



HELLENIC COLLEGE
 HOLY CROSS
 GREEK ORTHODOX
 SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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CORNERSTONE

Educating the next generation of Orthodox Christian Clergy and lay leaders.

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ALUM SERVES AS FIRST EVER FULL-TIME OCF MISSIONARY AT TEXAS A&M

Even before graduating from Hellenic College Holy Cross in May 2023, Alexandros Pandazis (the Theological School’s valedictorian that year), knew he was going apply his education and training as a campus missionary for Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) at Texas A&M University in College Station, TX. Pandazis had previously interviewed for a position with OCF but the timing wasn’t right for he and his wife, Rachel.

“To make the timing work, I had to spread out my last semester of classes at HCHC over two semesters. That’s when I was able to begin working for OCF at least part-time,” said Pandazis, a New Jersey native who had never been to Texas. “Once I got to College Station, I found it to be a great blessing to be in the south on the fertile ground of a traditional Christian university.”

As the first Campus Missionary for OCF, Pandazis had a blank slate upon which he could create his position. College Station is about a 90-minute drive to Houston and to Austin while Dallas is three hours away. But all three cities sent plenty of Orthodox students to A&M and College Station had an Antiochian parish in town and St. Paraskevi Monastery a mere half-hour away.



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Dear Friends,

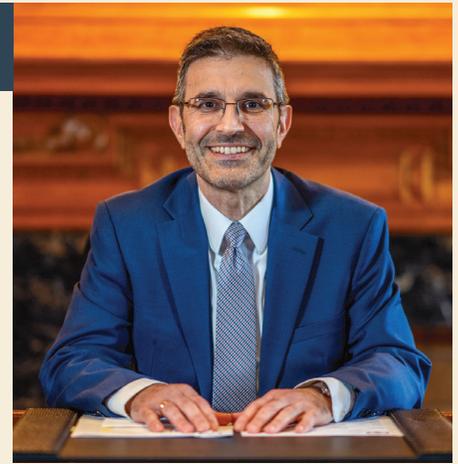
As fall approaches our beautiful Brookline campus, I am filled with gratitude for the extraordinary progress we've made – progress only possible because of you. Your prayers, your generosity, and your unwavering belief in the mission of Hellenic College Holy Cross have all carried us into a new season of growth and promise.

Thanks to your support, and the leadership of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros and our Archdiocese:

- Student enrollment continues to climb and will surpass 200 for 2025-26, with a growing number of men discerning the sacred call to the priesthood.

- Our Diaconate Program is thriving, with more than 50 dedicated participants preparing to serve the Church in this vital capacity
- Institutional debt has been reduced to approximately \$4 million.
- Our endowment has grown to over \$37 million, providing a stronger financial foundation for the future.
- And we are blessed with an exceptional Board of Trustees - visionary, hardworking, and generous leaders deeply committed to our success.

HCHC is also home to a growing constellation of institutes and ministries that extend our mission far beyond the classroom:



- Orthodox Christian Missions Institute
- Huffington Ecumenical Institute
- Pappas Patristic Institute
- Maliotis Cultural Center
- Kallinikeion Greek Language Institute
- Archbishop Iakovos Library and Learning Resource Center



QUIET STRENGTH OF PHILOPTOCHOS AT WORK AT HCHC

In recent years, the seniors from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology have made a short trip from Brookline to New York City to enjoy dinner with members of the National Ladies Philoptochos Society. It's an evening of fellowship that's meant to convey an important message.

“We want those graduating to know that, wherever their ministry takes them next, Philoptochos is there to support them just as we have been during their time at HCHC,” said Debbie George, National Philoptochos Society President. “Whether they are headed into parish life as a member of the clergy or as a pastoral assistant or youth director or if they are going into non-profit work or counseling, Philoptochos is here to help. Always.”

For more than 90 years, Philoptochos has quietly provided the undergirding strength to countless ministries at all levels – from the Archdiocese to each parish it serves (there are more than 400 chapters nationwide).

The examples are many – supporting the completion of Saint Nicholas National Shrine at the World Trade Center, Saint Basil's Academy, camping ministries, OCF, humanitarian relief, Children's Medical Fund and countless others - and include things that are behind-the-scenes at HCHC, but are vital to students, faculty and staff of the school.

In 2024, a Philoptochos grant enabled HCHC to upgrade critical I-T infrastructure such as servers and fiber-optic Internet connections;

improve security through access cards, cameras and intercom systems; repairing the steps around the Chapel and enhancing the landscaping to further beautify the campus and more. It took until Spring 2025 (and the winter thaw) to completely implement all projects funded by the grant.

“Yes, Philoptochos as an organization is a ‘friend of the poor.’ That is the core of our mission,” added George. “But we're here to sustain the Archdiocese and its educational resources. That's why we believe so deeply in supporting HCHC and its students; we recognize them as the future of our Church whether they are ministry leaders, lay leaders or clergy.”

Learn more about Philoptochos' work at www.philoptochos.org



- Mary Jaharis Center for Byzantine Art and Culture
- Scriptorium Initiative
- New York Life Insurance Company Center for the Study of Asia Minor

Still there is more on the horizon. With a team of trustees who have national reputations in higher education, business, and institutional transformation - and your continued support - we are building an even greater resource our church while preparing new generations to serve with wisdom and compassion while creating sustainable revenue to support our future.

Thank you for making this possible.
The best is yet to come.

In Christ,
Demetrios S. Katos, Ph.D.
President



COLLEGE ENROLLMENT ON THE RISE



The incoming Hellenic College class for 2025 is the largest in 25 years, continuing a three-year trend of enrollment increases and 10 percent growth over 2024. This follows the highest number of domestic applications received in school history.

