Center for the Study of Culture and Values Annual Report 2012-2013

During the 2012-2013 academic year the Center for the Study of Culture and Values continued its activities fulfilling the purpose as defined by its bylaws quoted here:

“1. To promote and sponsor study of the contributions of world cultures and individual leaders to the development of values and great value-based decisions in history and contemporary affairs.
2. To promote and sponsor the examination and analysis of ethical, moral, and legal codes in their effect upon patterns of social, professional, and business practice related to culture and values.
3. To bring distinguished visiting teachers and scholars to the university through endowed chairs in the history, distinctiveness, and influence of cultures and their values.
4. To engage the university and the Danbury community in dialogue on culture and values by means of an endowed lecture series.
5. To engage students in critical, reflective thinking about individual and collective belief systems and provide a forum for student engagement with culture and value-related issues.
6. To sponsor and promote additional activities related to the study of culture and values. These may include interdisciplinary academic programs leading to certificates and/or degrees, research on culture and values, publications, an interactive website, an electronic library, exhibitions, workshops, conferences, and symposia with community leaders.”

The following activities were organized, sponsored and promoted by the Center with the generous funding from the Macricostas Family Foundation:

1. World-touring production of the Greek tragedy "Helen of Troy" by the Greek director Leonidas Loizides was presented on September 24, 2012. Loizides and his group offered an interactive workshop for students majoring in Theater at WCSU before the show.
2. Macricostas Entrepreneurship Lecture and reception "A Visionary Look at Where Technology is Headed", by John Patrick, President of Attitude LLC and former Vice-President of Internet technology at IBM, April 25 2013.

Specifically Organized and facilitated by the Macricostas Visiting Endowed Chair, Nick Pappas:

1) Put together a tentative blog for Hellenic and Modern Greek Studies at WCSU, which includes blogs on previous Macricostas chairs and began an enumeration of the year-by-year activities in Hellenic and Modern Greek Studies between 2007 and 2012. It includes a tentative schedule of events for the Spring Semester 2013. It was only open to the comments and suggestions of the committee for Culture and Values, since this blog was provisional and experimental in nature. The Chair recommend that the committee form a web page through the university to announce events and to act as a sounding board for comments by students and the community. The URL is http://mchmgs.blogspot.com/ and I the chair re-invited all members to visit and consider making something like this an official page for Hellenic and Modern Greek Studies.
2) Met with Father Peter Karloutsos of Assumption Greek Orthodox church to make sure
that the Greek community would be aware of our program and to make sure that the dates of our events would not conflict with services and events of the Greek and other Orthodox Community. Father Peter made sure that ads and announcements events were sent through his email list, that included interested members, as well as other Orthodox churches and Greek organizations. As a result of Father Peter’s efforts, we had a number from the Greek community attend our events.

3) Through the advice of Theodora Pinou, the Chair contacted George Syrimis of the Niarchos Hellenic Center at Yale and shared schedules of programs. For each of our events, announcements sent to all of the faculty members of the Yale center. The Chair kept in personal contact with George, as well as with Nikos Chrissidis of SCSU, Stathis Kalyvas of Yale, and Gregory Koutmos of Fairfield University regarding our program.

4) The Chair helped to organize and present the lecture and PowerPoint presentation called, “Greece’s Modern Olympics. 1859, 1870, 1875, 1888, 1896, 1906, 2004: A Challenge to the International Olympic Movement?” In publicizing the event, I sent announcements via email to faculty in Social Science, Health, Athletics, and circulated an outstanding ad produced by the publishing and art department of the university. It was held at Warner Hall #102 on March 6, 2013. A near capacity attendance of about seventy persons was present.

5) The Chair helped to organize and present the lecture and PowerPoint presentation, “The Amazon Company: A Greek Women’s Military Honor Guard for Catherine II during Her Tour of the Crimea, 1787.” In publicizing the event, he circulated announcements to students and faculty through university email, as well as to the community through Father Peter, George Syrimis and others. He also circulated a hard copy of our ad for the event to buildings of the University. The event was held at Warner Hall #102 on April 2, 2013. This event had a good attendance of about 40-50 persons.

6) The Chair helped to organize the lecture of Professor David Wick of Gordon College on “Athens in the Age of the Apostles: An Urban Introduction.: The talk was held at Science Lecture Hall #125 on April 2, 2013. It was an outstanding presentation and a well-attended event. The reception and refreshments that followed were a joy.

7) As a member of the History Department, the Chair organized and taught a senior course, History 498-72: Greek History from the Ottomans to the E.U.: The First European Confront the Modern World. This is the first course at WCSU on Modern Greek history. As part of the curriculum, the Chair presented a series of four films, which the students viewed and reviewed, these included:

   a) The Trial of the Judges (Greece, 1974)-The story of the infamous trial of Kolokotrones of the 1830's and the two judges who refused to condemn him.

   b) America, America (United States, 1963)-A film by Elia Kazan about how his uncle came to America from the Ottoman Empire.

   c) Deep Soul (Psychi Vathia, Greece, 2009)-A view of the last days of the Greek Civil War from the perspective of both the Left and the Right.

   d) Z (He Lives, France, 1969)-An account of the assassination of Gregorios Lamprakis and the subsequent investigation in the years before the Greek Military Coup of 1967.
e) Waiting for the Clouds (Bulutları Bekleren, Turkey, 2003). The story of a Turkish women who struggles with her past and her identity in the 1970's.

The Chair could not show these films publicly because of fair use limits viewing of copyrighted works to curricular use. Nevertheless he strongly recommends film presentations as part of the program the Macricostas events. The Chair left the Center a copy film that a colleague in Greece sent me, entitled God Loves Caviar (O Theos agapaei Chaviari, Greece, 2012), which narrates the life of Ioannis Varvakis, who emigrated to Russia in the 1770's, made a fortune in caviar production in Astrakhan, and returned to Greece in the 1820's to support its revival, becoming one of the national benefactors of Greece.

8) The Chair also served the greater community by making a presentation for the Hellenic Center at Yale University on Monday, 22 April. Meeting over dinner after the talk with George Syrimis and Nikos Chrissidis, the Chair recommends them as potential speakers at future Macricostas events.

Nikos Chrissidis is Professor of History at SCSU and an expert on Greco-Russian relations. He has offered to give a talk on of three different topics:

a) The social and cultural life of the Greek community in Odessa in the 19th Century. (I think that this topic would be of the most interest)

b) The issue of indulgences in the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches in the 17th Century.

c) The question of tobacco use in the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches.

George Syrimis is a Professor of Literature at Yale University and an expert on Cavafy. He would like to give a public lecture on one of his other interests, Greek Popular Music and its survival in an era of cultural globalization.

9) Regarding international study in Greece for WCSU students. Professor Wick at Gordon College has a Greece study program in May and June. I am leaving brochures and other materials from this program for your perusal. I would also recommend investigating American College in Greece-Deree College in Athens (http://www.acg.edu/) and the American College in Thessaloniki-Anatolia College in Thessaloniki (http://www.anatolia.edu.gr/) for possible partners in study in Greece for WCSU students. Both schools have very good reputations and are accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. The Athens Institute for Education and Research is now mostly involved in professional academic conferences in Athens, and is not actively promoting study abroad programs at this time. Two members of the WCSU's history department, Martha May and Burton Peretti, will be presenting at the History Conference in late July this year.