

Adding value to education

Dr. David G. Horner, President of the American College of Greece (DEREE, Pierce and Alba), talks to Business File about education and explains what ACG does to help students maximise their opportunities for a better future despite the crisis

What unique offerings does The American College of Greece offer students in this time of crisis?

A core commitment of ACG is to add distinctive value to the lives of our students through transformative education that forms well-rounded individuals and active, engaged citizens.

Considering the current financial crisis, ACG's US-based Board of Trustees approved a six-fold increase in financial aid and scholarship funding for students with a total investment of more than \$20 million over four academic years. During the 2013-2014 academic year 1,420 ACG students (37 per cent of our student body) received some form of financial support.

Support for students comes in various forms at ACG, offering unique educational and professional opportunities. For example, DERE students can study abroad for a semester at one of our stellar partner universities (e.g. Cornell University, Emory University), and they can also intern with leading multinational companies, such as the Libra Group, Coca-Cola, Johnson & Johnson, etc.

ACG offers undergraduate and graduate degree programmes in various disciplines, tailored to the needs of our diverse student body, while students also enjoy a unique experience in the state-of-the-art ACG campus.

DEREE also offers a Parallel Studies programme for students of the Greek universities who wish to combine fields of study and enhance their academic skills. At the moment, nearly 300 Greek University students study in parallel at DERE.

To sum up _____

Dr. David G. Horner spoke to **Business File** in early November about The American College of Greece, which he heads, and shared his views on educational issues, the Greek economic crisis, how ACG is helping students cover tuition costs, and other topics.

But, the most unique offering ACG provides is proven by a fact linking studies at ACG with employment: Almost 70 per cent of our student body is employed within six months of graduating – another 18 per cent are in graduate school or engaged in further studies.

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How diverse is your student body?

Currently, students from 52 countries study at DERE. The majority of our students are Greek, while the rest are from the US, Europe, Asia, and Africa. International students either participate in the Study Abroad programme of a partner US institution or pursue their degree at DERE. Having a diverse student body is a rich educational experience for

everyone. That will be the world in which our students work after they graduate.

How does ACG help its students connect with the job market and gain professional experience?

Through our International Internship and Study Abroad Programme that is offering internships with leading companies around the world, our students gain professional experience and many of them get a job offer.

ACG also helps its students pursue their dreams through its 37,000 strong alumni network. Our alumni are dedicated to giving back to the College – not least through internships to ACG students, while they are also active in speaking to students, either on campus or at outreach events around Greece and the world.

ACG's Career Services office helps students prepare their resume and enhance their employability skills, and organises Career Days, an annual event that offers our students the opportunity to connect with HR representatives of multinational companies.

Are there any little-known facts the public should know about ACG?

ACG is structured exactly the way the most

Dr. David G. Horner

Dr. David G. Horner, PhD, has been the President and a Member of the Board of Trustees at The American College of Greece since July 1, 2008.

Dr. Horner served as Senior Managing Director of the Higher Education Practice of EFL Associates, Inc. between 2005 and 2008, where his clients included major public and private institutions, as well as regional and special purpose colleges and universities throughout the US.

Dr. Horner served as President of North Park University (IL) from 1987-2004 and President of Barrington College (RI) from 1979 to 1985.

Dr. Horner has taught at several institutions, among them Harvard University, and has presented professionally and/or published in the areas of business ethics, strategic planning, institutional governance, campus and community relationships, and leadership.

Dr. Horner holds a PhD (Stanford University School of Education) in higher education administration and policy analysis, an MBA (Stanford University Graduate School of Business), an MA (University of Rhode Island) in philosophy, and a BA summa cum laude (Barrington College) in philosophy.



Serving the public good: Dr. David G. Horner, President of the American College of Greece (DEREE), says ACG is structured exactly the way the most prestigious US universities are structured – as a private, non-profit institution dedicated to serving the public good. ACG also boasts a spectacular employment record for its students and graduates, despite the crisis

prestigious US universities are structured – as a private, non-profit institution dedicated to serving the public good. This philosophy is not well understood in Greece and has very few similar examples in this country but accounts for how we approach virtually all of our operations.

Are DERE degrees now recognised by the Greek state?

We were offering higher education courses long before Article 16 came into effect in the mid-1970s, and we are accredited by the same US body that accredits Harvard and Yale. Additionally, reflecting both our European and Greek operating context, we have partnered with the Open University, one of the best universities and the largest public university in the UK. Through this agreement, DERE graduates can gain dual –US and European– credentials at the same time, and Greece is required by the EU to recognise the “professional rights” of the EU credential.

It is unfortunate that the Greek state has yet to recognise fully (that is, both academically and professionally) the degrees of students attending internationally accredited private colleges in Greece. Greece would be well served

by “levelling the playing field” to allow private and public competition in higher education, which can only lead to better education for all students.

The fact is that we have always had the market’s recognition, as our 37,000 alumni are employed in 1,600 companies around the world.

You entered academia in adulthood as a philosophy student, and eventually became the youngest president of a university or college in the US at the age of 29. Now, where do you stand on the liberal arts debate, that is the value of a liberal arts education as technology and business continuously and swiftly change the work landscape?

First, I believe deeply in the value of the liberal arts as the optimal educational basis for both life and career. Many proponents of a liberal arts education could be cited to unfold the varied and valuable learning outcomes that immersion in the liberal arts can provide.

The model of four years of a liberal arts education followed by professional education –that is business, law, medicine, and so forth– is well established in the US. And I see great value in this model.

Here at ACG, we aim at the intentional integrative blending of liberal arts and applied or professional (e.g. business, technology) education from the “get go”.

We encourage blending pedagogical approaches –case studies, research papers, group projects, problem-based learning, seminar formats– as well as team teaching utilising liberal arts and business faculty and joint, interdisciplinary scholarship to leverage the creative possibilities for integrative learning.

Also, we have invested significantly in technology. As just one example, the DERE library, which is the largest college library in

Greece, has over 100,000 books, and also offers access to over 100,000 e-books and millions of articles and databases online.

What have you learned from your place at the helm of ACG since 2008, just before the Greek crisis struck?

Through the lens of ACG, I would say Greece has some real strategic advantages and opportunities – which can attract leading educational institutions and investors alike, based on Greece’s “brand” (its cultural heritage), its geographical and cultural position (between East and West), the strength of its diaspora, technological resources, low-cost travel and growing cross-cultural relationships.

It’s time to see the benefits of public-private competition and cooperation in higher education in Greece, but for this Article 16 of the Greek Constitution must be amended.

I believe that Greece will rebound; we at ACG are here to prepare our students for a better and brighter future for Greece.

What would you advise young Greeks who wish to leave the country as youth unemployment soars?

I would say to them that in every crisis there is a brain drain, but that in every crisis too, there are those who stay and find their own niche and competitive advantage. The market place is very challenging for any youngster or older person alike. But, it is the youth with their energy, creativity and willingness to serve the community that will shape the new dawn of Greece.

We see bright, promise-filled youngsters every day on this campus, and we are determined to help them realise their dreams – through our academic programmes, guidance, alumni network and the strength of our commitment to this great country even in its time of crisis. **bf**