



## UNIVERSITY OF THESSALY SELECTED TO HOST GREEK DIASPORA FELLOW

### *Greek Diaspora Fellowship Program Selects 30 Projects at 13 Greek Universities*

**Volos, Greece, 04 Sep. 2017** – University of Thessaly was selected to host a Greek Diaspora scholar from the United States to work on a collaborative project on the microbial diversity of Greek geothermal springs. Kostas Kormas will lead the project, together with Kostas Konstantinidis, a Fellow from the Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, USA.

The proposed activity aims at bringing together Drs. K. Kormas (host Institution, University of Thessaly) and K. Konstantinidis (Georgia Institute of Technology). Their joint collaborative research will focus on the long-term structural and functional diversity of microbial communities in Greek terrestrial thermal springs. The aim of this work will be to test the hypothesis of whether terrestrial thermal springs host rather stable microbial communities over time, in contrast to the seasonally-affected terrestrial and aquatic microbial communities. Finally, through the application of multi-omics technologies, we will reveal the existence of genes that encode microbial biomolecules with potential biotechnological applications. The project started in June 2017 and its first results are expected at the beginning of 2018.

University of Thessaly is one of thirteen Greek universities selected by the Greek Diaspora Fellowship Program to host the fellows for collaborative projects that meet specific needs at their institutions and in their communities, based on proposals submitted by faculty members and administrators at the Greek universities. The thirty Greek- and Cypriot-born scholars, hailing from a cross-section of twenty-eight prominent United States and Canadian universities, will work in areas that range from medical physics to curriculum co-development in clinical neurophysiology, and from Anglo-American Modernist Poetry to educational psychology.

With this second round of Fellowships, the program has now selected a total of 51 U.S. and Canadian based academics to collaborate with universities throughout Greece to develop curricula, conduct research, and teach and mentor graduate students in priority areas identified by the Greek universities.

The Greek Diaspora Fellowship Program is designed to help avert Greece's brain drain and develop long-term, mutually-beneficial collaborations between universities in Greece and the United States and Canada. Launched in 2016, the Fellowship Program is managed by the

Institute of International Education in collaboration with the [Fulbright Foundation in Greece](#), and funded by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

“One of the main goals of the Greek Diaspora Fellowship Program has been to engage productively one of Greece’s most important assets, its diasporic academic community,” said Stelios Vasilakis, Director of Programs and Strategic Initiatives at SNF. “The response and caliber of the Fellows selected for this first iteration of the Program, point to the existence of a critical mass of scholars that can contribute significantly to Greek Universities at a critical moment in modern Greek history. This is a collaboration that is mutually beneficial and carries the potential of long term impact and of changing the means of engagement between the motherland and its extensive diaspora.”

“The Stavros Niarchos Foundation’s generous support for these Fellowships demonstrates the Foundation’s commitment to expanding Greece’s human capital and investing in the country’s long-term economic recovery,” said Allan Goodman, President and CEO of the Institute of International Education.

**Contact:** University of Thessaly, Christos Genitseftsis e-mail: [resup@uth.gr](mailto:resup@uth.gr)  
Sharon Witherell, IIE Public Affairs, [switherell@iie.org](mailto:switherell@iie.org)  
Virginia Anagnos, Goodman Media for SNF, [virginia@goodmanmedia.com](mailto:virginia@goodmanmedia.com)

### **About the Stavros Niarchos Foundation**

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation [(SNF) ([www.SNF.org](http://www.SNF.org))] is one of the world’s leading private, international philanthropic organizations, making grants in the areas of arts and culture, education, health and sports, and social welfare. Since 1996, SNF has committed [\\$2.1 billion](#), through 3,891 grants to nonprofit organizations in [113 nations around the world](#). The Foundation funds organizations and projects that are expected to achieve a broad, lasting and positive impact for society at large, and exhibit strong leadership and sound management. The Foundation also supports projects that facilitate the formation of public-private partnerships as an effective means for serving public welfare.

In addition to its standard grants, the SNF has continued to respond to the urgent needs of Greek society, by providing relief against the severe effects of the socioeconomic crisis through three major grant initiatives of \$378 million.

The Foundation’s largest single gift is the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center (SNFCC), in Athens. The project’s total cost is \$861 million. The SNFCC is designed by the renowned architectural firm Renzo Piano Building Workshop, and includes the new facilities of the National Library of Greece, and Greek National Opera, as well as the Stavros Niarchos Park. The Center was delivered to the Greek Society on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017. Following the handover, the SNF announced its commitment to continue supporting the SNFCC for the next five years, through grants totaling up to \$53 million. The grants support the implementation of public

programming and help cover part of SNFCC's operational costs. All events funded with SNF support are free to the public.

**About the Institute of International Education (IIE)**

The Institute of International Education ([www.iie.org](http://www.iie.org)) works with policymakers, educators and employers across the globe to prepare students and professionals for the global workforce and equip them to solve the increasingly complex challenges facing our interconnected world. An independent, not-for-profit organization founded in 1919, IIE has a network of 18 offices and affiliates worldwide, and over 1,300 member institutions.

**The Fulbright Foundation in Greece**

Fulbright is the most widely recognized and prestigious international exchange program in the world, supported for more than half a century by the American people through an annual appropriation from the U.S. Congress and by the people of partner nations. The Fulbright Foundation in Greece (<http://www.fulbright.gr/en/>) offers scholarships to Greek and American citizens – students, teachers, scholars, and artists – to pursue a wide variety of educational projects. The Foundation awards grants to Greek and US citizens to study, teach, lecture, or conduct research in the United States and Greece respectively. The Fulbright Foundation in Greece operates an Educational Advising Center in Athens where staff offer free, comprehensive information on American institutions of higher learning.