



## 14<sup>th</sup> Annual AHIF College Student Foreign Policy Study Trip: DC, Greece & Cyprus

### 2022 STUDENT BIOS



**Melina Christodoulou** is a rising junior and member of the Dean's List at Drew University pursuing a BA in political science and a minor in communications. She was accepted into the prestigious Actions Scholar Honors Program and is a representative for the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee for both tennis and volleyball. Melina was recently named Female Athlete Of The Year at her university and led her tennis team to their second conference championship in Drew University history. She is currently studying social entrepreneurship at the United Nations in New York City where she has immersed herself in the work of like-minded academics. Melina was elected as the Secretary Commissioner for the Somerset County Commission on The Status of Women, which advocates for all women throughout New Jersey by providing an effective forum to identify and address women's issues and concerns. As secretary, Melina gained a greater awareness of women's issues by sponsoring informal exchanges in the hopes of improving the quality of life for everyone. Melina looks forward to sharing her experiences from the Foreign Policy Trip with her colleagues as she enters the workforce as a future leader.



**Maria Fusca** is a rising senior at the George Washington University Elliott School of International Affairs, where she is pursuing a BA in International Affairs and two minors in Sociocultural Anthropology and Cross-Cultural Communication. A Presidential Academic Scholarship recipient who regularly gets on her school's Dean's List, Maria has interned for the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration at the U.S. Department of State, as well as for the House Democracy Partnership subcommittee within the U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee. Maria has been researching Greek and Cypriot domestic and international affairs through her university since 2020, culminating in reports that have been published in the *European Journal of Political Research*. As a member of her university's Honors program, Maria will write a thesis focusing on Greece and Cyprus with the intention of publishing her findings and continuing her research post-graduation, with the intention to use her findings in order to advise American policy towards to the two countries.



**Morgan Lilly** is a Junior and Dean's list student at the University of Georgia where he is pursuing a double major in Political Science and International Affairs. Morgan was elected to serve on the University of Georgia's Student Government Association Senate as a representative for the student body at-large while being elected by over 3,000 of his peers. He is an active member of Pi Kappa Phi Fraternity and the University of Georgia's men's club lacrosse team along with working as a clerk for the Interfraternity Council. Last summer Morgan interned for the NGO The Borgen Project which mobilizes voters and citizens as well as advocating directly to Congress for increased United States involvement in International Affairs including women's empowerment and aiding in global poverty. Morgan's passion for international affairs began through his involvement in the Greek community. After serving as altar boy

captain, president of GOYA, and dancing every year in the Marietta Greek Festival, he hopes to continually be involved in the Greek community through direct church and cultural involvement as well as the international affairs field. Morgan plans on pursuing a law degree after graduation from undergrad and hopes to focus on international affairs.



**Zoe Logas** is a rising junior in the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan, majoring in Public Policy with a concentration in defense policy and foreign policy, and minoring in History. On campus, Zoe is the Vice President of Operations and Communications and a member of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee at the Alpha Mu Chapter of Sigma Kappa. She plays an active role in the Hellenic Student Association, and works as a Moderator for WeListen, a club promoting bipartisanship within America. In 2020, Zoe worked as a research intern, studying the perceived death of Vaudeville and its impact on American society. Additionally, she is an engaged member of Young Americans for Freedom and holds the position of Secretary in the founding chapter of College Republicans. Through the Foreign Policy Trip, Zoe hopes to connect to her heritage by learning more about the United States' diplomatic relations

within the Mediterranean. She aspires to become a leader of the future through achieving the position of a politician within the United States.



**Brendan C. O'Connor** is a rising junior and Dean's List student at American University majoring in International Studies with a minor in the Russian language. He is proficient in Spanish, Greek, and Russian and passionate about diplomacy and conflict resolution. He is currently conducting a research project on factors of ongoing conflict in regard to the Greco-Turkish conflict that has lasted for centuries. He is a member of the Saint Sophia GOYA Leadership Organization as well as American University's Orthodox Christian Fellowship. He is in the process of creating a Hellenic club at the university and organize Greek events. He regularly volunteers at Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral and is taking Greek language courses. He is interested in U.S. foreign policy towards Greece and Turkey and hope to one day work at the U.S. Department of State as a foreign service officer.



**Eleni Piliotis** recently graduated from UC Davis with a Bachelor's in Political Science with an emphasis in International Relations. This fall, she will be starting her Master's for Security Policy Studies at George Washington University. Currently, she works full-time as a Public Affairs Specialist for a public agency. During her undergraduate career, she interned with UC Davis Global Affairs where she contributed to research on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Eleni was also a Student Manager and Peer Advisor for UC Davis Washington Program, served as Secretary for the International Relations Student Association, and was involved with the UC Davis Model United Nations Club. In addition, she volunteered with the International Rescue Committee and has experience interning with her local congressional office. Eleni is thrilled to pursue a future career in foreign policy. She is looking forward to gaining a

stronger connection with her Greek heritage and developing a deeper understanding on issues affecting Greece-Cyprus and US relations through the AHIF Foreign Policy Trip.