“We are grateful to God for guiding each of these students to HCHC and honored to walk with them on this journey of faith and learning,” said Dr. Bruce Beck, Director of Enrollment Management and Assistant Professor of New Testament.

About half of Hellenic College’s new students are women who come from many different states – and New Zealand. Orthodox jurisdictions represented included the Greek, Antiochian and Russian Orthodox churches.

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DONOR PROFILE

Bill Spell



HCHC Board of Trustee member Bill Spell spent his formative years at St. Mary’s Greek Orthodox Church in Minneapolis, MN where Fr. Anthony Coniaris – an HCHC alum and distinguished clergyman for his forward thinking on stewardship, welcoming newcomers to the faith, and much more – shaped generations of parishioners during his 40+ year ministry.

To Spell, Fr. Coniaris held another important honorific – the title of ‘uncle.’ Spell’s mom and Presbytera Mary Coniaris were sisters, “so that meant a lot of time during holiday meals and other family occasions talking to my uncle, asking questions that were often answered with a deeper dive,” said Spell. “Fr. Anthony showed me his faith, and it inspired me.

“When I was asked to join the board of the school, it became quickly obvious to me that Hellenic College Holy Cross is the heartbeat of our faith. It produces priests, pastoral assistants, youth workers and others who are fundamental to furthering Orthodoxy, today and in the future.”

During HCHC’s recent “Bridge to the Future” fundraising campaign, Spell led by example with a transformative gift. His model of stewardship was followed by other donors, leading to \$2.6 million in donations during the 2024-25 fiscal year.

In addition to being trustee of the school, Spell serves on the Archdiocesan Council and is Chairman of the Stewardship committee, is a fulfilled member of Leadership 100, an Archon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, on

the Board of Trustees for the Order of Saint Andrew, Board member and treasurer of Saint Nicholas Church and National Shrine, a board member of the Metropolis of Chicago Foundation, on the investment committee of the Patriarch’s Foundation, and a recipient of the Medal of St. Paul. All of this in addition to having been Parish Council president and active in his home parish.

Since 1997, the Spell Family Foundation has been supporting organizations related to the Orthodox Church as well as children’s medical charities. By Spell’s estimation, 80 percent of the monies awarded by the foundation are to church-related organizations such as the Metropolis of Chicago, HCHC and St. George Orthodox Church in St. Paul, MN.

Over 40 years, Spell has built and managed Spell Capital Partners, a private equity investment firm, and the Spell Family Office. His forward thinking in his professional career is one of the gifts Spell applies to philanthropy and to the church. He wants to see parishes and all church organizations prepare for their futures by strengthening themselves now.

“I’d like to see the church and our parishes, empowered to establish endowments or foundations that enable them to focus on financial stability,” he said. “The parishes of the Greek Archdiocese have been welcoming new people to the faith, that’s where growth is coming from. We look more like the composition of America more than the immigrant churches we once were. To have a vibrant future, we need priests and people to minister to the faithful in a church that continues as it has for millennia.”





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ALUM SERVES AS FIRST EVER FULL-TIME OCF MISSIONARY



Even with fertile ground, Pandazis had his work cut out for him. Other faith traditions had invested heavily in well-established ministries on campus while Orthodoxy had been under-represented.

“Alexandros has poured his heart, his intelligence and his creativity into this work and has played a key role in the evolution of the campus ministry,” said Deacon Simon Marek, OCF Executive Director. “He is walking alongside students during their college journey and helping them form their discipleship in Christ.”

There are five pillars – worship, philanthropy, education, fellowship and witness – that build OCF’s discipleship on the A&M campus. There is a

weekly 90-minute scripture study attended by more than 30 students who are encouraged to be stewards and contribute to the life of the church. The Pandazis family also opens its house to dinner on the first Sunday of each month and the students regularly participate in philanthropic causes. In total, nearly 160 students participate in OCF in one way or another.

“College students want the fullness of the Orthodox faith, not a watered-down version. That’s why they’re willing to study scripture even as they carry a full load of classes,” added Pandazis. “As they become adults, we want them to contribute to the life of the church and not act as passive receivers of the faith. When their faith is allowed to thrive, it will take root at this most important time in their lives.”

Texas A&M was the first campus to have a full-time missionary and OCF has since added missionaries at Arizona State University and in Atlanta where the campuses of Georgia Tech and Emory University are served.

“On all three campuses, we work with student leadership, so their voice plays an important role in shaping the ministry,” added Deacon Simon. “The missionaries themselves meet to compare notes and have a retreat each summer about the things that are working best for them. We want to continue growing this program on new campuses around the U.S.”

For Pandazis, his HCHC education is never far from his mind because it is a touchstone that informs his daily work. “The point of a missionary is to build up the campus ministry but it’s also to build discipleship by experiencing a model of faith. I experienced my model of faith at Holy Cross. I’m constantly referring to my notes and classwork. That’s when I realized that all my classes helped prepare me for my work with OCF.” ❖❖

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COLLEGE ENROLLMENT ON THE RISE

Several new students are joining Hellenic College after participating in the Semester of Faith program while others have demonstrated a love for serving the Church, having participated in Project Mexico, Ionian Village, CrossRoads and the like.

Compared to 2024, the total number of full-time students has grown by more than 35 percent. And since 2020, Hellenic College has more than doubled in size – an increase of over 160 percent. Growth is projected to increase 35 percent by 2028. For information on enrollment, please visit www.hchc.edu/admissions-apply ❖❖