

# Millennium Wheel project gives students crash course in engineering

Groups of teens build models of London Eye with paper as their only material

BY JULIA PANAYOTOU

**Designing** and building a model of the 135-meter-tall London Eye in a day was not too great a challenge for students at three private schools in Athens. The British Council invited Joanne Crowther and Jack Bradley of the University of Bradford to organize three workshops for 16- and 17-year-olds at St Catherine's, the Geitonas School and Greek-German school Ellinogermaniki Agogi last week. The students received an intensive course in engineering, building a miniature of the British landmark erected in 1999 – the largest Ferris wheel in Europe and the world's tallest cantilevered observation wheel – from scratch.

Over a three-hour period, the approximately 30 students at each school, armed with 1,500 sheets of A4 and 120 sheets of A3 paper, set up a production line and organized themselves in order to build a 2.8-meter model of the London Eye.

The workshops took place on November 2 at St Catherine's School, on November 3 at the Geitonas School and on November 4 at Ellinogermaniki Agogi.



Similar workshops have also taken place in Cyprus, Spain and Bulgaria. All part of the "Design and Build Models of the London Eye in a Day" project initiated by the Institution of Civil Engineers in London, the aim is to introduce students to civil and structural engineering as well as to demonstrate how engineering factors into everyday life. The workshop also offered the chance to learn some hands-on team-building and communication and project management skills, useful in any field the students will eventually go into.



**Local 16- and 17-year-olds** at St Catherine's School, Geitonas School and Ellinogermaniki Agogi set out to make models of the London Eye, also known as the Millennium Wheel.

## Language courses get quality stamp

The Hellenic American Union offers classes in English and modern Greek, now accredited by the CEA

In August 2009, the Hellenic American Union's (HAU) Modern Greek language and English language programs were accredited by the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA). The CEA, which is recognized by the US Department of Education, is the only specialized accreditation organization of its kind in the United States and one of the most recognized worldwide. The CEA uses accreditation standards that offer an objective means to evaluate the quality of foreign language-teaching programs.

The HAU is the only institution of its kind in Greece and in the rest of the world to have been accredited by the CEA. It joins the ranks of 72 institutions worldwide whose foreign-language teaching programs have been similarly accredited, including those offered by Boston

University, Georgetown University and the University of Pennsylvania.

The accreditation came at the end of a five-year-long comprehensive, in-depth institutional assessment effort that included a review and revision of all administrative and academic processes and academic content of the program.

Currently, the HAU's Modern Greek language program boasts an annual student population of more than 900 students from approximately 75 countries. Students can choose from a variety of courses offered with flexible schedules: language and conversation courses at all levels and exam prep courses for the Examination for the Certificate of Attainment in Modern Greek from the Greek Ministry of Education and the Center for the Greek Language. The textbooks students use have been

developed by faculty members and academic staff and are supplemented by a variety of educational technological innovations. Moreover, the program places considerable emphasis on educational technology: Interactive whiteboards are used widely; Hellas Alive! – the highly interactive online Greek language learning platform – makes lessons easier to follow; visitors to the Hellenic American Union website can take advantage of free Greek podcasts and videocasts, and of an online placement test.

The program also organizes special educational and cultural events that are integrated into the lessons. Students can use services such as the Hellenic American Union Library and the Writing Center.

Visit [www.hau.gr/greek](http://www.hau.gr/greek) to find out more.

## EXHIBITION

### 'Common Grounds' by Campion alumni

**common grounds**



The City of Athens Arts Council presents a group show organized and curated by

Sarah Ettlinger. Open until November 14, the exhibition includes a selection of the latest work by Campion alumni, including painting, photography, video, illustration, street art, sculpture, architecture, design and installation.

The exhibition is on display at the N. Gyzis Gallery, City of Athens Arts Council (50 Academias, 1st Floor), Tuesday-Saturday 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. & 5-9 p.m. and Sunday 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. E-mail [sarahettlinger@gmail.com](mailto:sarahettlinger@gmail.com) for more details.

## WHAT'S NEW IN ACADEMIA

### Greece and Poland on the international stage

Greece and Poland's relationship was the central topic in a conference organized on the occasion of the 64th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The conference took place under the auspices of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Greece and the Athens Campus of the University of Indianapolis (UIndy Athens).

"This conference provides inspiration for a further systematic approach to this historical and political topic. I consider this very first meeting of Polish and Greek scholars to be a basis for research and the creation of a new chapter for mutual historical and political studies," said Polish Ambassador Michal Klingner.

"We are proud in Poland that many Polish officers and soldiers joined the Philhellenic movement during the early 19th century. They struggled with the Greeks for independence and the establishment of the modern Greek state. This effort is witnessed in monuments portraying the Polish Philhellenes in Mesolongi, Peta and other Greek towns. After World War II and during the dictatorship [by fleeing] to Poland. Many of them are still there. For 30 years there has also been a Polish diaspora living in Greece."

The international conference took place at the UIndy Athens Cultural Center in Plaka in cooperation with Kazimierz Wielki University of Bydgoszcz, the University of Economy in Bydgoszcz, the Hellenic Society of International Law and International Relations and the Hellenic United Nations Association. Polish and Greek university professors and other dignitaries from the academic and diplomatic communities spoke on various issues, especially on the historical, political, social and cultural relations between Greece and Poland.

"Poland is in the hearts of the people of both America and Greece due to their historical ties and common struggles for democratic ideals. We maintain excellent relations with the Polish Embassy and are open to developing close relations with universities in Poland, starting with the ones represented here," said Vasilis Botopoulos, chancellor of UIndy Athens and vice president of the University of Indianapolis (USA).

"This year's UN day is taking place in a period in which multiple crises – food, fuel, financial – are hitting at once, but also at a period when the world is renewing its confidence in multilateralism and the UN," said Dimitrios Fatouros, information officer for Greece and Cyprus at the UN Regional Information Center for Western Europe in Brussels. He explained that Greece's economical status and its citizens' lifestyle have changed tremendously. "Sixty years ago, we were receiving humanitarian aid and over 2 million Greeks suffered from malaria. Today we are a developed country," he said.

"Greece is a developed and asymmetric interdependent country, with a consolidated – but not yet qualitative – democracy," said Theodore Coulombis, professor emeritus of international relations at the University of Athens and vice president of the board of directors at the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), speaking on Greek foreign policy priorities. Coulombis spoke of Greece transitioning from geopolitics to geoeconomics, with its main interests lying in good relations between the European Union and the United States, keeping friendly relations with its neighbors and supporting EU membership for all. "We are a stronger country with full representation of all political forces, so we can afford to have better foreign relations. But we are pessimists. If we think that foreign countries control our country, that will happen," warned Professor Coulombis.

For more details on the conference and the International Relations Department at UIndy Athens, call 210.323.9740 or visit [www.uindy.gr](http://www.uindy.gr).