**Andreas Poulis** is a rising junior at the American University studying International Relations with a regional focus on Europe and a thematic focus on Peace, Global Security, & Conflict Resolution. These areas of study, and desire to strengthen the Greek American community, have always been a passion of his. *He serves as American University & World Politics club President, which focuses on raising awareness and knowledge on lesser recognized conflicts and geopolitical issues.* From a young age he has been an active member, and later president, of G.O.Y.A. and led his high school's Model United Nations team in DC area competitions. By going to university in Washington, DC, he has had the opportunity to immerse himself in actionable political

change. He currently serves as American University & World Politics club President, which focuses on raising awareness and knowledge on lesser recognized conflicts and geopolitical issues. Through the AHIF trip, Andreas hopes to further his knowledge and passion for issues regarding Greece and its diaspora. Additionally, he hopes to continue advocating for political action on Greek American policy upon his return to Washington, DC.



**Natasia Mariah Raptis** is a rising junior at the University of Michigan. Pursuing a dual-degree in Political Science and International Relations with a minor in Modern Greek, Natasia focuses on Hellenic foreign policy. She plans to write a political science honors thesis about the effect of cultural relations on international relations, through the lens of formal bilateral agreements between the unique duo of Greece and Turkey. Natasia has achieved multiple accolades at the University of Michigan, awarded the William J. Branstrom Freshman Prize and the James B. Angell Scholar Award. Beyond academics, Natasia focuses on the enrichment of young women in the legal field as president of Empowering Women in Law UMich and partakes in her university's Hellenic Student Association. Natasia centers all aspects of her university life on international law and Hellenic topics, and

she is eager to expand her knowledge of the subjects through this once in a lifetime opportunity.



**Anastasia Staurulakis** is a rising senior at Tulane University of Louisiana pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Finance and a Master's Degree in Accounting. She is a recipient of Tulane's Merit Award, receiving an academic scholarship. She is a captain for the Tulane club tennis team, helping to lead and organize club tennis tournaments. Anastasia is also a member of the Chi Omega sorority, organizing and participating in philanthropic events involving the Make a Wish Foundation. Anastasia has been an active member of the St. George Greek Orthodox Church community her entire life, graduating from the Greek language school, participating in Goya, participating in the National St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival, and graduating from Sunday school. She is passionate about her Greek heritage and her bonds with the Greek people are very strong because of her numerous relations who currently live there and her annual trips to Greece with her family. As a result of these connections and experiences, Anastasia is interested in the way Greece so adeptly handles their foreign affairs. Anastasia aspires to utilize her finance and accounting degrees along with her experience as a financial intern for JSI in pursuing a career in international business and finance.



**Christopher Zrazik**, a Dean's List student and Presidential Academic Scholarship recipient, is a rising sophomore at the Elliott School of International Affairs at The George Washington University majoring in International Affairs, concentrating in Security Policy, and minoring in Public Policy. He has a strong interest in government, law, and current events and has proudly grown up in Chicago's Greek community. While in high school, Christopher founded the Greek Club; led Future Problem Solvers, competing internationally; and served in student government, where he founded the Association of Chicago Student Councils. In college, Christopher is active in the Hellenic Student Association as Secretary and the Onero Institute, a student-run foreign policy think tank. During his time in DC, Christopher has connected with engagements related to American and Greek foreign affairs by volunteering at events including the Washington Oxi Day Foundation's Courage Awards; 3rd Conference on Southeast Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Western Balkans; and a celebration event in honor of the Greek Prime Minister. Through family travels to Greece, he has cultivated pride in his heritage and is eager to continue broadening his knowledge on the foreign policy issues that confront the US, Greece, Cyprus, and the wider region.

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The *AHIF College Student Foreign Policy Study Trip: Washington, DC, Greece & Cyprus* is a leading travel abroad program aimed to help Greek and Cypriot American college students better understand the importance of US-Greece-Cyprus relations and foreign policy issues important to the Greek American community. During the eighteen-day program, the students will have the opportunity to experience firsthand experience about the foreign policy issues affecting Greece and Cyprus, their relations with the U.S., and the interests of the U.S. in the region. Prior to their departure, students meet in Washington, DC where they attend meetings and briefings with officials at Greek and Cypriot embassies, the State Department, Congress and think-tanks. While in Greece and Cyprus the students attend briefings with officials at the American embassies; various ministries, including Foreign Affairs; military; members of Parliament; religious leaders; think-tanks, and members of academia and the private sector. In Greece, the students will also take a day-trip to visit Naval Support Activity (NSA) Souda Bay, Crete, where they will tour the NATO Missile Firing Installation (NAMFI) and receive a briefing.