hellenic Studies has had an enduring impact on campus and has become an international leader in the field.
The Program has been built on solid foundations, namely Princeton’s distinguished faculty in the humanities (including leading scholars in Classical, Late Antique, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies), as well as the strength of the University’s resources in Greek Studies and its intellectual engagement with the Hellenic world over two centuries.

The strategy was to build “from the ground up,” investing in people (students and young scholars) and generating demand, rather than a “top-down” approach, establishing positions which at the time would have been nearly impossible to fill, considering that this was actually a process of creating a new field.

While the vision and original plans for the Program were broad and ambitious, growth has been incremental and measured, focusing on selected areas of excellence, where Princeton was, or could become, a world leader. Maintaining emphasis on the humanities and the arts, the Program’s recent initiatives have included collaborations with the social sciences, the natural sciences, and engineering.

The Program has benefitted immensely from the leadership of distinguished scholars who have served as Directors, with seamless continuity and a shared sense of purpose.

Faculty

Today Hellenic Studies faculty represent a broad range of disciplines and intellectual interests covering many fields: Classical tradition; Classical Philosophy; Classical Archaeology; Late Antique history; Early Christianity; Syriac Studies; Byzantine literature; Byzantine history; Byzantine art and architecture; Byzantine music; Modern Greek and Comparative literature; Mediterranean and Modern Greek history; Anthropology of Modern Greece. Most of these faculty members are supported in part by the Program.

Undergraduate Teaching

With its innovative and extensive undergraduate curriculum, the Program regularly attracts a good number of outstanding concentrators. Many of them have become leaders in their fields: our undergraduate alumni include a US Congressman, academics, accomplished artists, and many others in public service or the business world. They maintain their special connection to Princeton through the Program, and several of them have made significant gifts to Hellenic Studies.
Graduate Opportunities

At the graduate level, more than 100 doctoral degrees have been awarded in the last 30 years to Princeton students affiliated with or supported by Hellenic Studies. A graduate certificate in Classical and Hellenic Studies is an option for students in the Classics Department. A graduate certificate in Hellenic Studies (open to students from all humanities disciplines) is envisioned in the near future. Supported by fellowships and prizes awarded by the Program, Seeger graduate scholars form the core of our lively graduate student community. The majority of our graduate alumni now hold academic positions at universities around the world.

Post-Doctoral Research Fellowships

At the post-doctoral research level, the Program has established a fellowship program unequalled anywhere in the world. Drawing many dozens of applicants each year, the Program has awarded over 85 Hellenic Studies post-doctoral fellowships since 1992. Almost all former fellows now occupy academic posts at major universities in the United States and Europe.

Collections: Art Museum and Library

The Program has partnered with the Princeton University Art Museum and the Princeton University Library and has provided expertise and significant resources to build distinguished, unique collections (books, manuscripts, coins, photographs, art objects) that attract scholars and students from around the world.

Publications

Supported by the Program, the Princeton University Press Modern Greek Studies series is the most prestigious of its kind. In more than 100 scholarly monographs and countless articles, former students and fellows have credited the Program for supporting their research.

Campus Activities

Campus activities (seminars, lectures, colloquia, exhibitions, concerts, etc.) and informal Program events are a constant source of inspiration, a magnet for our faculty and students, an academic community characterized by its diversity, high caliber, and intellectual energy.
International Initiatives: Travel for Study and Research

True to the purpose of the Fund and the University's mission "in the nation's service and in the service of all nations," the Program emphasizes cross-cultural dialogue, academic exchanges, and the creative arts, as well as teaching and research in situ, away from and in addition to the traditional classroom setting. Thus, almost 1,000 students and visiting scholars, most of them from Greece, have received Stanley J. Seeger fellowships for study or research at Princeton, while over 1,500 Princetonians (faculty, students, and staff) have been awarded Stanley J. Seeger fellowships for travel, study, or research in Greece and other Southeast European and Mediterranean countries influenced by Greek culture – ancient, medieval, or modern.

Academic Activities in Greece

The Program sponsors a broad array of academic activities in Greece and Cyprus: summer workshops, course-related travel, global seminars, excavations, lecture series, conferences, exhibitions, and research projects. More than 100 Princetonians are involved and funded each year. International initiatives include collaborations and exchanges with leading Greek institutions: universities, research centers, government agencies, museums, libraries.

Princeton's Hellenic Studies Model

At the very heart of the liberal arts, Princeton's model for Hellenic Studies is rigorous, expansive and flexible: it promotes the interdisciplinary study of cultures in dialogue, across space and time. Focusing on the relationship between past and present, and with innovative teaching and research at the center of current debates about identity and self-representation in our (globalized and transnational) contemporary world, the Program is not confined or determined by national, regional or disciplinary boundaries.

Hellenic Studies at a Crossroads

From its inception, the Program was envisioned as a cosmopolitan entrepot of scholarly activity: it now functions as an intellectual "agora" of people and ideas, as a magnet for scholars and students with diverse backgrounds, as an intellectual bridge across disciplines and fields, as a connector between Princeton, Greece and the Hellenic Mediterranean.

