

ADMINISTRATION: 9 Ipitou St., Syntagma Sq., Athens 105 57. Tel.: 210 323 7077, 210 323 9908-9, Fax: 210 324 8502 • **GRADUATE & UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS:** 7-9 Ypatias Street, Mitropoleos Square, Athens 105 57 • **CULTURAL CENTER:** 5 Markou Avriliou / 2 Kiristou & Lysiou Street, Plaka, Athens 105 57 • www.uindy.gr • **HEAD OFFICE:** 1400 East Hanna Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana 46227-3697, USA www.uindy.edu

PRESS RELEASE

**“Service Learning” Goes Global - Next Symposium Goes to China
International Symposium on “Service – Learning” in Higher Education
Organized by University of Indianapolis in Athens**

Athens, December 1, 2009 – 65 Universities from 11 countries participated in the International Symposium on “Service – Learning” that took place November 22 – 24, 2009 in Athens, and was organized by the University of Indianapolis, Indiana, USA (UIndy), under the auspices of the Athens Campus of the University of Indianapolis (UIndy Athens), and held at the UIndy Athens Cultural Center. The event introduced Athens public to the international academic discussion on “Service – Learning”, one of the most exciting, hands-on and innovative approaches to education, that brings learning to life by integrating meaningful community service with instruction, enriching learning experience, teaching civic responsibility, encouraging lifelong civic engagement and strengthening communities for the common good.

The Symposium involved universities from countries like the United States, South Africa, China, England, France, Germany, and - besides UIndy - universities such as Cornell University, USA, Georgetown University, USA, Rhodes University, South Africa, Temple University, USA, University of Cumbria, UK, University of Pretoria, South Africa, Universitaet Duisburg-Essen, Germany, Ningbo Institute of Technology - Zhejiang University, China.

“In our increasingly global and interdependent world, the power of the individual is far more important. Individual becomes even more influential with a profound effect on community and society,” declared Vasilis Botopoulos, Chancellor of UIndy Athens and Vice President of the University of Indianapolis (USA), addressing the international academic community participating in the Symposium at its opening ceremony. “The most important problems can only be addressed by more global participation which starts in our community,” and he urged: “Broaden our vision, yet narrow our focus.”

“If we consider service-learning as a ‘social movement’ or ‘social reform’ in higher education, we must address a number of pertinent questions so that service-learning can be rooted in the fabric of higher education,” said Phylis Lan Lin, Symposium Chair and Associate Vice President for International Partnerships of UIndy. “[...] Universities are increasingly embracing the notion of service-learning as a model to integrate research work, learning inside the community through civic engagement.”

The next Symposium on “Service learning” will take place in China. “Education is the most honored profession under the sun,” said H.E Luo Linqun, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to the Hellenic Republic. “Socrates had challenged his fellow Athenians to acknowledge their ignorance, and search for truth. Confucius had urged his contemporaries to approach wisdom through diligent learning, be ready to learn from others, and renew and reinvent our old country,” said Ambassador Linqun and invited all academics to instill the Symposium’s knowledge to their work and contribute to the upbringing of a globally minded, responsible and innovative generation.

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