After 30 years of successful operation and continuous growth made possible by the Stanley J. Seeger Hellenic Fund, the Program has reached a crossroads.
The sheer size and complexity of the Program, the range of activities it supports (across the Princeton campus and abroad in Greece and the Hellenic Mediterranean), its impact on graduate student support across the humanities disciplines, its leadership on University-level initiatives such as the promotion of the arts and international studies, and its impressive endowments and sizeable budget are not typical of a “program.”

Hellenic Studies academic activities in Greece have grown in scale and number to the point whereby they provide a multitude of opportunities for the University community as a whole, across disciplines and fields. Thus Princeton would open, by way of Hellenic Studies in Greece, an alternate “intellectual gateway” to Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean.

At the same time, the recent initiative to establish a partnership with the Benaki Museum in Greece has far broader implications to the University: it will provide a new model for international collaborations in the arts and museum worlds, including long-term loans, exhibitions, and the ethical management of cultural property. The partnership will bring to the Princeton campus artists from abroad, while showcasing in Greece and the broader region Princeton’s collections and the best of contemporary American culture and the arts.

**International Collaboration: Benaki Museum**

A major next step in furthering the Program’s presence in Greece is the recent formation of a collaboration with the Benaki Museum, the leading Greek private cultural institution. Led by the Program and the Princeton University Art Museum, the collaboration with the Benaki Museum promises to enhance Princeton’s role as a global institution of higher learning. The goal is to bring together, in the field, the best academic talent, scholars and students from Princeton, Greece and other countries of the Eastern Mediterranean.

The collaboration will provide a close match between academic strengths at Princeton and local opportunities in Greece that becomes one of University’s academic gateways to Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as a focal point for Hellenists, Byzantinists and Neohellenists world-wide. The University’s faculty interests, student needs, and institutional priorities (teaching and research; humanities and international studies; creative and performing arts) will thus engage with major issues in the host country (education; environment; culture), within the broader context of transatlantic (North American–European) educational exchanges and scholarly networks in the humanities.
The Stanley J. Seeger ’52 Center for Hellenic Studies at Princeton

Mission and Goals

While the Program in Hellenic Studies will continue to fulfill its mission of undergraduate and graduate teaching on campus, the Center will focus on research, broadly defined, and have a wider horizon as one of the University’s “windows” to the outside world.

Entering its fourth decade of operation, Hellenic Studies at Princeton will contribute to the University’s new initiatives towards the internationalization of the curriculum, excellence in undergraduate education, the promotion of the creative and performing arts, and the multi-cultural character of the university community.

With humanistic, international and regional studies assuming a central role in university curricula of the twenty-first century, the Stanley J. Seeger ’52 Center for Hellenic Studies will:

- maintain and enhance Princeton’s international leadership in Hellenic Studies among its peer institutions in the United States and Europe;
- attract and retain the best faculty, encouraging and supporting interdisciplinary work, while respecting departmental structure;
- support the best graduate students and post-doctoral fellows from around the world, thus enhancing the future of the field and the career prospects of the next generation of scholars in Hellenic Studies;
- enrich Princeton’s intellectual and cultural life across a broad range of disciplines and arts;
- consolidate and promote the University’s engagement with the Hellenic world for more than two centuries.

In keeping with the vision of Stanley J. Seeger ’52, the Center supports interdisciplinary work of the highest caliber and promote intercultural dialogue through scholarly exchanges and collaborative activities (teaching, research, community and volunteer work, exhibitions, publications, and the creative arts), engaging Princeton faculty, students, and artists, and their counterparts in Greece and the region.
Areas of Activity

The Center will support a broad range of activities, including the following: Fellowship programs (graduate, post-doctoral, visiting research, library grants, summer study/research, etc.); international initiatives (study abroad, global seminars, etc.); collections development through the Library and Art Museum; publications (electronic, monograph series, Princeton University Press); interdepartmental projects (with Lewis Center for the Arts, PIIRS, WWS, SEAS, etc.), institutional collaborations (Princeton-Oxford exchange), campus events, fundraising, and alumni relations.

The Center will be allowed to appoint lecturers, senior lecturer(s), and visiting faculty to teach for the Program. In special circumstances, the Center will be allowed to establish positions and make joint faculty appointments with departments in order to promote interdisciplinary teaching and research (e.g., in Mediterranean Archaeology, Late Antique Studies, International/European Union/Southeastern European Studies).

Working closely with the Graduate School, in special circumstances the Center will also be allowed to offer “add-on” graduate fellowships to students admitted in academic departments.

Center and Program

The Center and Program will be intimately linked — intellectually, structurally and physically — and their activities will be coordinated to ensure synergies and seamless connections between their respective missions: research and teaching. True to Mr. Seeger’s original vision for Hellenic Studies at Princeton, they will offer our students, faculty, fellows and other visitors a remarkable variety of courses, workshops, lectures, concerts and events that will foster intellectual and cultural exchange for generations.
Governance and Administration

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